

BEACHCOMBER

SINCE 1946



MUIR BEACH Holiday Arts Fair

December 7th and 8th, 2024 • Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm • Sunday, 10 am to 4 pm

By Laurie Piel – here's a sneak peak at some of the artisans.

RETURNING RESIDENTS & FAMILY



Debra Allen, our local Realtor, is also a crafter. She works mostly with paper and driftwood. She'll be selling her sassy decoupage driftwood signs, paper garlands, beach & snow themed ornaments, driftwood photo frames (pictured) and her clever gift tags. deballen.com & muirbeach.com



Corbits' crêpes and coffee. Come enjoy sweet and savory crepes made by local aspiring baker, 12-year old Belle Corbit. Sweet options will include Nutella with berries (shown),

along with a savory selection including ham & cheese, and, of course, a vegetarian option. Coffee, espresso, and cappuccino will be made to order by barista-in-training Kasey Corbit.



Craig Eichenbaum learned stone lithography from Kenji Nanao at Cal State Hayward from 1973-1980. In 1980 he acquired a litho press, litho stones and all materials and tools integral to the lithographic process. His art has been created through this process. He along

with his wife Pamela has been a resident of Muir Beach for the past 18 years.



Hilary Gross was born and raised in Muir Beach, now married to a Transylvania, Romanian, she discovered it is common in Transylvania for traditional medicine to be accompanied by herbal remedies. So, she developed

a line of stress-busting floral-embellished essential oil aromatherapy candles and herbal heating/cooling wraps for weary bones. She is also an animal chiropractor and has developed several functional accessories, treats, and toys for your beloved fur-babies. For more information, please visit: bucurabio.com



Vanessa, Bea & Evie Littler, will be back with the family's fabulous chutneys and jams.



Jennifer Terra is excited to be back at the Holiday Fair and this year she's expanded her creative side to tie dye and stencil art clothing. Jennifer is also a mother, junior high school teacher, Master Reiki practitioner, and nationally recognized diversity training educator. She draws

upon these diverse aspects of her life from spirituality to sports when creating her designs.



Robin Terra is a Muir Beach artist and designer. Her Free Verse Ceramics are handmade clay plates, jewelry and other objects that explore the beauty of imperfection @freeverseceramics



Nina Vincent learned to crochet in a mountain village in Guatemala in the mid 80's from a young Mayan boy. She turned crocheted hand bags into colorful hats and has been making them ever since.

Recently Nina has been playing with clay and has enjoyed experimenting with marbling and other artsy imperfect styles. Nina is a long time Muir Beach resident and loves her community and events that bring people and their interests together in joyous, playful, heart-centered settings.

Continued on page 12

Muir Beach Holiday Arts Fair

Continued from page 2

The preparations for our annual holiday arts fair (<https://www.muirbeachartsfair.com>) held on the first weekend in December (December 7th & 8th) are in full swing. Everyone had a great time last year thanks to the many Muir Beachers who offered their endeavors for sale and the tireless volunteers who made it all happen. We have lots of new Muir Beachers and many of them will be joining us this year. We have all generations represented and everything from espresso & crêpes, cutting boards and clothing to ornaments for the tree and body, some even made from corn, a must see!

For the first time since our loss of Suzanne Miller, we will be decorating the Center for the fair. What we do not have are decorations. We are looking specifically for large hanging stars or any other larger things that can be hung from the rafters. Currently decoration days are Wednesday, Dec. 4th & Thursday, Dec., 5th. If anyone would like to donate and/or decorate please text or call me at 415/595-7411 or send me an email to muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com.

Compliments of Debra Allen our flyers are printed in both letter size and quarter size, and we are looking for folks to distribute them. We're hoping to get them out to your favorite restaurant or store front window, and the smaller one's to sit on the counter of your doctor or dentist's office or other place with a front desk. If you can be of help please text me at 415/595-7411 or email me at muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com.

Volunteering to work a shift helps us immensely and offers the added opportunity to meet your neighbors... I would say especially our newcomers to the beach, but it's amazing how

many people don't know the folks around the corner or those living on either lower or upper beach. It's a great way to bridge the gap!

We will be doing an all donation kitchen again this year. Last year was an overload of deliciousness, so this year we're going to rethink our needs. Here is the link to donate food to the kitchen: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A084CA9A922ABFE3-52873681-arts> or you can contact Sarah Marshank directly — our kitchen coordinator this year — 541-973-9397, sarahmarshank@gmail.com, 90 Sunset.

Volunteering is almost as much fun as buying great gifts for friends (and yourself)... and we were a little short last year so the SignUpGenious link to volunteer is already up. Please give a little of your time, remember all of the profits from the kitchen and the beverage bar go directly to the CSD as a line item **specifically** for community events. This money helps fund events like the summer and winter solstices, Day of the Dead, the Kids Halloween Party, concerts and other events all year long. Here is the link to volunteer:

[https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A084CA9A922ABFE3-52871139-mbholiday#/
/](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A084CA9A922ABFE3-52871139-mbholiday#/)

The *Beachcomber*, our neighborhood news, is published quarterly by and for residents, friends, family and former residents of Muir Beach. Published since 1946 (on and off), circulation 170 (more or less).

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If you cannot volunteer your time (or even if you can) a financial donation is always a good thing! The fair has expenses such as our domain name, Dropbox, for those working on publicity, as well as the specific needs for the annual event...anything to help defray those costs is so helpful. To donate funds make a check out to me, Laurie Piel, and drop it in my mailbox at 9 Starbuck or hand it to me at the fair... cash is also accepted. I'll be turning to our stalwart regulars as well looking for help.

The fair serves many purposes. As mentioned, the profits are donated to the community coffers as a line item for community events. But equally important is the opportunity for our creative artisans, young and old, to sell their work and make some extra spending money for the holidays... and it's a great way to get involved in the community and meet your neighbors. There are more surprises and artists not yet confirmed...so, c'mon down... you don't want to miss the fun of finding gifts for your friends and family as well as the treasure you never knew you needed. I look forward to seeing you there!

With that, please meet your 2024 artists featured on page 2, and 12-14.

— Laurie Piel

Contribute your essays, poems, stories, photos, artwork, announcements, reviews – anything that celebrates Muir Beachers and our community. 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 except for readability and general appearance.

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ON THE COVER

Marin Headlands

9" x 12" watercolor

Skye Collier

Skye grew up in Muir Beach and lives on Sunset Way.

Building Community: Building the Community Center

Submitted by Ernst Karel and Gerry Pearlman



Muir Beach Community Center, reprinted from Pacific Sun 1978

The Community Center was literally built by the community. Part of the adventure was documented in a one-hour video, shot by Bill Sward (uncle of Jes) using a Sony Portapak video system, and produced by Gerry Pearlman. Entitled “Building Community: Building the Community Center”, the video features many of the friends and neighbors who participated in the “Great Gravel Movement,” including (in order of appearance):

Bill Sward (John John’s brother), Judith Yamamoto, Gerry Pearlman, Click Pickens, Rachael Knox, Sharon Pickens, Jane Colten, Peter Smith (Les Smith’s son), Laurie Smith, Dr. Scott, Bryce Browning, Malcom Litwiller, Supervisor Gary Giacomini, Marilyn Laatsch, the Onorato kids, Outi Onorato, Miriam Smith, Shelley Dunigan, Kathy Sward, Larry Yamamoto, Gary Smith, Terry Onorato, Bill Malick, Bill Hybert,

Balfour family, Richard Beckman, Robin Collier, Jennifer Smith (Gary Smith’s daughter), Nancy Knox, John John Sward, Elizabeth Pickens, André Pessis of Andre’s All-Stars, Harvey Pearlman, Mike Moore, Kim, Janet Stump, Larry Stump, Mary Collier, Rowan, Stump, Lisa Moore, Tony Onorato, Steve, Sean Onorato, Ricky Pickens, Jes Sward, Barbara Gillespie, Tyler Knox, Idgi Remington, Buttress, Ted Elliot, Aran Collier, Doris Clark, Dave Gillespie, Julian Knox, Gail Falls and more!

The video, with restored sound, will be presented at the Community Center on Friday, January 17, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Mark your calendars! Also on the program will be two recently scanned reels of 16mm film footage, also shot by Bill Sward, of the last days of the legendary Tavern, from the late 1960s.

Story, and photos reprinted from Pacific Sun 1978, continued on next page.

Barn Raising

Reprinted from *Pacific Sun*, Week of June 30-July 6, 1978

By Joanne Williams

Muir Beach. The mist hangs low and the ocean is showing its jaws. Tall gray waves bite the beach and a brisk wind is keeping residents close to home. Spirits are high, though, as neighbors gather on the deck of Richard Beckman's house and talk about the weekend. There'll be an old-fashioned barn raising, of sorts, the last of the weekend work parties, and by sundown Sunday, the Muir Beach Community Center will be all but finished.

For a long time, Muir Beach was just a wide place in the road at the foot of Green Gulch Ranch. There were retired persons, and then an invasion of ex-flower people. It had a compliment of dope dealers, but they have been replaced by consciousness raisers who have made it — people like Esalen's Will Schutz who lives in a grand circular house of redwood, and others who are just getting by. There's been an infusion of talent like architect Beckman, and the community seems stable now, although the exact population is uncertain.

"There are about 135 water connections," Beckman is saying, "and if you estimate four people to a household that would give you..."

"What about the family with 12 children?" asks Sharon Pickens, a freckle-faced brunette in Muir Beach mufti — jeans, Birkenstocks and a loose shirt.

"They're moving," someone volunteers.

The conversation is agreeable, with an undertone of excitement. Plans for a celebration, maybe on July 4, maybe the night before, are in the organizing stage. No one seems sure what band will play, but a couple of them live at the beach. Will the electricity be turned on?

"It will," says Gerry Pearlman, a sun-tanned political theorist turned carpenter. Pearlman built his own two-story half-circle home at Muir Beach and became the moving force behind the new \$100,000 community building that sits somewhat alone, bare of landscaping, on a hill above Sunset Way.

Pearlman was the grantsman — filling out the endless forms, writing proposals, making trips to Civic Center to inch each link of the money chain closer together. First there was \$2222 seed money from the Muir Beach Quilting Bee, a group that made and sold quilts to benefit the building program. Then \$2800 from the Community Services District (of which Pearlman was once a member), donor of the land. Then there was the first \$10,000 community development grant from HUD (Housing and Urban Development). That was five or six years ago. At the same time, residents were clearing the land, working as volunteers or near volunteers for \$4 an hour. And the labor was hard.

The Great Gravel Movement is recollected with humor and reminders of sore muscles, of the many hands it took, the bucketloads to move forty tons of gravel from here to there for the septic system. Three full weekends with forty people a day, Pearlman remembers. They were paid a total of \$3300, said Pickens, who keeps the financial reports for the center. The site made trucking impossible, and anyway, there was no road.

The project was stalled at the foundation until last year, when Pearlman, whose energy seems to revive when it's needed most, finally cajoled a second HUD community block grant, and then more. With one grant and another the community finally raised \$100,000, mostly from federal sources. It was far higher than the \$20,000 residents originally estimated, far more than they wanted to spend. But the center meets federal regulations, including a \$16,000 ramp to allow

access by the elderly and handicapped.

Inside the barnlike building the structure is mostly new fir. "We wanted used redwood but it became unavailable from our source," explained Beckman, a bearded graying man in his forties. "Anyway, the government usually specifies new materials."

Beckman was tapped four years ago at a beach picnic, the kind that has become a Muir Beach tribal ethic, when Pearlman (who brought Marin Community Video to the county and now serves on the



Gerry Pearlman

state Public Broadcasting Commission) said to him, "Why don't you donate your services to design the community center?" And so Beckman did.

"There has been so much help from everyone out here," Pickens adds. Her husband is general manager of the CSD. "When one person was needed to carry the project along someone would appear. When we needed a crowd scene we got that." Pickens said the Zen Center just up the road has been a great support politically, and as a community "we are very close," she said.

The idea for the center germinated about six years ago. One day after the state took over Muir Beach, Pearlman came home to find a beautiful old building the community had used had been razed. There was no place to meet. He asked the Community Services District to commit the land and the building took shape in their minds. It was to be a conch shell. But the design proved uneconomical and later was scratched for a more practical and roomy barn, with high rafters and many windows.

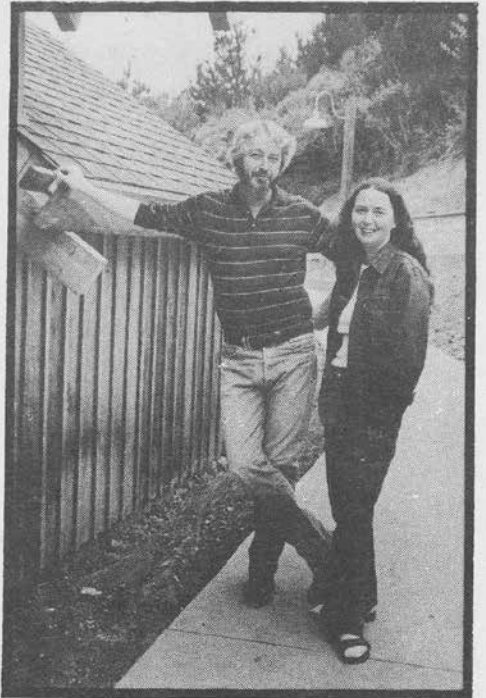
BACK AT HIS HOUSE, Pearlman, wearing a handknit sweater the deep-sea blue of his eyes, sits on a floor pillow and looks over the file he's accumulated. "HUD tried to deny our application on the grounds we didn't have enough low and moderate income residents. We proved we did," he said. "Then they

couldn't accept the fact that we would be able to accomplish what we stated in our application for the amount of money requested."

The cost did escalate, in fact, what with time and federal regulations, adding details the CSD hadn't originally planned. But many good things happened, Pearlman said. Thousands of hours of volunteer labor have knit the community together. Hands that didn't hammer brought food, donated the beer — an essential lubricant in endeavors of this nature, at least from the stories that circulate. The last heavy labor — an agreement that went with the grants — goes to work this weekend. Landscaping and the fireplace will have to wait.

Now that it's mostly over, Pearlman is on to other things. He has just received a \$10,000 grant from the Economic Development Administration to make a feasibility study for a windmill to generate back-up electricity for Muir Beach. The 100-foot tower with its 70-foot blades will rise on land owned by the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. It will be the first on the West Coast.

"But that is another story," says Pearlman, who can be counted on to tell it at the right time.



Richard Beckman and Sharon Pickens

Continued on next page

Muir Beach Community Center
Financial Report

To date a total of \$14,982 has been spent on the Community Center. This sum has been derived from the following sources:

-Quilting Bee	\$2,222.68
-Community Services District	2759.42
-H.U.D. Development Grant	10,000.

All of this money has been used for labor and materials to complete the foundation and septic tank system. All invoices for the material and hours of labor are on file with Sharon Pickens. Expenditures from the \$10,000 H.U.D. grant are as follows:

-Concrete	\$3816.11
-Concrete Pumpers	795.
-Labor	4388.04
-Materials	1000.35

In addition to the work completed with these funds, a great deal of preliminary work was done on a volunteer basis by members of the community:

- Clearing the site: 2 days, 75 people, working 3 hours each at \$4.00 per hour = \$900.
- Preparing the site: Digging trenches, grading, footings, septic tank for 2 days with 60 people averaging 3 hours per person at \$4.00 an hour = \$720.
- Great gravel movement: 40 tons plus lumber and steel to the site for three full weekends (7 days) with 40 people a day averaging 3 hours each at \$4.00 an hour = \$3360.
- First foundation forms & first concrete pour: (steel tying, digging, removal of forms) 10 days, 80 people averaging 5 hours at \$4.00 an hour = \$1600.

These figures represent a conservative estimate of actual physical labor donated by the community. If the \$4.00 hourly rate is accepted, the total value of on-site volunteer labor equals \$6580.

In addition to this physical labor a good deal more community input was volunteered by various members of the building committee in organizing work parties, general planning, applying for and securing permits, and appearing at hearings at the Civic Center in San Rafael. Over the past several years at least 20 meetings have taken place with 5 people averaging 3 hours per meeting at \$75. per meeting. This comes to \$1500 which is a conservative estimate. Add on another \$5000. for architect's fees and time spent on grant applications. We can then estimate conservatively that the total value of community volunteer labor to be:

\$13,080

Muir Beach Community Center, 1978 Financial Report

I think everyone who has contributed to this process should feel pretty good. It has been a good five or six years since we first started thinking about the Community Center. The first set of plans were drawn up by Tom Murphy. It was a brilliant design inspired by the symmetry of the conch shell but the \$60,000 we estimated it would cost was considered too steep at the time. Nothing much happened for several years. Then about two years ago Richard Beckman volunteered his services and we were off. Frustrations were offset by high spirits at the early work parties and the magnificent achievement of the great gravel movement. There is still some way to go but with any luck this year may be the one that witnesses the first use of the Community Center.

Gerry Pearlman
Sharon Pickens
Richard Beckman
Janet Stump

Local Kale Boycott Goes Viral

Kale farmers now struggling with unsold crops...
Nutritional deficiencies developing in the populace at a never-before-seen rate



Fire Chief Chris Gove, warding off the kale with his EpiPen at the community center Friends and Neighbors kale recipe contest. Story and photo by Beth Begault

The Tavern

By Charlie Stump

The Tavern was located below Pacific Way near where the current beach parking lot has been constructed. In the 1950's and early 1960's, it served as a restaurant and makeshift market. This was where my mother made basic food purchases to tide the family over between trips to Mill Valley for her sizable grocery shopping. Built by Bello Beach (name before "Muir Beach") founder Antonio Bello, the Tavern served as a watering hole and community gathering place. Pictures from the 1940's show Coca-Cola signs on the building. Beer and alcohol were available. My dad told me he had heard that at one time the Tavern had sported a bowling alley. The single story structure situated next to the original parking lot below Pacific Way was a pretty good size - approximately five thousand square feet. Painted white, it had large windows facing both the lagoon and beach. The wooden floors inside the Tavern were worn gray and spongy from years of community use; along the baseboards the floor retained some finish, but it was speckled and thinning. The bathrooms were in the back of the north side of the building, near the fetid septic tank and failing leach field. The deck out front offered wooden benches, chairs, tables with clear glass ashtrays, and stairs that led down to a concrete walkway and crabgrass lawn.

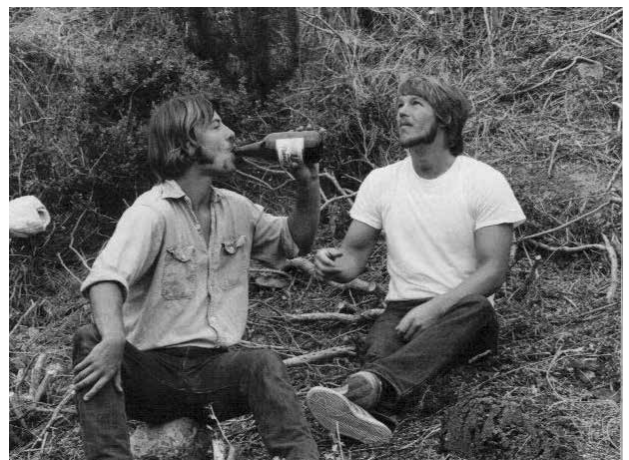
On occasion in the early 1960's, my family dined out at the Tavern. It was there that I was introduced to eggplant. I wouldn't eat it, but mom raved about it between large savory bites. There's a good possibility that the eggplant came from a local garden because vegetables, milk, eggs, chickens, rabbits, and other foods were produced and sold by Muir Beach residents, particularly the Portugueses families such as the Souzas, Machados, Pontes, Leals, Mellos, Brazils and Rodrigueses. The simmering eggplants' garlic aroma mixed with the Tavern's musty odor was inviting and welcoming. We sat at a wobbly round table with a white table cloth next to one of the large, thick-glassed windows facing the lagoon. In the center of the table sat a squat, dark green Chianti wine bottle with thin, brown, fishing net twine woven around its base. The bottle held a lit red candle that dribbled hot wax onto the twine. It was warm inside the Tavern, comfortable. Outside, the lagoon was still as waves rolled onto the beach.

Shortly thereafter, the restaurant at the Tavern went by the wayside. But a snackbar opened that for a few years was a popular attraction for beachgoers and tourists, as well as locals. On late summer days, where Aran had returned from Taos, he, Mike and I bought French fries, Big Hunk and Mars candy bars, softy cones, and toy balsa wood airplanes with twisted, red rubber band-powered propellers.

Another Tavern related event was watching the softball games on the pickleweed area between the Tavern lawn and the lagoon. The hippies moved the driftwood and debris that had washed up in the winter to fashion a softball diamond for their highly charged games. They played with passion and laughter and I doubt they kept score. It always looked like fun.

With the hippies' arrival in the mid 60's, the Tavern was transformed into a venue for live music and dancing. Bands including the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Clover, Flying Circus, Jefferson Airplane, and Creedence Clearwater Revival blared out their rock tunes. We were too young to go inside, but Aran and I hung out on the deck, listening to the music and peering through the steamed-up windows at the crowd grooving on the dance floor.

By the late 1960's, a group of the notorious motorcycle gang, Gypsy Jokers, holed up inside the vacant Tavern without the permission of the owners and used it as a party pad until the Sheriff forced them out. Soon thereafter, with support of the community, the State of California assumed control of the beach and it became a State Park. But because of its dilapidated condition - to the dismay of some residents who wanted it preserved as an historic landmark or to function as a community center - the old Tavern was demolished in 1970.



Charlie with his brother Larry, photo by Steve Hatch 1975 (2)

A Muir Beach Wedding, Blessed by Grandmother Willow

By Pamela Tom Swarts

In Disney's Pocahontas animated film (1995), Grandmother Willow is not only a tree, she's an integral character. Grandmother Willow speaks and provides spiritual wisdom to Pocahontas.

When Pocahontas asks what her path should be, Grandmother Willow sings, "Listen with your heart. You will understand."

Our daughter, Emily, didn't really relate to Disney princesses, but she loved Pocahontas. As a little girl, she lived in her Pocahontas dress and wore her hair in braids. We still have the little dress, 27 years later. At the same time, our son, Douglas, dressed up as a cowboy. One of their favorite after school activities with Jeff aka Mr. Mom: making hunting bows and cedar arrows "en costume." And when we went to Disneyland, Emily finally got to meet Pocahontas—and her raccoon friend, Meeko—in person.

But it was more than meeting her hero. Pocahontas' love and respect for nature and Mother Earth deeply influenced Emily. While working at Google, she became a certified herbalist. Pretty soon she was foraging for herbs and concocting salves, tinctures, including recommending various herbs to heal Jeff's ailments. I suppose it shouldn't have been surprising as her great-grandfather and his father were both Chinese herbalists.

Listening to Her Heart

Do we encourage our children to listen to their hearts? Or do we want them to have a secure job? Despite working at Google for more than eight years, Emily wanted to quit her job as a user experience (UX) program manager and become a

floral designer. She had already taken a mini sabbatical to attend FlowerSchool New York. Jeff and I were concerned. If she quit her tech job, how would she afford rent, food, etc.? Then her boyfriend, Tyler, told me, "Her tech job is sucking the soul out of her." That's when I knew that her heart had sounded an alarm, and that she had heard it loud and clear. That's also when I knew that if he supported her this way, he really loves her.

Making this big career move meant she was continuing on her personal path with intent. It made me ponder my own path. As a young woman, I was less bold. Maybe it was simply a sign of the times. I followed my passion to become a journalist; however, I didn't think about living an intentional life. Many of us from the Boomer generation followed a predetermined linear plan that instructed us what to do next. My daughter enlightened me. Funny how we learn from our children.

In 2023, Emily founded Fleurvoyant, a floral-botanical design studio in New York for corporate events, weddings, and special gifts. She also assists clients in California and Hawaii.

Celebrating Love at Muir Beach

Naturally, Emily and her crew created all of the bouquets and floral decor for her wedding and welcome dinner. She set up a "Flower Camp" in our front yard for three days. The cool, damp Muir Beach air cooperated, keeping the arrangements fresh. One night, Jeff slept outside on the ground to guard the flowers from hungry deer.

"Flowers are like candy to deer," said Jeff.

Emily always remembered the giant willow tree in Muir Beach. Willow trees symbolize fertility and new life. "With a long history of symbolism, the willow has deep roots with spirituality and psychic ability with specific links to the lunar realm. The strong association with the moon comes from the trees' love for water," according to Tree2MyDoor.

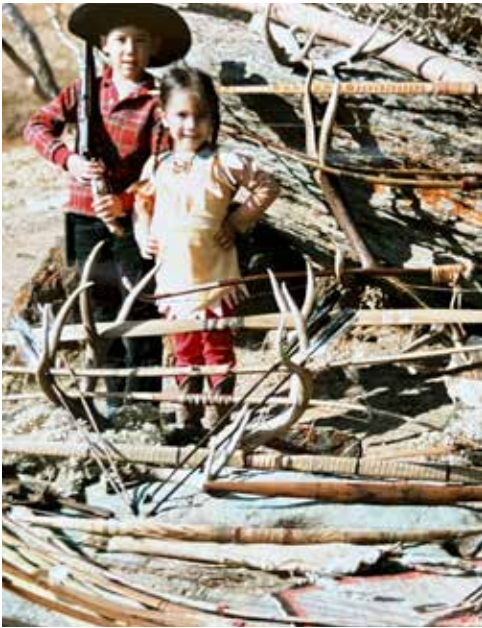
Getting married under the canopy of a real life Grandmother Willow blessed the ceremony with beauty and magic. Truly, a fairy tale wedding!

After taking "first look" photos at the Muir Beach Overlook, Emily Swarts and Tyler Swiggett were married on August 2, 2024 at a private home—under Grandmother Willow, newly trimmed and coiffed by Jeff—before 80 friends and family members. When guests arrived, they were invited to enjoy a glass of refreshing ginger tea from Front Porch Farm in Healdsburg, and to adorn themselves with hair combs and boutonnieres laced with soft white baby's breath. Emily wanted her loved ones to feel a part of the experience, and not merely attending guests.

Emily and Tyler met online two years ago and exchanged long distance love letters for several months until meeting in person for the first time in Kauai. No emails. Instead, they took photos of their handwritten letters and sent the photos to each other. When they finally met face to face, they already knew each other. They were already in love. At the wedding ceremony, Emily and Tyler continued the tradition.

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page



Their vows read like personal love letters and everyone was teary-eyed, including Jeff.

The reception was held at The Pelican Inn. A big thank you to the inn's event coordinator, Andrea Papadopulos, who executed Emily's vision perfectly. Emily's floral team decorated the long, rectangular wedding cake by Elisa Sunga with fresh flowers. It was almost too beautiful to slice. Inside, half lemon poppyseed and half carrot cake.

And a very special thank you to our dear Muir Beach friends Jon Rauh and Danny Hobson, and Ian and Brittany Claudius, for providing the perfect place for Emily and Tyler to say, "I do."

Tyler is a Director at Hines, a global real estate developer and investment manager. A week before the wedding, he and Emily packed up all of their belongings and moved from their apartment in New York's West Village. They will create their new home in Los Angeles. Undoubtedly, they will return to Muir Beach time and time again to visit us—and give homage to Grandmother Willow.

Emily and Tyler's story is published in the Style Section of the August 18, 2024 Sunday New York Times.

Wedding photos by Annie Morgan Photography



The Muir Beach Disaster Council Shines Some Critical Light Again

Submitted by Stephen Somers

On Sunday morning October 20th, the Muir Beach Disaster Council (MBDC) took an enthusiastic next step in helping community members prepare for a natural disaster. Back on April 21st, 2024 our MBDC leader, Kerry Wynn led a discussion of how to pack a GoBag in case local authorities recommend an immediate evacuation of the community.

This month's presentation focused entirely upon the equally important need for us all to prepare a StayBox in case a large scale disaster strikes that makes it impossible for us to leave the community (this could be an earthquake). Were that to happen, we could all be stranded for days without access to heat, gas, electricity, cell service, running water, food, medications, and other essentials.

Kerry works with a group of MBDC liaisons each of whom are responsible for one of the 15 pods that blanket the whole community. You should get to know your MBDC liaisons



MBDC Leader, Kerry Wynn, photo by Sarah Nesbitt



and you can get their contacts from her at kerrywynn2@gmail.com. The liaisons are sources of information for you and will also serve as links to Kerry and the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department in case of a disaster. Kerry and her colleagues presented an array of StayBox options that can be purchased on line and elsewhere. Their contents range from the obvious—flashlights, water and food—to less obvious items like hammers, hand sanitizers, and other hardware (see a full list below from ReadyMarin). A particularly noteworthy piece of information for me was how much water each of us needs - a minimum of 1 gallon per day.

StayBox Contents

(from ReadyMarin):

- Water – 1 gallon per person per day
- Non-perishable food with pop-top lids
- First aid kit and manual
- Flashlight or head lamp, batteries
- Fire extinguisher
- Warm clothes and sturdy shoes
- Portable toilet/bucket and trash bags
- Hand sanitizer and baby wipes
- Radio – battery, solar or hand crank
- Sleeping bags, blankets
- Tools – wrench, duck tape, hammer, gloves
- Camping supplies, tent, cooking stove
- Rope, bungee cords, scissors, tarp

There is a lot for us all to absorb in regards to both the GoBag and the StayBox, so we recommend that you check out MBDC Liaison Sarah Nesbitt's very informative article on GoBags in the May 2024 Beachcomber. You can also get more information, at www.ReadyMarin.org and we recommend that you pay attention to the AlertMarin Emergency Notification System.

Thanks for reading this and know that Kerry and her band of MBDC Liaisons will continue to keep you posted.

Photos by Denise Lamott



Kerry Wynn addressing the crowd

Join in on the Fun!

Submitted by Amy Utstein

The Muir Beach Friends and Neighbors group has been bringing the Muir Beach community together for many years. We organize a few events each year - from the welcome events for new neighbors to our first ever Sing-Along movie night last year. We also sponsor documentary film screenings as well as the weekly Cafe-Bistro on Mondays, and we are looking for neighbors interested in helping us.

Do you have an idea for a fun event to bring the community together? Do you want to provide a helping hand to make sure these sorts of events can continue to happen? There's room for everyone's ideas! We meet once a month from 10-11 on the third Saturday of the month at the community center, and it's a pretty light lift that makes a big difference in MB.

Check out some of the photos below to get a sense of what we do and if you have any questions or would like to join us in planning our next event, please reach out to Amy Utstein, at amyutstein@gmail.com



Photos by Lucky Shannon



*Fun around the Bistro Coffee Bar,
photo by Laurie Piel*

Bistro Needs Help

By Laurie Piel

We're looking for a few people who would like to commit to working one Monday morning a month. Bistro is a relaxed gathering of folks who are interested in getting to know their neighbors a little better and good conversation on lots of topics. It's a very basic version of a coffee bar with Bob's doughnuts and bagels & lox.

It's not a lot of work and there is plenty of time to join the conversations. Whoever volunteers will never have to be there alone. They will be partnered with either Harvey or myself.

Bistro runs for 2 hours from 10am to 12noon with set up starting around 9:15am. Over the course of the 2 hours we usually have between 6 and 12 folks so it's not a frenzied time behind the counter. Clean up takes less than half an hour.

It's a volunteer job but in exchange breakfast is on the house.

It's an opportunity to meet some of your neighbors and it literally brings Upper & Lower Beach to the same table in a more intimate setting than one of the big events.

If you're interested or would like more information please call/text or email me at: 415/595-7411 or clarkpiel1@gmail.com.

Come and enjoy your neighbors and a cuppa coffee or tea.

Muir Beach Holiday Arts Fair Artists *continued from page 2*

NEW RESIDENTS & FAMILY



April Camlin is a visual artist who recently completed her MFA in the Art Studio program at UC Davis. She is currently living in Muir Beach while attending a year-long Graduate Fellowship at the Headlands Center for the Arts. Her work honors the cycles of life and death through the transformation of scavenged and repurposed materials into new forms.



Alexandra Frazer. My great nephew, Vincent Piazza, is a long time artist at the fair. I'm looking forward to sharing the experience of the Muir Beach Arts Fair with him. Throughout my life dogs and cats have been my best friends, companions, advisers and confidants. They remind me to stretch, exercise, laugh, and to observe and enjoy the day. My art is a pay forward for all their love and attention.



Skye Collier is a water color artist whose paintings mainly focus on Muir Beach and the surrounding natural areas, including many from the trails of Mount Tam. Her painting style is done in an impressionistic way, and they are all plein air paintings, meaning they are painted on location and not from photos. Growing up in Muir Beach has given Skye a deep appreciation for the natural beauty there. She attempts to capture that beauty in her paintings and hopes to showcase how she feels about the moments in these spaces.



Austin Moore is a junior at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo studying landscape architecture. Growing up in Muir Beach, including being a Junior MB Volunteer Fireman, inspires his watercolors of his home town and Marin. Currently, he balances his full-time studies with his passion for enjoying the beauty of the California Central Coast.



Vinja Perretto is a student at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, pursuing a degree in landscape architecture. Growing up in San Diego, she developed a strong passion for the arts, earning several awards during her high school years. Vinja creates unique ceramic creations including planters inspired by human and animal forms. Her artistic vision blends creativity with functionality reflecting her love for both design and nature.



Lissa Rankin, MD is a 16 year Muir Beach local whose art has been shown in some of the finest hotels, museums and galleries around the world. She works in encaustic art. Encaustic painters paint with pigmented beeswax, applied in molten form to wood panels and burned in archivally with blow torches and heat guns. It's one of the most beautiful art mediums and, as the ancient Greeks have proven, encaustic paintings can last thousands of years without losing their luminosity. If you are interested in learning more about it, you can find her textbook, *Encaustic Art* at Random House. She looks forward to following in the footsteps of her daughter, Mira, who has participated in the fair for many years, but who is currently in Portugal.

RETURNING NON-RESIDENTS



Katy Biller weaves baskets from pine needles using colored linen threads. She enhances her one of a kind baskets with beads, feathers and stones or wood bases. Her baskets are many different sizes and shapes. (Sunday only)



Jie Lee Grady. I first studied design in north China, where I was born. Then I spent seven years in Tokyo learning the language so I could attend the well-known Fashion Institute of Japan. After graduating, I worked for an international company that brought me to New York where I attended the Fashion Institute of Technology. For me, I discovered that bringing together bits of all of the cultures I've studied allows me to create a complete outfit that makes you ask... is this from Japan or France? But it's just from me. Designing clothes has been a passion all my life.



Ryan Kunkel is a senior at Tamalpais High School. The ability to think of something in my head and bring it into reality is really fascinating to me and 3D printing is my medium of choice. Some of the things I've created are 3D ornaments of Mount Tam that are accurate to its surface, Snow Globes of Mount Tam made with a similar approach and miniaturized Lake Tahoes... minus the water! These all make great gifts to outdoors people as well as fabulous paper weights.

Continued on next page

December 7th and 8th, 2024 • Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm • Sunday, 10 am to 4 pm

RETURNING NON-RESIDENTS



Nya Van Leuvan. I began my interest in the alchemical art of transforming raw materials into wearable works of art in college when I found art deeply calms my mind. Through my company, Opulent Ore, I make both jewelry for everyday wear and heirloom quality pieces to be passed on through generations. In 2013, when I learned the art of lost wax casting, my creative outlet took a transformative turn. Being able to cast my creations empowered me to share my designs so I could pursue something I feel very called to do - work on behalf of our planet. I established an NGO that would help my colleagues succeed at the human dimension of environmental challenges. Fast forward a decade and I have co-authored Making Shift Happen which is already having a far reaching impact on environmental work worldwide. Unsurprisingly, many of my pieces are nature based and a percentage of the profits from these lines supports environmental work at the NGO Root Solutions in the SF Bay Area. You can find my work at www.opulentore.com.



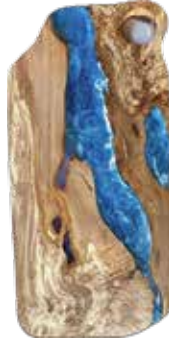
Tom Soltesz is a resident of Marin for almost 40 years and has been painting the landscape for such organizations as Marinscapes, MALT, Ranches and Rolling hills, The Baywood Group of environmental artists, the California Art Club, and Oil painters of America. I am represented by two galleries in California and one in Hawaii. My art has been collected by corporations and individuals across the US and abroad. I have also been published in a number of books and magazines. More of my work can be seen on my website www.tomsoltesz.com.

NEW NON-RESIDENTS



Rachel Levy. I was born in Morocco and my metalsmithing practice was first inspired by the rich tradition of metalworking in North Africa. It has also been enriched and informed by my work as a painter, gardener and expressive arts facilitator for kids at risk. I approach my studio as a contemplative space where playful curiosity and discovery have full reign. I work directly with the metal without the use of molds or wax. Each piece is original and is made using mostly traditional hand tools. Rachel Levy-Bencheton METAL ARTS

NEW NON-RESIDENTS



Tara Marple's QueenBee's Woodshop is a new arrival to the art fair in 2024. Tara is a wood artist who is inspired by the beautiful trees and landscape of California. The combination of artistry, logic, learned skill, courage, and patience are all present in each piece. Her work features live edge planks that she has carefully restored, rescued or locally sourced. Expect festive decor and household items for yourself or gifting. <https://qbwoodshop.myshopify.com>



Jennifer Morgan lives in Mill Valley, graduated from RISD and after a career in graphic design she found her ultimate passion for glass blowing. She creates functional glass art that showcases the organic form of the glass itself. Jennifer's preference for clear glass speaks to her appreciation for simplicity and transparency, both in art and in life. By manipulating this colorless medium, she creates textures and forms that interact with light in ways reminiscent of natural occurrences - like sunlight reflecting off water or filtering through ice. This interplay between glass and light imbues her functional art with a living, breathing quality. Her background in intuitive medicine healing informs her artistic practice, suggesting a deeper connection between the energetic properties of her glasswork and the natural world. Each piece becomes a vessel not just for physical objects, but for the essence of her creative spirit and the pure energy she channels during the creation process. You can find her work at www.jennifermorganglass.com and @jennifermorganglass on Instagram and Facebook



Lorna Newlin is thrilled to be back at the Muir Beach Holiday Arts Fair. She started her studio Sausalito Pottery in 2002 and is still going strong. She continues to love making things in clay plus teaching and helping other budding artists. Her newer works are of porcelain with real gold rims and sand colored clay pressed with seashells & sea life motifs. Also, she wouldn't come without the perennial favorites ... functional pottery and whimsical sculptures.

Continued on next page

Muir Beach Holiday Arts Fair Artists *continued from page 2*

NEW NON-RESIDENTS



Gillian Mai. As a self-taught jewelry artist, I was always drawn to the energies and colors of crystals but the harm that mining causes to people and our planet troubled me. In 2020, after my friend shared a vivid dream of our friend “dripping in corn jewelry,” I knew I had an answer—but nothing like I envisioned existed yet. After 3 years of slow experimentation through growing rainbow corn and turning the kernels into gems, Mama Maize was founded in 2023—so you can adorn living, garden-grown seeds and always keep the miracle of life close. Each piece is crafted by drying the kernels for months to years, coating them in non-toxic epoxy, and pairing them with 18k Gold artisan designs—offering the same sparkle and elegance as traditional gems—without mining’s destructive impact. And, every purchase supports indigenous, women-led gardens. Through wearing Mama Maize, you are telling your story of appreciation, love, and care for our Earth. <https://mamamaize.com>



Nikki Rene Perlman is a Marin based artist who weaves childhood magic into every moment with hand-illustrated designs. The seeds of her company, Nikki Rene, were first planted on Nantucket Island, where she sold her watercolor and cut-paper artwork at the Farmers Market. Two babies later, Nikki expanded her designs to kids wear. She set about sourcing the softest, chemical-free fabrics for littles, and designing patterns that capture the carefree whim and joy of her own kids. Her hope is that when you dress your kids in Nikki Rene, you envelop them in the sweetness of childhood just a little bit longer. (Saturday only)



Jade Qin. I was born in a small village in China to a family that brought me up in the strong traditions of my family’s Miao culture. As one of China’s 55 ethnic groups, we are known for our work with silver. For generations, silver has held a sacred place in our customs, not just as a symbol of beauty, but also of tradition and expert craftsmanship. Growing up surrounded by these traditions, I developed a deep love for creating silver jewelry. I was lucky to be able to move to California in 2006 where I studied jewelry making at the College of Marin. I spent three years refining my skills and adding western craftsmanship. I believe I now create jewelry that combines the best of both worlds. For me, each piece I design is a work of art, handcrafted with care and love, using only the highest quality materials. Looking to my heritage, I also bring traditional Chinese knotting techniques into my designs.

LEGACY ORGANIZATIONS



Muir Beach Garden Club. Their selection of evergreen, herbal and succulent wreaths are always a sell-out. Don’t miss their beautiful kitchen garlands or their miniature succulent gardens which are a sure-fire addition to anyone’s home



Muir Beach Junior Artisans. The Muir Beach Community has always encouraged creativity in the young people who are lucky enough to grow up here. Be sure to see what they’ve been making recently!



Muir Beach Quilters have been having great fun stitching a whole new whimsical ornament collection. Besides the usual winter accessories for adults, we have a knitted kids/babies section with garments, socks and hats. All wonderful for your gift giving.



Muir Beach Volunteer Firemens Association. Come by the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department (MBVFD) booth and support their goal of building a new firehouse while you holiday shop for your friends and family! The iconic doggy logo will be featured on T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, baby wear, stainless steel drinkware & more and available for purchase.

Come on down meet and support your neighbors, find great gifts for the holidays and maybe volunteer for a bit.

Any questions give me a call at 415.595.7411 or drop me a line at muirbeachartsfair@gmail.com.

– Laurie

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Artwork by Durand and Beth Begault



October 16, 2024, photo by David Taylor

A Whale of a Good Time (sorry, we couldn't help ourselves)!

By Shawn Roberts

On Sunday, August 25, 2024, Muir Beachers Rick Bernard and Shawn Roberts, Kate and Steve Somers, Klaus Poppensieker, and Mike Held (an honorary Muir Beacher who lives in San Francisco) went to the Farallon Islands with the Oceanic Society. This trip was a long time in the making. Several years ago, we scheduled the trip many months in advance as a birthday celebration, only to have it cancelled the day before due to rough seas. About a year later, we tried booking a trip with a different company, on Call of the Sea's tall ship, "Matthew Turner," but it, too, was cancelled at the last minute due to concerns about high winds and waves. Then this year, we tried again, once again booking a trip on the Oceanic Society's "Wacky Jacky" fishing boat, knowing that we were again taking a planning risk, due to the predictably unpredictable changing nature of our foggy summer months. We nonetheless went ahead and chose a date when all of us were available toward the end of the summer, because we all wanted to do this "bucket list" trip. As the day for the trip grew near, and the weather forecast warned of choppy waters and foggy skies, we worried that we wouldn't be able to see anything because of the fog. Luckily, the night before, we were notified that that trip, too, had been cancelled, due to one of the boat's propellers having had an encounter with a rock at the edge of the Farallons the day before. Disappointed, we took a few weeks off from pursuing the trip further. Then, we began to see forecasts for a series of rare warm days with calm waters and low winds, and booked again, this time without Shawn's son, Justin, and Klaus' spouse, Susannah Kennedy, who had other plans and couldn't join us.



Klaus and Shawn, Rick Bernard photo



Steve and Kate, Rick Bernard photo



*Risso's dolphin
Oceanic Society photo 8 25 2024*

As the date of our embarkation neared, we had a lot of discussions about seasickness and available remedies: ginger tea, ginger candies, meditation, acupuncture wrist bands, Dramamine, and—available only with a prescription—Scopalamine. Early on Saturday morning before the trip, we were panic-stricken when we received a worried text from Kate and Steve, who were parked and at the dock near the San Francisco Yacht Club, asking where the *&^%\$#! the rest of us were, as the boat was ready to shove-off. After considerable adrenaline responses and anxiety for all, we checked our tickets and saw that the early-birds were a day early, misremembering the correct date of the trip, and – drugged up and miserable on the full doses of Dramamine that they'd taken as instructed (both the night before the trip and the morning before) – they gamely said they'd have to find a roller-coaster to ride so that the day wouldn't be wasted. They also decided that they never wanted to take Dramamine again, and so later consulted with their doctor and were prescribed Scopalamine. More struggles followed, with a tsunami of texts and emails, discussing how much Scopalamine to take. Some of us opted to take half a dose, others the whole dose, and others took none at all.

Continued on next page



The Farallon Islands' lighthouse and rock arch, Shawn Roberts photo

When Sunday morning dawned, we could see that it had turned out to be the beautiful, calm day that we'd hoped for. The Wacky Jacky left the dock, and headed out on San Francisco Bay, followed by harbor seals and porpoises. We headed out under the Golden Gate Bridge, and were treated to a wonderful view of Muir Beach from the ocean side, and spent happy minutes trying to identify various landmarks and homes.

Not long later, we spotted our first whales, by spotting their blowing and spouting: Humpbacks – first one, then another, then more than we could count. They were slapping the water with their tails or their pectoral fins, perhaps communicating with other whales by sending signals that could indicate aggression, mating interest, a warning, or a way to stun prey. At times they were also breaching the water, their bodies almost completely displayed in the air, or they were rolling in the water, and diving down to eat, showing us their enormous tails and moving with spectacular grace. They were also accompanied by sea lions, dolphins and many sheer-water birds and pelicans.

The sea life that surrounded us was awesome, the naturalist on board commented that it was like a buffet, due to the phytoplankton that was feeding the anchovies. In turn, the humpbacks and other creatures were feasting on the anchovies.

We arrived at the Farallon Islands (also known as the “Devil’s Teeth”) at midday. As we approached the Islands, we noticed the smell of the birds and the vegetation in residence there (where, we were told, during nesting season there can be 200,000 birds at a time), and we saw dozens of additional whales very close up to the boat, along with some Dall porpoises. It was great to see the sea lions and

dolphins swimming along next to the boat, playing in the wake, and going up and down in the waves in an action that the naturalist explains is called “porpoising.” This movement allows them to go faster, to get to the food that they’re after. We also saw an Ocean sunfish, also called a “Mola Mola” which floated to the surface of the ocean next to our boat; we were told that the Mola Mola is the largest bony fish in the world, but surprisingly, it has very short fins and is vulnerable to sharks and other predators because of its difficulty navigating. Adult Mola Molas can weigh up to 2,205 pounds!

Once we arrived at the desolate and bleak Islands, the boat slowly circled around them twice while we ate our bag lunches, and the naturalists pointed out the striking rock formations, various kinds of birds (pelicans, brown albatross, tufted puffins, and many others). They also explained that some of the dwellings on the islands have been there for over a hundred years, and stressed that human access to the land is now restricted to researchers who spend a required number of weeks each year on the islands.

After the tour of the islands by boat was completed, we were told that the calm seas had allowed the boat to make record time and that as a result, we were in for a treat: we could head out to the Continental Shelf. Once we arrived at the shelf, we were fortunate to see the largest whales that swim the globe: the Blue whales, along with some Sei whales. We also saw some Risso’s dolphins frolicking in the water.

Reluctantly, the captain eventually slowly turned the boat around, and started to head back to San Francisco. But first, we were treated to a large humpback lollygagging 10 feet under

our bow for about ten minutes! All told, it was a fantastic all-day trip, from check-in at the dock at 8 am to our return just before 4 pm. In the debriefing after the boat landed, we were told that the naturalists had counted 217 Humpback whales, 12 Blue whales, and 7 Sei whales, in what they referred to as one of their best days ever.

As we left the gangplank, Klaus commented that being surrounded by so much nature put him in closer contact with his soul. To celebrate and continue to experience our gratitude for this amazing day, we sipped aged whiskey from a flask he’d brought along, which he generously shared in tiny crystal glasses.

Lessons learned:

- (1) Don’t miss this life-altering experience!
- (2) Don’t book months in advance – wait until you see that the marine forecast calls for warm days, low winds, and low seas, and contact the Oceanic Society or other providers when you know you have a free day to schedule. Oceanic Society told us that that’s the best way to plan these trips, and said that if their main boat gets filled up, they’ll often add a second boat to accommodate demand when the weather is good.
- (3) Plan ahead about sea-sickness medicines, especially for those who know that they are prone to illness. You don’t want your trip to be spoiled by spending the day nauseated.

PS: None of us got sick! Although a couple people on the boat had some moments of queasiness, the naturalists provided them with the following tips to avoid it worsening: keep your eyes on the horizon; don’t spend a lot of time inside the cabin; and try to sit in a place where you can feel the wind on your skin, while breathing deeply.

Muir Beach's Beloved Cypress Owl

by Jim White

Some 45 years ago I moved here to 170 Pacific Way with my family to a property that needed some improvements. I was inspired by Mr. Harris's cypress hedge along the ocean side of 165 Sunset Way across from Click Pickens's. So I went one day up on Panoramic Blvd where some large Monterey Cypressess grew, and I noticed seedlings a few inches tall, so I dug one up, then carefully planted it in our new front yard. To maintain our newly elevated and paved parking places I knew that I would have to trim and shape the cypress though the amount of time and effort thru the years should have been of more concern. The flat face spread then a limb wrapped as a fence along the driveway and few years later took on a new look when I snipped in two eyes and let two ears grow. Many people have told me that they love the owl and hundreds of photos have been taken.

Now Marin Fire is saying that juniper trees (it is a Monterey Cypress) are a fire hazard, branches are to be cut off to 6 feet above the ground and they are demanding that I cut it down.

Never mind that the typical nighttime temperature in Muir Beach is 55 or that I can fog wash my car almost any morning, simply toweling off the condensation with the daily dirt. That proves that most mornings the humidity reaches 100%. Never mind that beautiful Muir Beach has only reached 80 degrees twice this year. Bringing memories of Paradise here does not raise the temperature of the Pacific Ocean, though climate change will, albeit slowly. The Pacific Ocean is a very good neighbor when considering wildfire.

I helped put out two wildfires along Highway 1 while I was a member of the Muir Beach Volunteer Fire Department, who we all respect. Let me tell you about the time a tin can camper collided with the inside corner of the bottom curve approaching Muir Beach. For years before the repaving you could see melted metal on the scorched pavement. Tyler Knox and I were working on a house in Muir Beach and got the call on our plectrons, hustled down to the fire barn, got the fairly new green fire truck and headed up the hill. Not far because there stuck on the roadside blazing away was this van, the owners gone calling for help. Tyler thought maybe we could put it out but it was a goner and the hillside was burning, besides the popping turned out to be a box of

rifle bullets going off. So we grabbed two maddoxes, climbed the fence and hill to its fires top, under 100 yards, the flames were only 1 to 2 feet high, and I had learned on my first fire that you can get into the black burned side of the flame line, then use the tool to rake and drag the burning grass and brush into that already burned zone. At the time the hillside was a sparsely grazed horse pasture. You can extinguish a small grass fire line! So I walked back down the right side of the fire arc and Tyler took the left. We were actually making good progress stopping the fire line and could hear other fire sirens approaching. Marin fire had sensibly set up a fire break with trucks up on Panoramic, just a couple miles away, to use the road as a fire break to protect Mill Valley homes. With the help that arrived we had contained and put out the fire at about one acre! The van was totaled, the gasoline burned up, tires still smoldering, but checking on some hot spots the hillside was extinguished and a much bigger wildfire averted.

For another, in trying to satisfy Marin Fire's demands, yesterday I may have broken the law. One of the factors that allowed Tylor and me to put out the wildfire was that on the S/W flank of the lightly grazed hillside was mostly grass and native fire adapted coyote brush which doesn't burn really well, breaks off rather easily, and I think the roots can stay alive, to help hold the soil, and then regrow. So some 15 years ago when my interest in birds and nature began to thrive, I went to the native plant nursery in Tam junction, brought a small Toyon, a native shrub, and planted it near the lower east corner of my lot to shield the street and my propane tank. This year it was finally thriving, growing thousands of Berries, and I had visions of thrushes and robins and a beautiful flock of Cedar Waxwings descending on it in midwinter and eating their fill of red berries! Whoops, a couple of blossom-laden branches were were reaching within a couple of feet of that propane tank and in fact the 4" trunks are not 10' away. Marin Fire has listed in my report that I must clear all vegetation from within 10 feet of my Propane tank. So yesterday, in an effort to comply, I filled my big green bin with thousands of blossoms and developing berries. But I think it may still be illegal pick Christmas berries in California. Well, they weren't red yet.

Continued on next page

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Well, that brought back some memories, but why am I bringing it up now? For 1, a fire break is important, like Pacific Way in front of my house. Like Highway 1 wrapping around the other sides is a protective fire break.

I also need to talk about sharing the planet particularly with wildlife like birds. Birds need habitat that includes cover and shelter. I often have a covey of California Quail in my yard. You may not have witnessed how swiftly a Coopers Hawk or a Merlin can flash into a space and the ensuing panic, the scramble to get away to hide to get under something that a family of Quail has to do to survive! We also have several specie of Sparrows, Juncos, Towhees and Thrushes that feed and nest on the ground and that need cover and places to nest. Because of our rather heavy human footprint on the Earth many other species are in peril. I think that a pair of California Towhees nested in the Owl this year because it has cover near the ground. Caring for the earth is deeper that just caring about our selves. To me that is important.

What am I to do?



MBVFD OCTOBER 29, 2024 CALL LOG BY DAVID TAYLOR

Since our last report in July we have run another 16 calls. Three 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.

07/19/2024 13:49. Jon Rauh. Tree down in Muir Woods Parking Lot

07/30/2024 19:13 Maurice Conti. Traumatic hand injury in Muir Woods

08/03/2024 17:10. Chris Gove, Sefton Murray, David Taylor. Injured hiker in Pirate's Cove

08/04/2024 13:28 Brad Eigsti, David Taylor. Fall in Muir Woods

09/08/2024 16:21 Chris Gove, Chris Vallee. Fall in Mt. Tam State Park

09/13/2024. 19:24. Maurice Conti, David Taylor. Solo motorcycle accident HWY 1 @ Redwood Creek Bridge

10/02/2024 17:17. Jon Rauh. Diabetic emergency @ Muir Woods

10/12/2024 23:55. Chris Gove. Solo rollover motor vehicle accident on HWY 1

10/13/2024 15:31. Chris Gove. 30 y/o male short of breath @ Muir Woods

10/13/2024 17:38. Chris Gove. 19 y/o female numbness in hands @ Muir Woods

10/26/2024 17:00. Chris Gove, Jon Rauh. Stranded motorist UTL (unable to locate)

10/26/2024. 18:36. Chris Gove, Jon Rauh. 15 y/o male seizure @ Muir Woods

10/28/2024 17:12. Chris Gove, Sefton Murray, Jon Rauh. 70 y/o male stroke @ Muir Woods

Billy and Poptart: Two Good Dogs

A "cowboy poem" by Jeffrey Swarts

A good dog is worth three in the saddle when it comes
to moving cows I've heard said,
Plus they work nights, don't smoke or take up a bed.

Protecting the chickens was their round the clock job,
And old habits aren't broken for these good ol' dogs.

We moved to the beach when retirement called, to slow
down, take it easy and walk in the fog

But our dogs never got the notice, they worked our
new place, vermin weren't welcome to enter our space

Billy was a big Lab of mixed blood,
Gentle, quiet and loved to be hugged

He was a local beach favorite when he wandered down
for a swim,
He would enjoy some free snacks and pets, then return
home again.

Billy was never gone long and enjoyed his free rein,
For he was rescued as a pup from a life on a chain.

I would find him all wet lying on our deck,
And as far as I was concerned he was the perfect pet.

He wasn't much of a guard dog and welcomed all,
He just liked to eat, sleep, and swim after his ball.

Yes, Billy was adored ... except by one,
A man who feared his deep bark, called the pound, and
ruined his fun.

Billy's life changed to supervised walks,
While we kept an eye out for this neighbor and the
county dog cops.

Our other pup was one of eight,
A bit cross eyed at first, but turned out great.

She went with me everywhere, riding in my truck,
She'd jump right in even with the tailgate up.

Sometimes she'd mix it up and ride up front,
Jumping through the open window, scratching her
way up

My son named her Poptart, why, I still don't know,
But the name suited her just fine, as far as dog names go.

She was a Heeler alright nipping all that she could,
Especially moving car tires, bicycles, and kids in
dark hoods



Photo by Pam Swarts

We mostly broke her of that inherited trait,
Although you'd never know about a new visitor's fate.

She'd look everyone over and deep into their eye,
If she approved of your character, you might get by.

Unlike other dogs I've had in the past,
If the Tart didn't like a command she wouldn't do what
you asked

She's clever, alert and thinks on her own,
But don't get out of your truck in my driveway when
no one's home

She's always been a part of our family, queen of the
guard,
Watching the animals and protecting our yard

She'd fought several raccoons up on our ranch in the
past, killed two,
But on occasions I had to save my little gray lass.

She eventually grew old and moved past her prime,
But was always ready to rumble, any place, any time

Late one night with old teeth worn, and a few others gone,
Our small but mighty cow dog attacked a raccoon on
the lawn.

Most raccoons would usually run, but this old boy
thought he would have some fun,
Her food smelled good and he wanted some.

I was fast asleep, when I was wakened by the roar,
A fight outside that I couldn't ignore

As the ruckus grew louder I could tell it was bad,
I flipped off the covers and grabbed what I had

A flashlight and knife that I kept by my side,
I forgot to put clothes on, and ran outside.

Continued on next page

Continued from previous page

Grass was flying and the screeching was loud,
They were flipping and flopping, while Billy just
howled.

Locked in battle, biting neck and neck,
I saw them with my flashlight tumbling under our deck.

Billy barked at me with worried cries,
Poptart was losing as that coon scratched at her eyes.

“Well go get him” I yelled out at last,
Bill crawled back in there to aid in the task.

It became eerily quiet except for some grunting,
Then out backed Billy dragging Poptart and that coon
she’d been hunting.

Billy barely had him except by a toe,
He looked up at me hoping I would tell him to let go.

Poptart and the coon were still locked at the neck,
Neither one quitting, just resting a sec

Billy looked into my eyes saying “what shall we do”?
They had him stretched out, and in my full view...

I stuck that knife deep into his chest,
Attempting to put that raccoon quickly to rest

But that fighter exploded with such might,
It scared me backwards rolling into the night.

I yelled “get him” and with that Billy lunged forth,
Grabbed the coon’s leg and bit down with force

The villain’s jaw released, he spun toward my Lab,
With claws out and hissing as Poptart secured a
new grab

With both dogs locked onto their stretched-out foe,
It was soon all over... and I was getting cold!

With the big coon soon dead it was quiet once more,
Poptart came in and laid down on the floor.

I cleaned up her wounds and petted her head,
She went back outside with Billy... and I went to bed

Pulling up the covers over my back covered in grass,
I took a deep breath and closed my eyes at last.

My wife asked if it was all over and how did it go?
My answer was yes, it’s all quiet now,
No thanks to another Poptart show

Both these dogs have now passed,
Their legacy: all the adventures they amassed

They both lie buried in the shade of our trees,
Poptart in the mountains, and Billy here by the sea

Two-Eyed Seeing

by Mia Monroe

Since time immemorial monarch butterflies have arrived in the highlands of central Mexico in early November, welcomed as the returning souls of their ancestors. Dias de los Muertos celebrations are colorful rituals to honor the past family members and include orange flowers, sugar skulls and powerful altars to recall the dead. We can see vestiges of this in today’s Halloween!

Maybe the proximity to the Dutch Flat cemeteries (we have a cabin in the Sierra foothills) or my passion for monarch butterflies has me thinking about the cosmology of the Mexican culture as a powerful way to remember the past, recall extinct species and to celebrate the turning of the seasons. It also reminds me that there is much more to my passion than the science of migration, metamorphosis, population counts...there’s the power and awe of beauty, the hope monarchs offer of a healthy world full of wonder!

This also seems like an apropos time to share a new technique, Two-Eyed Seeing. This is a framework that Elder Dr. Albert Marshall described as “learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of mainstream knowledge and ways of knowing, and to then use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all.”

Another who has opened our eyes to the stewardship of Indigenous people literally “forever” is Kat Anderson. Her seminal book, *Tending the Wild* opened our eyes to the profound inter-relationship of people to nature, the concept of «re-wilding» as well as re-defining wilderness as a landscape full of the mutualism of people to the natural world. She has a new website (www.tendingthewild.com) and soon a new book... check it out!

This autumn may we all have bounty, watch the birds enjoy the abundant dogwood fruit as we crunch the colorful fall leaves with each step!

SANCTUARY: A Warm Wind in Washington

Kristin Shannon

November 5, 2024

This story takes place around midnight, in Washington D.C. at a gathering place that serves as a sanctuary. It is a true story.

The air is softer here. There is a rippling sound of water lapping at the edge of the tidal basin. It's thickly dark now, near midnight, and I cannot see the water move, but I am grateful that I can feel its quietly soothing rhythm.

I find my way to a place on the old marble steps. They are weathered, wide and welcoming. I sit way over to the right where I can lean back against the solid granite wall. The stone is staunch and resolute against my skin. I close my eyes. Sanctuary.

Breathing out slowly, my cheeks let go of the thin film of hot moisture that formed as I found my way here. My eyelids stop quivering. For now, I am beyond the reach of the evening's turmoil. It's safe to let my eyes stay closed for a few minutes.

There are muted footsteps nearby, but they are not hurried. They are slow and deliberate, often pausing, as if pacing in deep thought. Those of us who have found our way here are secure, temporarily sheltered under the refuge of the monumental dome. The drying cherry trees rattle as the wind shifts direction.

I am momentarily unsettled as someone sits down near me, only a few steps higher on the marble stairs. I can hear his labored breathing. He must be heavyset as he takes several moments to settle in. His foot scrapes the stone as he stretches his legs. There is the faint scent of his sweat in the hot Washington summer. I catch a whiff of ripe leather from his weighty briefcase.

Behind me I hear the rustle of note cards and my shoulders ease. His is a comforting presence now. I guess he has walked over from the nearby building, stepping out beyond the tall

forged iron fence through one of the well-guarded gates.

There is a clink as something drops and rolls down the steps. His solid silver pen cap lodges near my right hand. I smile. He writes with an old fashioned fountain pen. A Mark Cross. It is slightly scratched. Another speechwriter in search of solace, sanctuary and companionable silences.

It is likely we've spoken before. And though we might not have agreed, it is a small town for us. Yet as I turn softly to hand him his pen cap, I don't offer a greeting because I understand why he is here tonight. Why the handful of others are here. Why I am here. We come for the quality of silence. We come together here for the strong presence behind us, up in the rotunda. Our talisman stands very tall, right under the center of the limestone dome. This upright figure on the enormous block of black granite is a ten- thousand pound rendering of Thomas Jefferson.

We feel his presence as a reminder. We are a spectral group, those of us who haunt these steps for inspiration at midnight. We glide past one another as we tumble our thoughts, our footfalls circling his memorial.

We come for the vigorous words that are inscribed here. We come to be reassured not only by the legacy of this man's memory, but for the quality of his foresight. He warned us of the risks.

Chiefly, we come to be comforted by the direction and force of Jefferson's gaze: he looks straight into the back portico of the White House. Square jawed, clutching his rolled up copy of the Declaration of Independence in his left hand, he aims his stare at the current residents.

One former President ordered several elm and pine trees to be cut down so there would always be a clear sight

line from the White House, towards the Jefferson memorial. Roosevelt wanted to preserve his view. But those of us who come here now to mull over our words and our choices have a different perspective.

We look at the White House from Jefferson's point of view.

We privately rely on Jefferson to keep his stern eyes fixed on what should happen inside that white edifice. We trust that the strength of Jefferson's convictions will make it past the gate guards and into the dreams of the sleeping residents. We count on his firm gaze to keep the newcomers in line.

Our midnight fraternity shares a secret mystical belief that if we stand here with Jefferson, we might find the words for better choices. At night we come to this cool marble touchstone to remind ourselves of why we chose to read history, draft laws, and try to discover the right words.

The stocky man behind me writes for a while longer, then shuffles his note cards and stuffs them back into his briefcase. He slowly rises, and makes his way down the marble steps in the direction of those tall black iron gates. For a moment he turns, looks up at the tall statue above us, then briefly nods in my direction. If you look closely, a trace of a smile moves between us.

We both know why we are here.

The informal tradition of late night writers who quietly gather at the Jefferson Memorial continues. For many years Kristin served as a policy advisor and speechwriter to the White House, through different administrations, and in Canada, for the Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau. Some neighbors felt that this story brings a little relief from this election cycle, and a warm smile.



DECEMBER '23

Double Wow. It had been a variously grey run, damp with fog. I took the long way home and was duly rewarded.



NOVEMBER '23

L'il Bob. Young Bobcats can be breathtakingly trusting. This year, I've enjoyed more encounters than ever.



OCTOBER '24

Heatwave. After a loop to Pirates Cove and an unseasonably warm swim, soggy shoes brought more joy.



NOVEMBER 2024

WHAT I SEE WHEN I RUN

A year in pictures from Muir Beach and back

By Sarah Nesbitt

Why is trail running good for us - what does it do to mind and body?

Yes. There are the endorphins and injuries, the highs and lows.

Whatever we may think, whatever we may feel, there is always so much for us to see. Here in the Marin Headlands, the hills are calling.

When I answer, I do not tend to stop or use my phone.

Then something happens and I catch myself standing still.

Looking and listening, watching and waiting.

You coming?



APRIL '24

Forget-me-nots. There is a trail for all seasons without much gradient. Ask nicely, I'll tell you where to find it.

OCTOBER '24

Blue and Gold. Slacker Hill hands me my arse every time, but the views always make me want more.



DECEMBER '23

Promise and Foreboding... Happy trails Muir Beach Neighbours and clear horizons in '25!



MAY '24

Never gets old. Sometimes, even seasoned runners reverentially stop to lie down and look up.



OCTOBER '24

What planet are we on? Where to look: Wolf Ridge Sunset! Hunter's Moon! Comet C/2024 S1 (Atlas)!

Milestones



The Muir Beach Friends and Neighbors "Milestones" celebration, see page 11. Photo by Lucky Shannon

Welcome Luca



Brittany & Ian Claudius are thrilled to welcome the newest member of the Muir Beach community - baby boy, Luca Gabriel Claudius. Luca was born on August 16, 2024 at 1:20pm. Photos by Taryn Beller

A Visit with Tayeko and Michael



My sister and I took a road trip down to SoCal and visited with Tayeko and Michael Kaufman in their new home. Here they are showing me the garden they have. Tayeko loves having her garden and misses hers in Muir Beach.

– Joey Groneman



During the Pandemic, photo by Outi Onorato