

BEACHCOMBER

SINCE 1946



Assistant Chief, Robert Allen retires from the MBVFD after 35 years of service to Muir Beach and the surrounding communities



Submitted by Debra Allen

He said “Yes”

When Sutton Freebairn-Smith and I thought about recruiting Rob Allen for the MBVFD fire department, John John was chief and we were Assistant Chiefs.

We saw Rob as an enthusiastic community member who was not only athletic and smart, but easy to work with.

When Rob said yes, we had no idea that he would go on to serve as an EMT and Assistant Chief under all five chiefs (*John John twice*).

I believe I can speak for the whole community when I say...

“Thanks Rob, you’re the best.”

– *Michael Moore, MBVFD Chief ret.*

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THE THING ABOUT COMMUNITY...

About this time every year we start thinking about the Community Dinner. An idea established in 2012 by the then Elderberries when the Yamamoto Family were selling their beloved handmade house and moving to the city. I remember Judith telling me that night they had never built a house before and began collecting wood wherever they could find it, culminating in a studio for him and one for her. Later the children shared these unconventional spaces. They were happy.

This sort of oral history is about as close as we get to recording the many interesting lives here and of course our Beachcomber. The first dinner took place and tickets were sold and reservations made and a caterer procured. Washing up tubs were set up with soapy water and rinse water and a stack of clean t-towels with the little kids doing the clean up work. Those little ones are now living in Paris and spread across America at schools and Universities. It is hard to believe more than a decade has passed since that first Community Dinner.

The idea behind these dinners was pure fellowship. No agenda other than coming together under one roof, eating, drinking, talking, story telling and getting to know both old residents and new residents. In the beginning dinners I remember Martha de Barros had little slips of paper on the table asking residents what they were interested in contributing to the community. At another dinner in 2015 I had Tenn’s bluegrass band come and play on the deck whilst people arrived, found their table, ordered a drink and met friends old and new.

Recently I received a message that new energy was needed in getting the dinner off the ground this year. Something simple with the same ethos, but less laborious. And so I’ve offered to try and reinvent the dinner a bit. I’ve been looking at food trucks, and portable brick oven pizza services. I’ve been talking to the kids about playing some music together. I’ve been thinking we need some young kids as runners to help serve, and some generous residents to provide some good wine and beer and drinks for the children. Maybe ice cream for dessert.

We are in that phase where things are changing. My old end of Sunset Way is kind of breaking my heart...Don gone, Aran gone, Tayeko and Michael gone, Arlene gone. It sort of takes my breath away going to swim. I expect to see Tayeko bent over in her beloved garden and Aran doing his walking rounds. But this is life, and we are lucky to be here with each other in such a gorgeous, unique and loving community.

This is my open call for help, for ideas, for volunteers for a potential September Community Dinner. Please feel free to ring me on 415 497 7387 or send me a message at nelsonart@ymail.com.

Thank you and see you at the dinner !

– *Beth Nelson*

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ON THE COVER

Buck Moon

Full Moon Hike
Photo taken on Saturday,
July 20, 2024, 7:30pm
Nikki Clark

NEW Happening in Our Community

by Alecia Singer and Sarah Marshank

The Muir Beach Community Movement Gathering (MBCMG) is a creative collaboration offered by us, Alecia Singer and Sarah Marshank, held monthly at the community center.

The event runs from 10 am to 11:30 am on one Friday per month. Check Laurie Piel’s newsletter for exact dates.

This gathering is modeled on the traditions of Five Rhythms by Gabrielle Roth, Soul Motion by Vin Marti, and Nia by Debbie and Carlos Rosas. Each of these movement traditions recognizes the significance of moving our bodies in both synchronized and unsynchronized movements with others. These systems promote somatic (of the body) and psychological (of the mind) expressions and healing while cultivating connection and communion with oneself, one’s Source, and one’s community.

We both have extensive experience in these modalities and regularly facilitate somatic exploration in our private practices.

Here’s what happens at these gatherings:

When folks arrive, everyone sits in circle, introduces themselves, and offers a brief check-in on how they’re doing that morning.

We then spend 55-60 minutes moving to music from a playlist that offers a thematic arc, beginning gently, building in intensity, and followed by a gentle cool down and completion. Either one of us might offer a few minutes of guided movement at the beginning to connect us to our bodies, breath, the space, and one another. The music and the guidance are chosen to delight and ignite, generate play and catharsis, and foster relaxation and connection with one’s body, heart, mind, and spirit. The invitation is to listen to oneself and move accordingly. Specific song requests are welcome as well as requests to host or co-host the event.

Our gathering closes with a circle where each person shares a bit about what they experienced.

What else to know:

This gathering is not a dance class or a traditional social dance party. It’s more of a community-based mindfulness practice that’s minimally structured, organic, playful, and fun.

In other words, anything goes. You’re invited to move or not move in any way you feel comfortable. Wear comfortable clothing and bring a yoga mat if you wish. Each gathering is unique based on who shows up, what songs make their way to the playlist, the weather, and the state of the world.

You’re not obligated to share in the circle. You’re simply invited. So far, people have met new friends in the community and deepened their friendships with those they already know.

Though this article is an attempt, this kind of event can be difficult to describe. So experiencing it is truly the best way to discover what it is. If at any point you’re not loving the experience, you’re free to leave. No offense taken.

Calling this event the MBCMG was the most descriptive title we could come up with, but we are hoping for a better title to emerge. Maybe you will inspire it!

If you have any questions or concerns, we are happy to chat. We look forward to welcoming you to one of the upcoming gatherings. Remember, check Laurie’s newsletter for upcoming dates.

Thank you for making the 50th Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen's Barbecue a huge success!

We achieved record-breaking fundraising and fostered community spirit and epic amounts of fun. This wouldn't have been possible without everyone's contribution. Whether you dedicated your time at the Saturday work parties in May, led a committee, volunteered during the event, or made a purchase, your role was crucial. Together, we raised around \$75,000 for our new firehouse, making this one of the most successful barbecues.

There are so many people to thank for contributing to the success of the event, including the **MBVFD firefighters** and **Chief Chris Gove**; the MBVFA Board - **Paul Brannan** (treasurer, tickets, all things \$\$), **Lisa Eigsti** (merchandise), **Brenda Kohn**, **Ellen Littweller** (secretary, barbecue sauce and beans), **Nina Vincent** (volunteer coordinator), **Eli Pearlman** (kid zone), **Frank Schoenfeld** and **Deb Ketchum**. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our sponsors **Recology**, **Lagunitas Beer** (20 kegs!), **Gabe Leis** and **Joe's Taco Lounge** (burritos for all the Saturday work parties and salsa for the veggie meals), **Green Gulch** (use of kitchen), **Good Earth** (ingredients for the desserts), the **Conti Family** (the incredible crepe booth), **David Taylor** (crucial field internet setup), **Greg Kidd** (chicken), the dozens of businesses and individuals that donated to the raffle and wine booth, and everyone that came out and bought food, drinks, merch and raffle tickets. Your support and generosity made this event a huge success.

Once again, a tremendous thank you to all of the committee heads and their fabulous crews of volunteers: **Deb Allen** (raffle); **Jesse Rudnick**, **Frank Piazza**, and **Graham Groneman** (beer booth); **Sarah Nesbitt** and **Norbert Schnadt** (wine); **Jesse De Voss**, **Matt Silva** and **Steve Shaffer** (chicken); **Sophie and Annabelle Conti** (crepes); **Alexis Chase** and **April Randle** (desserts); **Barbara Piotter** (veggie meals); **Laura Van Amburgh** (kitchen crew); **Joey Groneman** (decorations); **Rob Allen** (first aid tent); **Andre Pessis** for bringing together everybody's favorite BBQ band **Andre and the All Stars** (we love you, Andre!); **Monroe Grisman** (for stepping in in Andre's absence); **Jonathan Korty** and **Vinyl** (for getting the dance floor going); **Brad Eigsti** (hand-made signs and w/ **Dan Skurow** the gorgeous event poster); **Brett Sibley** (supplies); **Anna Rauh** (non-alcoholic drinks); **Laurie Piel** (paparazzi);

Renee Boeche (security); **Skip Rudolph** (coordinating the back bridge patrol); **Jon Rauh** (portapotties); **Don Piotter** (garbage), **Ian Claudius** (parking); **Chris Gove** (Sat work parties, ice); **Brittnay Claudius** (parking); **Deborah McDonald** (Sunday volunteer breakfast); **Aran Moore** (charcoal and my support system through the crazy permitting process!); **Michael Moore** (for building the cool live edge tables and bar); **Ralph "Roger" Rogers** (Saturday night security); **Cuco and Consuela Acala** and a generous Muir Beach benefactor for providing tacos for the Saturday night work party.

We are already looking forward to the 51st MBVFD BBQ in May 2025, and we hope you will join us again. Please get in touch with me at denise@deniselamottpr.com for volunteer and sponsorship opportunities or to donate to the new firehouse. Your continued support is invaluable to us.

—Denise Lamott

President, Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Association

See pages 12-13 for more BBQ photos.



Photo by Laurie Piel

Road trip -- Muir Beach to Washington, DC

(as related to Susannah Kennedy)



Created with Google Maps

In June, Muir Beachers Leah Kennedy and Adrianna Bender took off on a road trip adventure across the country. Both study on the East Coast – Leah in Washington, DC and Adrianna in Boston. They encountered the usual road trip mishaps, like weird men at gas stations, an especially creepy one in Gallup, NM (“the most patriotic town in America,” btw), and some unusual ones like a flying tire coming at them in Virginia, driving through a gigantic thunder and hailstorm in New Mexico (“Are those mountains on the horizon? Oh my God, those are dark clouds!”), and that crazy heatwave dome in the South -- a place that to the rest of us already evokes insane rivulets-of-sweat summer heat.

Their favorite places: Sedona, Arizona and New Orleans, Louisiana

Least favorite: Amarillo, Texas

Best drive: “The drive from LA to Sedona, once we got into Arizona. The red rocks were so beautiful, and the people were really nice. As well as the drive from Amarillo to Austin -- we were surprised at the greenery and got to see beautiful farms and ranches, by taking backroads through historic towns.”

Worst drive: “Driving through New Mexico for over 10 hours. We drove through a crazy storm and couldn’t see 30 feet in front of the car for a bit.”

After roughly 60 hours of driving, and over four thousand miles they arrived in DC safely, much to the relief of their parents, their health stayed stable (Leah is in treatment for Lyme disease), and they’ve started summer classes and are getting ready for senior year. How did they get so grown up?



The Dragon

by Charlie Stump

My dad was convinced that Sir Francis Drake had landed at Muir Beach. Our cove was close to Drakes Bay where it was long believed that Drake had landed. In 1579 the Drakes Bay cove – later named Drakes Bay in the Point Reyes National Seashore – offered easy harboring, fresh water and wild game, a small fertile valley, and Coast Miwok Native Americans with whom to trade goods.

The historical accounts of Drakes Bay and other nearby landing spots were regarded as out-of-date by my dad, antediluvian and subject to revision for historical accuracy. One Saturday, he asked me to accompany him to go look for almost four-hundred-year-old evidence of Sir Francis Drake – El Draque – The Dragon.

We started down the path to Little Beach and paused at Cliff Moccasin. Pointing towards the hill above Big Beach, Dad talked about the white-faced cliff above the ocean and how El Draque mentioned white cliffs in his notes. He then imagined, out loud, a row boat landing with El Draque at the helm and how his men would have followed Redwood Creek up past the lagoon. “Let’s head over there.”

Our shoes got wet when we crossed the stream where the lagoon emptied into the cove. By the time we got across Big Beach to the dunes, our shoes were heavy with sand. Dad noted that El Draque and his men likely wore tall boots and therefore were not bothered by wet sandy shoes. I said, “I don’t care about my wet sandy shoes.” He replied in a contrived British accent, pointing a finger skyward, “Nor do I!”

Leaving the creek for high ground where it bends sharply just beyond the lagoon, we headed up the hill to get a view of the area – to locate the harbor where Drake’s Golden Hind had anchored and where the explorers came ashore, and maybe, just maybe, to find some evidence of their stay. Sitting on the steep hillside, we dug our heels in and scanned the area. I listened to Dad discuss his revisionist theory about Sir Francis Drake. Made sense to me – the way he described it, I could see El Draque leading his men to find game, restocking water, and trading with the Miwok, all while exploring the Muir Beach area.

Our trek continued along a dirt road on George Wheelwright’s cattle ranch. Dad had heard that Indian shell mounds were discovered in this area and he wondered if we could find pottery shards from 1579 in those mounds. We searched for little hills or mounds but found only a few shells. Dropping to our hands and knees, we pulled away the wild grasses and jabbed sticks into the dirt, scraping the soil in hopes of finding old pottery shards. I thought it was kind of odd seeing my dad on all fours digging in the dirt with a stick. I went along enthusiastically. Regretfully, it wasn’t meant to be – we found no more shells, let alone any artifacts. We relinquished our search after a gallant try.

We sat and rested before heading back to the beach. Dad, speaking philosophically, pondered the rapid passage of time. “In the big picture – in geologic time – El Draque was here yesterday,” he said. He told me I was growing up fast, then asked me what I wanted to do with my life when I grew up. Taken by surprise, I told him I didn’t know, but that I liked history and looking for artifacts. He smiled and assured me that even though time is fleeting, I had time to figure out what to do with those two interests. Standing up and offering his hand to pull me to my feet he said, “Explore life with passion like El Draque explored Muir Beach.”

“That’s just my Nature”

by Mia Monroe

When we say “that’s just my nature” we’re saying much more than we realize and now retired, I find my nature guiding my time, what refreshes, where I seek wonder. That still is, will always be, among the redwoods but more often than not it is an aimless wander along the shoreline as I’ve always been a beachcomber!

Barefoot, pants rolled up. Binoculars to see what’s offshore. Newspaper bag to pick up trash. Easy.

More often than not, walking along the flotsam and jetsam of my life comes to mind to be examined, smiled at, tossed out or even seen differently with the fresh eyes of age and experience. Just like what’s been washed up on the beach, who knows what will come from the soul, the heart, the worried mind unbidden to be turned over and over but the beachcomber is easily distracted so even if I came with something to work out there’s something cool, curious that catches my eye or a friend to walk with a bit, a scene to take in or the colors of the sunset to catch one’s breath!

My contemporary worries scurry by as I scan or look right at my feet: microplastics, the scourge of single use stuff, the growing amount of charcoal but easy to refocus on beach wrack which I know is teeming with life being nurtured by the strands of seaweed (oops, marine algae!), hiding in the cool moist shelter of a mussel shell or driftwood. How nice to see the real treasure of a sand dollar! Or a piece of sea glass.

Am reassured that there are those working on fishing line entanglements and shipping lanes safe for whales

as well as boats. This recalls special people moments such as assisting Chris haul the whale skull off the beach, early walks with Mrs. T and my finding ambergris during beach clean-up. Or the return of sand dunes as a part of Big Lagoon restoration. The reassuring build-up of sand each spring though love the rocky times, too! I wonder if the elephant seals will claim this beach some day and hope a condor will soar overhead when a whale beaches again!

After the Fourth it was so uplifting (but not surprising) to meet friends who’d already been down to the beach with clean-up top on their minds! Thank you.

Always, I amble with the spirit of my grandmother by my side or vow to plan a beach visit soon with my mother, as beachcombing was a lifestyle gift from them that makes me realize it is both their nurture and now my nature of how to spend

time with others that make up my life’s fabric. As do beach clean-ups, stewardship and suggesting a walk on the beach as the best way to spend time with friends. Now I sure appreciate it as my most healing metaphor for retirement: slow down, enjoy spontaneity, plan a bit (the tide table and the weather, the picnic basket!), take in the breeze, and time will slow down, the wonders never cease! And, as Rachel Carson suggests, one can feel connected with the bigger world as shores everywhere “are made one by the unifying touch of the sea”.

May we find a sea star again to throw back in for a chance at life, see more and more kelp, and listen to a magic word when we put a sea shell to our ear or close eyes and hear the roar of the surf to transport us far away. Dear neighbor, look for a message often written one way or another in the sand for you: peace.

The Beachcomber is running on fumes!

Please **DONATE** if you haven’t
in the last 12 months...



It’s easy, just mail or drop off your check to:

BEACHCOMBER (mail drop at end of mailbox row)
19 Seacape Dr., Muir Beach, CA 94965

or

PAYPAL: subscriptions@muirbeachcomber.com

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\$35 mailed

100% of your donation goes to printing, mailings, and website fees.

MUIR BEACH HOLIDAY ARTS FAIR 2024

REGISTRATION AUGUST 5th – 26th

by Laurie Piel

It's hard to believe that the summer is rushing by and people have already started emailing me with requests to participate in our 2024 Holiday Arts Fair... so registration is opening this month. If you have suggestions to improve the fair, I am all ears, so email me at muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com or call or text me at (415/595-7411) and let's chat. If you know someone who might like to be part of our musical offerings, please contact Bob Bowyer at bigbowyer@gmail.com.

Registration opens Monday, August 5th for the Muir Beach 2024 Holiday Arts Fair and closes on Monday, August 26th. It is open to all Muir Beach residents. Please let me know if you only want to participate on one day. All residents are entitled to one table and it will open up to non-residents after all residents have been accommodated. This is a community event that gives back financially to the community for events like bistro, the Solstices, Day of the Dead and the MB Friends & Neighbors events like the Sound of Music Sing-a-Long and cocktail party. So even if you don't make art, hopefully you'll volunteer. Below is all of the information to register...call, text or write me with any questions.

Fair Dates:

Set up: Fri., Dec. 6th (9-7)

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

Sun., Dec. 8th (10-4 and then break down)

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

Entrance Rules: The work must be your creation although you do not have to manufacture it yourself. For example, if you make a piece of pottery you do not have to fire it yourself. You can use found objects in your art and can design the sweater but do not have to knit it yourself. This is a curated event. Please do not make something edible that will take away from the money made in the kitchen.

Cost: \$70/table. Two people can share a table if they don't think they have enough items to sell on their own.

Sales: There is no central cashier and each artist is responsible for their own means of getting paid.

Registration: By email ONLY to muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com **Monday, August 5th through Monday, August 26th.** Please include your name, contact

information (phone number, MB address & email address) and your medium along with a blurb and some pictures in the same format as the website. Please go to our website <https://www.muirbeachartsfair.com> to look at the blurbs and pictures for examples. Please send the pictures as JPGs in native format or as large as you can.

Acceptance: All MB'ers are automatically accepted. Space assignments are based on the range of artists genres and types of space needed. Currently there is only 1 table/space available to each Muir Beach resident. Acceptance letters will go out via email by September 15th, so if you don't get one please contact me to make sure your registration went through.

MB Organizations: Organizations that support Muir Beach such as the MBVFA, Quilters and the Garden Club are exempted from the fee. Please register.

I hope that even if you don't want to participate as an artist, you'll volunteer to help make this annual community event a success. Information for volunteering will be available closer to the event.

Thanks everybody!

Laurie 415/595-7411

muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com

Susannah Kennedy Aug 1st author panel



Muir Beacher Susannah Kennedy shown with fellow authors Robin Somers, Simi Monheit, and publisher/author Vicki DeArmon at Sausalito Books By The Bay, discussing Sibylline Press' laser focus on promoting women authors "of a certain age." Photo by Beth Begault

Forever is Not Enough

By Suzanne Bender-Van Spyk, Photos by Adrianna Bender and Robert Rodriguez

It was June, 1999. We had plenty of time to make it to the airport from Olema. We drove slowly, savoring each twist and turn that the unfamiliar coastal highway brought to us, oblivious to the growing line of cars behind us and the frowns aimed at the bumper of our rental car. The weekend had been magical. All the fears of things forgotten, feuds erupting, weather disasters, or plans gone awry had evaporated when we'd contemplated each other under the giant magnolia tree and said, "I do." As we stood in the receiving line, hugging and kissing friends and family who had traveled thousands of miles to our destination wedding, the delicate scent of wisteria climbing over the trellis above us drew us both into a dream. We danced, we laughed, we kissed to the ringing of glasses and cheers of all those around us. We were certain that nothing in our future could ever come close to this feeling. We had glimpsed heaven, surrounded by those we loved most.

Bolinas and Stinson passed by our windows, the sparkling of the waters appearing to jump out of the pages of a coffee table book. How could such beauty be real? As Slide Ranch disappeared behind us and we crested the hill, we saw a street sign that read "Muir Beach Overlook." 10 more minutes would bring no harm. We had plenty of time.

Hang on a moment. Do you realize there are houses here? With mountains on one side and ocean on the other? How had we never seen this place before? Didn't you once say your dream house would have both mountains and ocean? Yes, and didn't you say that type of house simply didn't exist?

We crept through the streets, poking our heads out the windows and gawking. Pointing like school children, we looked at each house in detail, amazed at how each successive structure seemed to thumb its nose at conventional architecture. This community was nothing like the suburban street on which we lived, in Illinois.

There was only one house for sale, near the top of Starbuck, with giant piers holding it up high and a yard that seemed to stretch forever. A loud, blaring horn startled us into realizing that we had come to a complete stop in the middle of the street as we both stared at the for sale sign, lost in our fantasies.

For the next two years, we stalked the community on the internet. It was not until years later that we truly

understood why so few houses ever came up for sale. Every time we had a business trip to San Francisco, we made a point of driving through the quiet streets again, feeding our dreams for another few months. It was shortly after our son was born, on one of our pilgrimages to Muir Beach, that we spotted the sign at the corner of Seacape and Highway 1.

Did you see anything for sale online? No, and I checked the website just yesterday. I wonder which house it is? Grab your cell and call the number on the sign!

The agent was speechless for a moment. He had dug the sign into the ground just an hour prior. We had permission to go and peek in the windows since the owners were not there. Neither one of us took a breath as we headed down Starbuck. We had both discovered over the years that often, when dreams and reality collided, the result was a vague feeling of let-down, and a grasping to figure out how to make the reality match the dream. We parked in the driveway, plucked our 2-month old son out of his car seat, and stared. This reality was indeed the dream.

Two months later, after multiple offers, walking away, the horror of 9-11, serious doubts about the path we had taken, returning to the table, and a cordial call between seller and buyer that resolved all issues in 15 minutes, we became residents of Muir Beach. It took almost two more years to fully vacate our midwestern home, but we welcomed our daughter to Marin with a painful and intensely scary drive to the hospital one Sunday morning in August. Then, life happened. Babies. Toddlers. Nursery school. Way too many years of elementary school. A feral cat adoption. Starting our own business. Carpools with neighbors. Commiserations over glasses of wine. Parties. Community engagement. Walks on the beach. The pain of the middle school years. Community disengagement. High school. Teenagers. Teenagers driving. Walks to the Overlook. Breathtaking health scares. Dear friends departing. Dear friends returning. Dog adoption. Another dog adoption. Starting a second company. Questioning our sanity. University. Pandemic. Unexpected and cherished family time. University again. Empty nest...

It was perhaps the longest blink of an eye. Suddenly, almost 23 years of our lives had been spent in Muir Beach. We met the people who would shape our lives, our parenting, our social calendar, and our friendships.

Continued on next page

Continued from page 10

It was June, 2024. Our 25th wedding anniversary was approaching. The hotel in Olema was under new management and the wisteria was long gone. But the magnolia tree still stood. We invited the same friends and family who had helped us to glimpse heaven 25 years prior. This included dear ones who traveled from the east coast, southern California, and even as far as Melbourne, Australia and Singapore. We also invited “newer” friends, from Muir Beach, who had helped us to create heaven in our everyday lives. Joanie and Steve returned to our arms, traveling 2,300 miles from

Kona, Hawaii. We danced, we laughed, we kissed to the ringing of glasses once again, surrounded by Sophie & Maurice, Susannah & Klaus & Leah, David, Leighton & Kathy, Laurie & David, Chris, Samantha, Janet & Mike, and Lori & John.

We wonder if we will make it to 50. That would put us in our late 70’s and early 80’s. We can hope. Another 25 years in Muir Beach would certainly make it our forever home. But whether or not we can hit that particular milestone, living here has made us feel like we will always want more time. In this community, surrounded by these friends, forever will never be enough.



Joanie & Steve Wynn



Christian, Suzanne, Scott & Adrianna Bender



Amy & Steve Utstein



Klaus Poppensieker, Leah & Susanna Kennedy



Chris Gove, Scott Bender, Laurie Piel



Sophie & Maurice Conti



David Taylor, Leighton Hills, Kathy Johnston, Janet Tumpich & Mike Moore

50th Muir Beach Volunteer Firemen's Barbecue



Photos by Laurie Piel and Denise Lamott
See page 5 for story.

(Below) Saturday work building the creperie
and powerwashing, photos by Kerry Wynn





GOODBYE MUIR BEACH, HELLO ENSO VILLAGE

by Paul Jeschke

Question while shaving: Can a deeply anchored agnostic who moved to a spiritual community develop new insights in an environment where Dharma Day chanting, silent sitting meditation, Feldenkrais, yoga, Tao Yin and Evening Zazen are enthusiastically practiced?

Last fall my wife Anne and I traded our sprawling, contemporary home with amazing Muir Beach views for a Zen-inspired community with Quaker overtones.



Residents' gardens, and the corn is really as high as an elephant's eye!

Moving to a two bedroom apartment on the outskirts of Healdsburg required considerable downsizing but we now know that architect

Continued on page 22



Water aerobics in the pool.



The stone garden, the Zendo and the evening sky. Photos by Anne Jeschke

Our Backyard Menagerie

by Katherine Bicer

“Mom, there’s a lynx in our yard!” My son has a prime viewing spot from his bedroom out into the menagerie of our backyard. The sighting got us curious so we looked up some information. We learned that there are four species of lynx, including the bobcat we saw on our deck.



Photo by Lev Bicer

Continued on next page

Muir Beach Dog of the Month by David Taylor

Cwtch Taylor (pronounced kŭtch) is a 3 year old McNab from a working dog family in Santa Maria. McNabs are native California herding dogs originally bred in Hopland in the 19th century. Her early education was with a flock of sheep in Rohnert Park.

She is brave, brilliant, sweet, very obedient and gorgeous. She helps clean the beach every morning and can play frisbee for hours. She valiantly fends off the coyotes lurking around the Pelican Inn and has ridden shotgun on a number of fire calls.

She speaks one word of Welsh (Cwtch means cuddle in Welsh) and 27 words of English. Her only

quirk is that if she hears the word “chipmunk” she goes briefly mad.

Photos by Lonna



Send your dog story and photo for Dog of the Month to be featured in a future issue, email editor@muirbeachcomber.com

– Janet Tumpich

Our Backyard continued

The San Diego Zoo website says “the bobcat is known by lots of names: wildcat, bay lynx, and lynx cat. Some people call it the spitfire of the Animal Kingdom, because it seems fearless and won’t back down from a fight! Found throughout North America, it is our continent’s most common native cat.” This little bobcat climbed under our fence through a perfectly cat-sized gap and wandered around for a few minutes before heading to its next destination.

Several months ago I saw a bobcat under my neighbor’s deck. After some funny confusion about whether I meant an animal or one of the Bobcat machines from my landscaping project, she told me that she had seen a pair palling around the neighborhood. Was our visitor their offspring? I like to think so.

Since living on Ahab, we’ve gotten to see an assortment of animals that never fails to delight, or at least be a

good story. On one of our first days in the house, we were blessed by a fox sleeping on our stairs. We have had a number of fox visits over the years. We also met a friendly blue jay with a craving for crumbs and an apparent history of success getting them at our house. One night we spied a racoon sitting on our deck chair eating a sleeve of Ritz crackers like a little man having a midnight snack.

Once we found a lifeless hummingbird on our deck. After examining its beautiful feathers for a minute, I went inside to find a makeshift coffin. When I came back to scoop it up, it flew away! I hope it continues to survive. We often see hummingbirds in our flowering plants, large ones the size of a lady finger banana. I don’t know if hummingbirds have territories but we try to provide a good home.

Last July 4th we met a skunk, or rather I should say my dog met one.

He came running up to us, yelping and foaming and stinking beyond all measure. Naturally the skunk shampoo I was certain we had was nowhere to be found. Nevermind, dish soap worked just as well and the next day he got a new collar out of the experience. Since then he’s not allowed outside on his own after dark.

Of course we can’t talk about Muir Beach animals without mentioning our whale friend on Little Beach. It was tragic and fascinating to see it rot away. My family was later excited to learn that the skull was put on display in the Presidio Tunnel Tops field station.

Muir Beach is a really special place. We’re lucky to be able to share it with our animal friends, to watch them at work and to be curious about them (except the skunks maybe). What animal will slink, fly, or slither past our windows next?

MBVFD JULY 19, 2024 CALL LOG BY DAVID TAYLOR

Since our last report in April we have run another 19 calls. Eight of these calls were medical calls in the community. These calls will not be described in any way in the Beachcomber given the small size of our community and our professional and legal obligations regarding confidentiality.

05/01/2024 13:27 Maurice Conti, Sefton Murray, Jon Rauh, David Taylor. 19 year old cyclist back injury and shortness of breath on Coastal View Trail

05/08/2024 11:07 Sefton Murray, Jon Rauh, Chris Vallee. Vehicle accident, evaluation of pregnant passenger

05/19/2024 15:01 Rob Allen, Sefton Murray, Jon Rauh. 26 year old male experienced syncope in Muir Woods

05/24/24 10:43 Maurice Conti, Sefton Murray, Jon Rauh. 22 year old female suffered a seizure in Muir Woods

05/25/24 19:14 Maurice Conti, Brad Eigsti, Chris Gove. Vehicle accident UTL (unable to locate)

05/27/24 15:53 Chris Gove, Sefton Murray, Jon Rauh, Chris Vallee. Confirmation of death by suicide in vehicle

06/08/2024 20:54 Sefton Murray, Jon Rauh. Intoxicated juvenile at Overlook

06/22/2024 14:53 Maurice Conti, Chris Gove, David Taylor. Multiple wasp stings at Slide Ranch

06/28/2024 12:20 David Taylor, Chris Vallee. Tree down HWY 1

07/14/2024 11:12 Brad Eigsti, Chris Gove, Jon Rauh 61 y/o female dislocated shoulder Muir Woods

07/14/2024 15:54 Chris Gove, Jon Rauh, David Taylor 36 y/o male dislocated shoulder Muir Woods

2024 MUIR BEACH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT RAFFLE PRIZES

Winners

4623 Ketchum	1. A Disaster Go-Bag by Uncharted Supply Co., <i>the Seventy2 Pro Survival System</i> (containing tents, water filtration, air masks, shovel, food, blanket, gloves, + a lot more!) donated by Kerry & Rob Wynn of MB, \$580.
4146 Jeffrey	2. Nomad Groves Olive Oil (2 bottles) from The Sadoffs of MB, \$66.
4502 Drowning	3. In-N-Out Burger Lunch Tote filled with 10 Meal Cards, T-Shirt, Pen, Note Pad, Apron Pin, Drink Tumbler, Hat, Erasers, Stickers... \$250.+
9142 Cameron	4. <i>Out West</i> Jigsaw Puzzle from Blue Kazoo, \$32.
2312 Rumsey	5. Dia de los Muertos Hot Sauce Collection Box from Tapatio, \$60.
9916 Sohn	6. Shop at Driver's Market, Sausalito, \$100.
611 Vieree	7. <i>The Magic Years, Scenes From a Rock-And-Roll Life & Dream State, California in the Movies Books</i> from Heyday Publishers, \$47.
2723 Kohn	8. Enjoy a Meal at Sam's Anchor Cafe, Tiburon, \$100.
7721 Sheff	9. <i>Golden Gate Bridge & Mt. Tam</i> luxe size Natural Candles, Candlefy, \$60.
3934 Yeshi	10. Orig. "Raw" Bike Bell & "Catchup" Water Bottle, Spurcycle, Oregon, \$71.
557 Rauh	11. Ticket to shop at Big 5 Sporting Goods, \$25.
3509 S. Martin	12. Clothing & Gift Card to Proof Lab (skate/surf), Mill Valley, \$150.
9307 Tony Moore	13. <i>The Wolf Who Ate the Sky</i> by Anna Rauh and Mary Daniel Hobson & Photo Art Cards by Mary Daniel Hobson of Muir Beach, \$36.
2179 Tumplich	14. <i>The Curated Home & The Designer Within</i> , Gibbs Smith Publishers, \$85.
9636 Reis	15. Dr. Bronner's Castile Soap (three 32 oz bottles), \$51.
2098 E. Schwenfeld	16. Dinner at Spinnaker, Sausalito, \$125.
1893 Catalan	17. Lots of Honey (three different kinds) from Backroad Beekeeping, \$69.
1840 M. De-Barros	18. Eat Oysters at Hog Island, Marshall/SF & <i>Oyster Culture</i> Book from Tomales Bay Oyster Company, \$120.
9405 B. Stevens	19. Guest Passes (two) to SF MOMA, \$60.
2208 B. Dunbar	20. "Weekender Tote" (made w/upcycled fire hose) from OxGut Hose Co., \$249.
3684 Lambert	21. Vegan Sunscreen Products for Toddlers/Kids in a Fire Truck, CA Baby, \$65.
1015 C. Pugh	22. <i>Oceanographie</i> Jigsaw Puzzle from New York Puzzle Co., \$25.
6274 C. Brent	23. Coffee Pods Variety Pack from San Francisco Bay Coffee Co., \$44.
3734 N. Catalan	24. Eat at Fish, Sausalito (bring the dog!), \$100.
4529 Jim White	25. Muir Beach Pocket Hat from Bartbridge, \$35.
9762 Naïma	26. Mai Tai Cocktail Glasses (2), Retro Notu Mug, Retro mini Suffering Bastard Mug, Retro Golden Koi Fish Mug & Mai Tai Mix from Trader Vic's, \$133.
9027 D. Connors A.O.S.	27. Bkfst. at Side Street Kitchen & Lunch at Station House Cafe, Pt. Reyes, \$75.
Lauren Dibins	28. West Coast Incense Gift Pack & Watercolor Match Tube, Juniper Ridge, \$78.
2322 A. Rumsey	29. Ball Cap & Certificate to Eat at Hook Fish Co, Mill Valley, \$80.
5327 A. Debono	30. <i>Fri. Night on the Wheel</i> for two at Amphora Ceramic Studio, San Raf., \$160.
9850 Chris Newell	31. Shop at Tivoli (unique, one of a kind gifts) in Sausalito, \$50.
3392 B. Walner	32. Certif. for One Dozen Cup Cakes, from Susie's Cakes, Greenbrae, \$60.
9320 T. Moore	33. Enjoy Healthy Drinks/Food at Urban Remedy, Mill Valley, \$200.
2307 A. Rumsey	34. Certif. to Sloat Garden Center & <i>Blooms & Dreams</i> book, Gibbs Smith, \$60.
7022 Amy Zeno	35. <i>Tahoe & Marin</i> luxe size Natural Candles from Candlefy, \$60.

7787 E. Carroll	36. Enjoy another Meal at Sam's Anchor Cafe, Tiburon, \$100.
5017 Lindhardt	37. <i>The Curious World of Seaweed & Pacific Coast Tide Pools</i> , Heyday, \$61.
4501 Rob Matthew	38. The Smokey The Bear Prize: (2 totes, 2 hats, 4 enamel mugs + patches), from The Printer Image, Chico, \$148.
4452 Paul Tollefson	39. <i>Equator Blend</i> Coffee Beans & Mug, \$25.
5314 C. Valentine	40. A Bay Sail for Two Adults with Adventure Cat Sailing Charters, SF, \$150.
2791 M. Dehaat	41. And enjoy another Meal at Sam's Anchor Cafe, Tiburon, \$100.
4744 Judy	42. <i>Jet Stream & Flower Pot</i> Jigsaw Puzzles from Blue Kazoo, \$44.
6853 Diane + Jan	43. The Snoopy/Peanuts Prize: (b.pack, tote, socks, sweatshirt, shirts, mugs...ice skate passes + Charles M. Schulz Museum passes), Santa Rosa, \$300+
4748 S. Eigsti	44. Eat at Flour Craft Bakery, from Sean Maley of Guarantee Mortgage, \$25.
4477 T. Ash	45. An Hour of Bowling (in one lane) at Presidio Bowl, SF, \$125.
6881 Piei	46. <i>Stranded, Finding Nature in Uncertain Times & The Questions That Matter Most</i> from Heyday Books, \$53.
9440 Tangko	47. Dine at Floodwater, Mill Valley, \$100.
2711 T. Lovato	48. "Coastal Pine" Candle & <i>Redwood Mist</i> Body Wash, Juniper Ridge, \$43.
5184 Zofa Paul	49. <i>Santa Monica Pier & Real City Downtown LA</i> , from Gibbs Smith Pub., \$50.
6934 J. Buchholz	50. Columbian Coffee Beans (2 lbs) from San Francisco Bay Coffee Co., \$22.
898 Ken High	51. A Certif. for Framing, a Frame & a Bag, Sausalito Picture Framing, \$270.+
6818 Jane Bker	52. <i>Marin & San Francisco</i> luxe size Natural Candles from Candlefy, \$60.
1585 Laura Merrif	53. Compact Bike Bell & "Relish" Water Bottle from Spurcycle, Oregon, \$44.
423 B. Edna	54. <i>Design Mixology & Authentic Interiors</i> from Gibbs Smith Publishers, \$90.
5163 J. Audrick	55. Enjoy another Waterfront Meal at Sam's Anchor Cafe, Tiburon, \$100.
1506 Liz Roger	56. <i>Liability & Triangles</i> Jigsaw Puzzles from Blue Kazoo, \$44.
4549 Jim White	57. Mai Tai Cocktail Glasses (2), Retro Blowfish Mug, Retro Pink Seahorse Mug, Retro mini Koi Fish Mug & Mai Tai Mix from Trader Vic's, \$135.
4792 Laura	58. <i>Pacific Coast</i> Jigsaw Puzzle from New York Puzzle Co., \$25.
734 Hobson	59. Shop for Western Gear at Cabaline Country Emporium, Pt. Reyes, \$45.
2206 B. Barlow	60. <i>Mt. Tam & Golden Gate Bridge</i> luxe size Natural Candles, Candlefy, \$60.
484 B. Kohn	61. Fire Hose Mini Mat from OxGut Hose Co. Berkeley, \$76.
5258 SCOUT	62. Certificate to Grocery Shop at Nugget Market, \$100.
1951 John Korne	63. Orig. Black Bike Bell & "Must Hard" Wtr Bottle from Spurcycle, Ore., \$81.
D. Conolly	64. <i>Bkfst. Blend</i> Ground Coffee & a Campfire Mug, SF Bay Coffee Co., \$20.
5338 Libby	65. Bayfront Dining at Scomas, Sausalito, \$100.
2706 Herwitz	66. <i>San Francisco & Tahoe</i> luxe size Natural Candles from Candlefy, \$60.
4823 W. Kohn	67. Two Tickets for June 2024 Mountain Play's Kinky Boots, Mill Valley, \$110.
5289 Car. Valerini	68. <i>Layers of Life</i> Jigsaw Puzzle from New York Puzzle Co., \$25.
1822 W. Kohn	69. Sam's Anchor Cafe, Tiburon has sent even another meal certif!, \$100.
5022 Lindhardt	70. Picnic Basket Packed Full of Treats, Snacks, Store Certif + much more... from Palace Market in Pt. Reyes, \$200.+
6644 Charie mri	71. A Tour + Tasting for Four People at Heidrun Meadery, Pt. Reyes, \$180.
1560 Liz Roger	72. A Night's Stay in a Deluxe Bayview Rm, Claremont Hotel, Berk., \$495.
6255 C. Brandt	73. Golden Gate Seaplane Tour for Two, Mill Valley, \$596.
4436 Dean Sward	74. One Night in a Queen Deluxe Room at Inn Above Tide, Sausalito, \$615.
4538 Jim White	75. An Overnight with Breakfast for two in an Historical or Contemporary Room at Cavallo Point, Sausalito, \$750.

Thank you to all who purchased raffle tickets and congratulations to the winners! deballen@deballen.com



Mabel's Mandylyon Summer Reading Recommendations

Muir Beach native Mabel Taylor is a co-founder and editor of Mandylyon Press, a small press dedicated to reviving overlooked and forgotten nineteenth-century novels. Mandylyon's first two releases, *The Gadfly* by Ethel Lilian Voynich and *Other Things Being Equal* by Emma Wolf, were released this year and are available for purchase at mandylyonpress.com and at Green Apple in San Francisco. Mandylyon has a bimonthly newsletter on Substack (mandylyon.substack.com). Below is an excerpt from Mabel's most recent missive, which her father, David Taylor, requested she share here...



Sometimes I remember that Mandylyon Press is a literary enterprise and I wonder if we should use Substack to talk more about nineteenth-century novels. This is the sort of thought that flits through my brain when I'm brushing my teeth—and then quickly flits out. Novels? Those are private. Reading? That's a type of worship that I conduct within the four walls of my apartment and, more specifically, within the four walls of my skull. Why would I share my passion for reading with the community we've assembled around our love for books? But Mandylyon means growth. Mandylyon means bravery. Mandylyon means family. Family means nobody gets left behind or forgotten. Therefore, in the spirit of this beautiful world we've constructed, I refuse to forget or leave behind my precious books, who have escorted me through life's most sublime and tortured moments.

Summer is famously a good time for reading. A Google search for "best summer reads 2024" generates a cool 514,000,000 results. Every newspaper and magazine and

Instagram book club is desperate to curate your summer reading list. But before you listen to the literary mafia, I invite you to take a stroll down *Mabel's Summer Reading Memory Lane*.

Summer 2024: *Vanity Fair* (1847-48) by William Makepeace Thackeray

I declare 2024 the Summer of William Makepeace Thackeray. You might be wondering, *isn't it brat summer?* Of course, it will always be brat summer, but while reading this 800-page nineteenth-century novel, I discovered that brat summer is synonymous with William Makepeace Thackeray Summer.

Vanity Fair is considered one of the greatest English-language novels. It is an epic (very long) panoramic study of Regency society (like *Bridgerton*) that focuses on an interwoven group of individuals belonging mostly to the merchant class. After a period of serialization, the novel was published in a single volume with the full title of *Vanity Fair: A Novel without a Hero*. Thackeray wasn't exaggerating with this subtitle. *Vanity Fair* introduced me to some of the most despicable characters I've ever encountered. The novel centers around Rebecca Sharp, a girl of dubious origins, who we meet while she's a charity case at a girls' school. Over the course of the novel, Becky ascends the ranks of English society. She claws her way up the social ladder, fueled by a lethal combination of credit, lies, and seduction. Yet she's not quite a villain. Everyone in *Vanity Fair*, whether they know it or not, seems to live on credit and to worship false gods. Thackeray contrasts descriptions of lush bourgeois interiors with stories of the overly trusting merchants who lend jewels, food, and carriages to their clients. But the merchants aren't particularly sympathetic either. No matter where you turn in *Vanity Fair*, whether you're looking at a lord or a maid, you are bound to find evidence of selfishness.

Thackeray took the name for the novel from John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). In Bunyan's Christian allegory, *Vanity Fair* is a tantalizing stop along the pilgrim's journey, a place where the party never stops and worldly pleasures abound. By the early nineteenth century, all the world was *Vanity Fair*. There was no substance. There was no heart. Without giving too much away, there is one likable character in all of *Vanity Fair*, and even he is a sucker, whose generosity, kindness, and morality is inspired not by fear of God but by love for a married woman.

Continued on next page

Mabel's Mandylion continued

At the beginning of the novel, Thackeray introduces his characters as puppets and himself as the puppetmaster. Pulling the strings doesn't make Thackeray all-powerful. He is also part of the show, as hopelessly subservient to a selfish, predatory world as any one of his puppets. In one of the moments where his omniscience disappears and his authorial voice emerges in all of its cutting hilarity, he writes:

“The novelist, it has been said before, knows everything, and as I am in a situation to be able to tell the public how Crawley and his wife lived without any income, may I entreat the public newspapers which are in the habit of extracting portions of the various periodical works now published, *not* to reprint the following exact narratives and calculations — of which I ought, as the discoverer (and at some expense, too), to have the benefit?” (419)

In this passage, Thackeray reveals that the novelist's task is not to explore human interiority or to create heroes, but to explain how to live “without any income.” His insight is itself a commodity. Thackeray begs the newspapers “*not* to reprint the following exact narratives and calculations,” or at least, not to do so without paying him. In *Vanity Fair*, everyone has something to sell.

One hundred and seventy-seven years after Thackeray began publishing *Vanity Fair* in serial, Charli XCX released an album called *Brat*. One of her lead singles “360” idolizes the great-great-great granddaughters of Rebecca Sharp. Girls who trade in aura, selfies, and ample charm, and dominate society for their fifteen seconds of fame. In the music video, Charli struts into a nondescript Italian restaurant and confronts a long banquet table full of her peers: Julia Fox, who turned a sixty-day relationship with Kanye West and a role in a Safdie brothers film into complete cultural domination; Chloe Cherry, a porn star cum actress noted for her big lips; and Gabriette, a model who looks like she's dead but posts wholesome videos of herself cooking on Instagram. The music cuts and the girls start berating Charli. Actress Rachel Sennott, who posted thottie selfies for years before succeeding on the silver screen, apologizes profusely, “We're so sorry because the thing is we really want you to do the song...” Gabriette explains: “Charli, we have to fulfill the prophecy of finding a new hot internet girl. That's literally why we're at dinner.” Chloe Cherry augurs, “Or else our kind will cease to exist.”

I wouldn't worry Chloe. Your kind has always been here and will never go away. If I brought Thackeray back from

the dead, gave him a glass of water, sat him in front of an iPhone, and showed him the “360” music video, I am sure that he would simply say, “Nice to see that little Becky Sharp is still thriving.”

Summer 2015: *Crime and Punishment* (1866) by Fyodor Dostoevsky

It was my first summer in New York City and absolutely the worst one ever. I had never experienced such sweatiness or loneliness. I sublet a room on Pulaski Street. My relatives assured me that my address was a good omen because none other than EGOT-winner Barbra Streisand had once lived on Pulaski Street. It was sure to be a fabulous summer! But my Broadway dreams didn't come true. I shared a wall with a young man who spent his days interning in the Financial District and his evenings experimenting with psychedelics. One time I tried to break myself out of my humidity ennui by breaking into his room and reading his drug journal. Maybe I was inspired by *Crime and Punishment*, the book I lugged with me everywhere that summer, the book I read on the G train platform, on the G train, on the beach, on my lunch break, and on the plane, when my parents finally relented and rescued me at the end of the summer. Though I was always an avid reader, this was the first time I understood the utility of reading in New York City and of the merits of the book as a shield from the heat, depravity, and crowds of the subway. I learned to dissociate by listening to Hilary Duff's new album *Breathe In. Breathe Out.* at full volume while keeping my eyes glued to the page. Like Raskolnikov, desperation compelled me to home-invade. My roommate was lucky I didn't have an ax.

Summer 2018: Kevin Kwan's *Crazy Rich Asians* Trilogy (2013-17) and Willa Cather's *The Prairie Trilogy* (1913-18)

Three years later, I was a wizened New Yorker and a fresh college graduate. I celebrated commencement by going through a gnarly breakup that left me holed up at my mom's house for weeks. Everything made me cry, so I deleted Twitter and sought levity on my new Kindle. This was the summer that the film adaptation of *Crazy Rich Asians* (2013) by Kevin Kwan was released. I decided that I simply *had* to read the book before the movie came out. I downloaded it on my Kindle and achieved a lifelong goal: reading while knitting. I sat on my mom's porch, propped my feet up on the railing, balanced my Kindle between my knees, and knit. I only put my needles down to click the “turn page” button. I devoured *Crazy Rich Asians* and its sequel *China Rich Girlfriend* (2015) in this manner.

Continued on next page

By the time I reached the third installment in the series, *Rich People Problems* (2017), my mood had stabilized enough that I lost interest and moved onto another trilogy of greater literary significance. I owned a beautiful box set of Willa Cather's collected works from a summer working at the Library of America, the most amazing publisher of authoritative editions of classic American writing. If you're going to read a great American novel and want to make sure you are reading the edition most faithful to the author's original intent, buy Library of America. Also, their books are printed on special paper that's less likely to turn yellow or become brittle with time! :) As my malaise lifted, I cracked open a volume of Cather's early novels. I read *O Pioneers!* (1913), *The Song of the Lark* (1915), and *My Ántonia* (1918) in rapid succession. Where Kwan distracted me with the upper echelons of Singapore's elite, Cather transported me to the American west. I lost myself in the vivid descriptions of the Nebraskan landscape, flirted with Manifest Destiny, and thought about what it means to be a woman who both *yearns* and feels a profound connection to the earth. I can't recommend these books enough.

Summer 2019: *Kristin Lavransdatter Trilogy* (1920-1922) by Sigrid Undset

There's something about summertime and trilogies... A year after my summer of breakups and Kwan-Cather, I was soaring through my pre-pandemic life and simply inhaled *Kristin Lavransdatter I: The Wreath* (1920), *Kristin Lavransdatter II: The Wife* (1921), and *Kristin Lavransdatter III: The Cross* (1922). Written by Nobel Prize winner Sigrid Undset, the epic series follows a girl named Kristin, datter of Lavrans, living and loving it up in medieval Norway. Over the course of three books, Kristin wrestles with sexual temptation, familial duty, and faith. She undertakes religious pilgrimages through the Norwegian wilderness. She sleeps in lofted beds of hay above long medieval banquet halls. She wears a virgin's wreath in her hair, even after she makes passionate love to a beautiful man. There are some interesting parallels between the trilogies of Cather (1873-1947) and Undset (1882-1949). Writing in the early twentieth century, one in the American West and the other in Norway, two women authors centered female protagonists in epic place-making novels. Kristin Lavransdatter, like Thea Kronborg in *The Song of the Lark*, seems to emerge organically from her home environment, as much a feature of the landscape as a towering mountain or a spindly tree. Their foibles and struggles become microcosms of larger cultural transformations. Kristin struggles to balance her sensual

nature with her Christian faith, while the talented Thea must sacrifice family and relationships to pursue her singing career. These are novels about women who can't have it all. Funny, because in the summer of 2019, I was convinced I *could* have it all. Jokes on you, Mabel.

Summer 2021: Everything Jane Austen has ever written

By the summer of 2021, I was decidedly in my mid-twenties and contemplating how little time I had left. It seemed time to tackle a long-postponed obligation: reading everything Jane Austen had ever written. I started with *Persuasion* (1817)—I identified with its spinster heroine Anne Elliot, since I was starting to feel rather over the hill. I moved onto *Emma* (1816), again with the hope of watching a film adaptation (I preferred Gwyneth Paltrow to Anya Taylor-Joy, but Alicia Silverstone in *Clueless* (1995) obviously takes the cake). Then I read *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and had the pleasure of reading my Penguin edition from 2005, the one with Keira Knightley on the cover. It's awesome to force your parents to buy you something and to only use it sixteen years later. I think I understood Elizabeth Bennet as a twenty-five year old more than I would have at the age of nine. What am I other than a judgemental firecracker liable to self-sabotage? I read *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) on a girls' trip to Lake Ontario later in the summer. My friends and I wore white cotton nightgowns, got bitten by countless bugs, and built huge bonfires. One time these Polish guys who had rented the house next door came over and threw lighter fluid onto our fire, much to our delight. We were practically the reincarnation of the Dashwood sisters. (Please note that I read *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Northanger Abbey* (1817), and *Lady Susan* (1794) in the summer of 2022).

Back to Summer 2024: What's next?

Now you may be wondering, what does the rest of the summer hold? What could that crazy girl be reading now? Post-*Vanity Fair*, I had the best time reading Laurie Colwin's *Happy All the Time* (1978). It was hilarious. My favorite part was when one of the WASP main characters attends a dinner party with his Jewish wife: "Misty wore on her face an expression that Vincent called 'the only Jew at the dinner table look.'" This is the 1970s version of Mandylion's *Other Things Being Equal*, buy it online or in stores now!

Thanks for reading!
Muir Beach forever.
XO,
Mabel

A Paul Smith July

by Laurie Piel

Every summer the College of Marin holds a “Music from Marin Summer Festival.” We are fortunate that Paul Smith keeps us on the schedule so we are treated to two wonderful programs every July compliments of the College of Marin and our CSD.

This year our first concert consisted of two pianos and 4 hands as Paul and Brad Schultz, the recently appointed music director at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Belvedere, joined forces to perform four outstanding works by American composers.

First, Leonard Bernstein & Stephen Sondheim were represented by compositions they created during their college days. If you listened carefully you could hear the beginnings of their future creative selves. These were followed by a Cole Porter ballet and Percy Grainger’s iconic arrangement of George Gershwin’s Porgy & Bess. It doesn’t get any more all American than that.

The following concert was two satirical political operas... what a sense of timing! Hans Gal, a noted Viennese composer, fled Austria in 1938 along with other Jews and found a home in London and Edinburgh. Believe it or not, during World War II, the British worried about possible Nazi leanings by this group of Jews that had fled the Nazis so they created an internment camp where they were housed. Hans Gal wrote a cabaret style revue for his fellow inmates in his internment camp called What a Life. Dimitri Shostakovich wrote Rayok an underground opera that presents the Soviet politburo at its most ludicrous. Never publicly performed during his lifetime, the secret, private living room performances were always a hot ticket. Both operas were funny and beautifully sung. At the end, Paul said that the College of Marin was discontinuing its opera department... so we may have been the last performance of the College of Marin opera department.

I have not as yet heard if there will be holiday performances later in the year... so stay tuned. We are grateful to Paul for keeping us on his radar, and we hope that we will continue be the beneficiaries of his talent.



Paul Smith and Brad Schultz, photo by Laurie Piel



College of Marin performing What a Life by Hans Gal, photos by Kristin Shannon

Goodbye Muir Beach *continued from page 14*

Mies van der Rohe was right when he famously proclaimed “less is more.”

Our new home, Enso Village, is a senior living residential community newly built among the lush vineyards of Sonoma County. Its striking agrarian style and Japanese flourishes reflect the community’s desire to promote healthy living, self-reflection and spiritual growth for adults 60 and over while striving to be more cooperative, sustainable and just than mainstream society. That’s a hard row to hoe but after living here for more than six months, we have seen the effort begin to grow fruit.

If meditation isn’t your morning cup of chai, there are many other paths to nurture body and soul. I’ve traded my skepticism about the benefits of yoga and am now addicted to a daily practice of “chair yoga” under the tutelage of an encouraging instructor. Available, but not on my daily menu, are classes on Tibetan Inner Yoga, Tai Chi, Pilates and Somatic Awareness. Mental stimulation is a high priority at Enso. Library books are organized by topic and distributed to alcoves with bookcases, comfortable chairs and reading lights. Puzzles appear wherever residents congregate. A “Lifelong Learning” committee arranges lectures and documentary films.

I’ve traded slogs over the hill to the Mill Valley Community Center’s swimming pool for a short walk down the hill to Enso’s luxurious “Ocean Pool” and hot tub. A massive retractable door at the end of the pool opens onto the community’s thriving kitchen garden. Rows of tomatoes, corn, squash and herbs are planted in

raised containers and are tended to by residents. The garden has a full-time manager who maintains a plot that supplies the Enso kitchen.

Quality food is a high priority at Enso’s two dining rooms – one with a seasonal menu that includes animal proteins and a second that is strictly vegetarian. Both eating areas have open kitchens and seating both inside and outdoor. They are popular places for long conversations.

What tops everything in this very comfortable cooperative living situation is the quality of the residents and their eager willingness to share accumulated knowledge and wisdom. Enso is full of doctors, lawyers, educators, engineers and retired residents of Green Gulch and San Francisco Zen Center. Great friendships have been formed over heirloom tomato burrata, grilled strip steak or the fresh catch of the day -- all served with generous portions of contemplation, concern and mindfulness.

So back to the relocated seeker without roots who asks: “In the garden of many practices, can the unplanted tree bear fruit?” It’s a koan that can’t be answered.

Postscript from Anne Jeschke:

The Jeschke’s, and dog Milo, have both visitors and trips coming up, but if you’re looking for free house or dog sitting we would be happy to see both friends and beach fog for a while at Muir Beach if our calendars match up. Email possible dates to Ajeschke@gmail.com.

Summer Solstice

by Laurie Piel

During the early half of the year Muir Beach Friends & Neighbors sponsored some fun new events like a documentary night and the Sound of Music Sing-a-Long. But, the first big community gathering was the Summer Solstice, a yearly celebration welcoming the longest day of the year. It’s the first opportunity for the community to mix, mingle and shake off the winter blues.

We dine on the fruits of our local taco master, Cuco Alcala, and his wife Consuelo. They set up shop on the deck and grill various meats with varying degrees of spice and provide many add-ons to complement the basic taco...many of which are vegetarian. We provide non-alcoholic drink options but if you want anything else, it’s BYOB. You’d be surprised at the many options people bring to share. If sweets are your thing, then you need to bring it as well. We are usually graced with many desserts including Chris Gove’s famous chocolate cake and home-made whipped cream.

This year we danced to the Muir Beach Grass Band. They serenaded us during dinner and, after a break to grab something to eat, they pulled out a whole new set of fun to dance to numbers. The members of the band are: Bob Bowyer, Renee Boeche, Bryce Bowyer, Robin Terra, Mark Pandapas, Paul Tollesfson, Garrett Laurence, and John Stebner.

Next year come and join us to welcome the sun.
See you there!

Bistro's NATO Summit *Submitted by Beth Nelson*



Buck Moon Hikers *Photo by Nikki Clark*



Welcome Hazel Elizabeth

Long-time Muir Beachers Deb McDonald and Ed Hyman proudly share the news of the birth of their grandchild Hazel Elizabeth on July 8th in Minneapolis. Her dad, native Muir Beacher Cam McDonald-Hyman is an assistant professor of Immunology, Oncology, Hematology and Hematopoietic Transplant at the University of Minnesota School of Medicine, and her mom Elizabeth Jarrett is a pediatric hospitalist at the University's Children's Hospital. Hazel has an older sister, Eloise Charlotte who will be 7 in September, and an older brother, Graham Duncan, who will be 3 in September. The family resides in Roseville, just adjacent to St. Paul.

– Ed Hyman



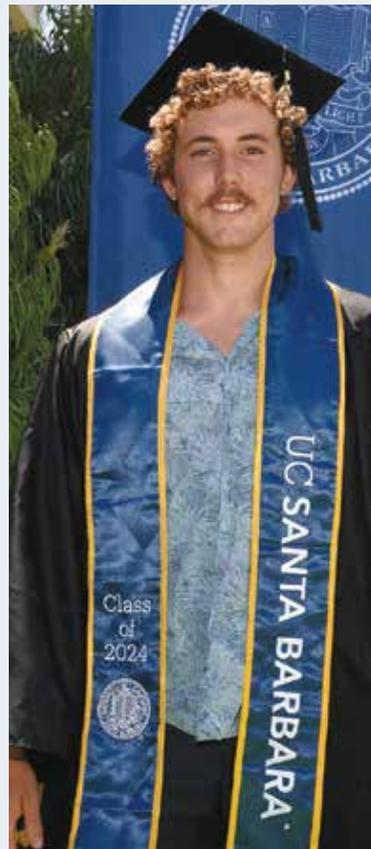
Eloise, Cam, Graham and baby Hazel

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES



Congratulations to Jackson Moore! University of California, Santa Barbara Graduate | Class of 2024 Environmental Studies, with Outstanding Academic Achievement honors

– Denise and Aran



Congratulations to, Dylan Freebairn-Smith! University of California, Santa Barbara B.A. Environmental Studies w/ Geography focus Dylan is the grandson of Martha deBarros.

– Cindy and Sutton

Many congratulations to Christian Van Spyk Bender, who graduated on May 4th, Summa Cum Laude, from Northeastern University with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering as well as a minor in Math. Christian moved to Muir Beach when he was only 5 months old and spent 4 years on the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department. While at Northeastern University in Boston, he studied in Greece, fought through the pandemic chaos during his freshman and sophomore year,

worked as an electrical design engineer in Boston on an internship, and traveled to Copenhagen twice for internships in both hardware and camera development for growth stage companies. He is currently taking the summer off while he works on a startup idea with a venture capital company (yes, that is what he considers taking time off!) before he starts looking at full time job opportunities in the U.S. and abroad. Needless to say, his parents are very proud of him and thrilled to have him home in Muir Beach for as long as they can.

– Suzanne Bender-Van Spyk, photo by Adrianna Bender

