



# The Lookout

Muir Woods Park Community Association

[www.mounttam.org](http://www.mounttam.org)

June-July 2009

415/381-3119

## Special Feature: Sewer Situation

### Dear Fellow Mountain Dwellers,

For many years the concept of extending a sewer to our neighborhood has been debated on the mountain. Some of the history of this debate is presented in the excellent accompanying Lookout article put together by Robert Clemons (page 4).

One issue is cost. Proponents of the sewer are concerned about the potentially very high cost of repairing septic systems when (not if) they fail or must be upgraded if a dwelling is significantly remodeled. They believe the sewer will be less expensive in the long run, especially if the current trend of tightening requirements for septic systems continues.

Opponents, especially those that have recently upgraded their septic systems, are less willing to pay for something they may not need for many years. Chris Murnford's excellent article addresses some of the issues about paying for the sewer (page 3).

Proponents are more concerned about the public health and other environmental impacts of septic systems, whereas opponents are uneasy about the potential for increased development if a sewer comes.

Those of us who favor the sewer believe that the time has come for us to take the steps necessary to bring a sewer to our neighborhood. We have had many meetings with local officials and agencies and have been successful in gaining their support. Community meetings have been held, the purpose of which has been to inform the community of progress and outline future possibilities. I believe that we are at a unique juncture to take the next important step. Some of the reasons for decisive action are outlined below. If we do not take advantage of the timing, we may lose our opportunity.

The following Agencies and local officials have stepped up to the plate to assist and support us:

**SASM** – The Sewerage Agency of Southern Marin has expressed their willingness to accept our effluent. Other

sewer districts within the Mill Valley area are willing to sell us some of their excess capacity.

**HVSD** - The Homestead Valley Sanitary District is willing to annex us into their Sewer District, eliminating the necessity, and subsequent cost, of our establishing and administering our own district. Furthermore, the Homestead Valley Sanitary District has been proactive in upgrading their infrastructure, which means that there will not be the need for a lot more upgrades to allow for the acceptance of our effluent.

**LAFCO** – The Local Agency Formation Commission has agreed to support our annexation into the Homestead Valley Sanitary District and will study, free of charge to us, the impact such an annexation might have on our community. They would also study the potential development that may result as a consequence of the annexation.

**Steve Kinsey**, our local Supervisor, has agreed to assist us with political and financial support. He has agreed to help with the initial cost (estimated at \$80,000) of defining the legal boundaries to establish an assessment district. He has pledged to provide \$40,000. It is up to us to come up with the other \$40,000.

In addition we have the enthusiastic support of **Dietrich Stroeh**. Dietrich has assisted us in preliminary work and has been involved with sewer extensions in the past and has experience in overseeing such projects. Furthermore he has political "know-how" to help us pursue and possibly gain access to grants and/or Federal monies.

The good will, support, and access to physical facilities mentioned above has been time-consuming and somewhat costly to develop. It is likely to dissipate unless we move forward. For those and the following reasons I believe that it is important that we now join together as a community to make this happen.

We know that septic tanks, as we have known them, will not continue indefinitely. A letter from the County of Marin Department of Environmental Services dated August 13, 1974, complains about the septic waste in this area.  
(Continued on page 2)

(continued from cover page)

"The ground is generally unsuitable for septic tank systems as Franciscan shale and rock-type ground strata characterize the area. In a lot of places the ground consists of a relatively thin layer of pervious topsoil. Below this layer lies either hardpan or clay. During the heavy rain falls, due to over saturation of the leaching drain field, there is a better chance for the effluent to overflow onto the surface and to find its way to watercourses and gullies which carry it down and ultimately into the Mill Valley creeks and onto the Bay. The Division of Environmental Control has been very anxious to see this area sewered."

More recently, the State of California (AB588) has moved closer to substantially raising requirements for septic systems. This was addressed in the last Lookout edition.

The state may require homeowners to be licensed to operate septic tanks. (This is the case at Sea Ranch.) These costs will be far higher, in most cases, than to bring the sewer to the neighborhood.

Many homes on the mountain have "aging systems" and small lots, and would be severely challenged to meet the new guidelines.

SASM will not always have the capacity to receive us. This could result in our having to fund "upgrades" to SASM facilities in order for them to accept our effluent.

(Recent spills by SASM have not been due to insufficient capacity, but by what is called "infiltration" problems. Simply put, much of Mill Valley's sewer infrastructure, including lateral pipes from homes to mains, is old. It was constructed using clay pipes bonded together with an out-dated compound that has since decomposed, leaving the system quite porous.)

Another compelling reason to bring the sewer to the mountain is to safely and effectively treat the "waste water" generated by households on the mountain. Septic tanks do not treat "waste water." Septic tanks introduce contaminated water into the ground. This water may seep deeply, or simply run quite close to the surface. Either way it is going to run down hill, and contaminate on its way.

Please consider this matter carefully. E-mail me with your questions, your support and if possible your pledge for the cause. (See the form on page 4.)

Remember, money donated to implement the first phase will be refunded in the form of a credit against what the donator owes when the first assessments are made.

We will not collect pledges until we are confident that there is sufficient support for the measure to pass.

- Lynn Hindley [lynnhindley@sbcgloba.net](mailto:lynnhindley@sbcgloba.net)  
Chair, Sewer Committee

## President's Message

Thanks to the more than 100 mountain families who have paid their annual dues, many including a donation as well. We like to feel ours is a special neighborhood; one indication is the many former locals who like to keep in touch and maintain their membership. For those who haven't yet paid, it's never too late! (See page 11.)

It's been a busy few months. Four-leaf clovers abounded while shillelaghs were left at the door when 60 or so leprechaun-lovers came out in force for the St. Patrick's Day party, to socialize and feast on Lynn Hindley's fabulous dinner of corned beef with all the trimmings. Foo Kennedy tended the bar and kept order.

We had a successful Work Day on April 4, with considerable progress in cleaning and maintaining areas inside and out. Kit Harris gets special plaudits for bringing her two young sons, in festive work-day regalia, and assigning them the wall-building task. Though not on Work Day, we completed the rock work in the patio area. Putting some sort of attractive but removable wood plank cover on the sand pit (above the septic tank) will complete the job.

Kit Harris organized the Children's Easter Egg Hunt on April 12. About 20 kids energetically enjoyed the hunt and



its bounty, and as many adults watched on with equal pleasure in the beautiful weather.

As always, interest in the potential for bringing a sewer to the neighborhood was high. The "Sewer Meeting" on March 26 attracted about 40 attendees. Dietrich Stroeh and Peter Banning gave brief presentations and answered questions; David Escobar from Steve Kinsey's office attended and affirmed his (Kinsey's) support of the project. Of those who filled out and left a paper "ballot", 26 favored sewer, 3 opposed, with 1 undecided.

The Nature Friends contracted for the widening of Muir Woods Trail (the road to the Nature Friends facilities bordering our property) to permit access by the fire department's new, wider trucks. The main work has been completed and looks good, and the bare ground was covered for protection. Brad Sifen was instrumental in organizing and facilitating the process leading to the widening.

- Fete

## How the Sewer Finances Might Work

As our community meetings and discussions have shown, there are many factors and diverse opinions to consider with regard to the MWPCA sewer project; costs and financing considerations are certainly among them, but these are not particularly complicated or mysterious. Let's focus just on finances for a moment.

Like any business or investment decision, front-end capital costs have to be compared to expected benefits in the future. A lot of work has been done to quantify the cost side of this equation, which we will discuss below; benefits are harder to forecast precisely and, in some cases, more subjective - but are certainly real.

The costs in front of us are reasonably clear. (Further comments elaborate each # that appears in parentheses.)

If you make a low-end estimate (300)(1) of the number of parcels that would actually be included in this project, the per-unit front-end costs for real engineering and construction would be 1/300<sup>th</sup> of \$7.6 million(2), or a little over \$25,000 per parcel. This would be the cost in an ideal world where everyone simply paid a one-time assessment and was done with it - no bonds and no financing. In addition to these engineering and construction costs, each parcel owner could also expect to pay \$5,000 to \$6,000 based on fixture units as a one-time sewer connection fees, one-time close-down costs for existing septic systems of \$500 - \$800, and on-going annual sewerage fees of approximately:

\$400.00 in 2009  
\$450.00 in 2010  
\$500.00 in 2011

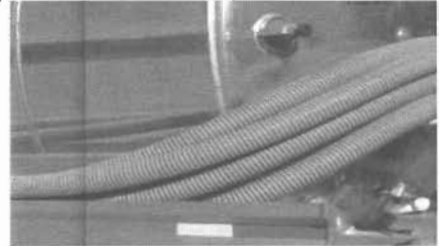
Adding financing to the equation - just like a mortgage - will obviously increase total costs but also will spread those costs over a long period of time and perhaps future owners of a property.

Dietrich Stroeh's estimates for bond financing add \$1.5 million(3) to the front-end costs (\$5,000 per parcel) - bringing total non-interest costs for the project to \$9.1 million (including a 20% contingency fund on the actual construction estimates), or just over \$30,000 per parcel.

A 30-year amortizing bond for this amount at 5%(4) interest will require total payments of approximately \$17 million over the 30-year period - adding about \$8 million of interest (\$26,600 per parcel) to the project cost. Looked at another way, each property owner would pay something like \$1,900 per year for 30 years instead of \$25,000 at the front-end. We don't pretend to give tax advice about what is and is not deductible, but the \$1,900 assessment would be included in each owner's annual property tax bill.

As mentioned above, the financial benefit side of this project is harder to quantify and could vary substantially for different owners. Factors to consider are:

1. Ongoing maintenance cost of operable septic systems (probably minor);
2. Repair and upgrade costs for failing systems (\$25,000 to \$100,000);
3. Avoided cost of future regulatory requirements for all septic systems (unknown); and
4. Increase in property values inherent in having a connection to a sewerage system, which has been estimated by Dietrich Stroeh at an average of \$60,000 per parcel based on his experience in other communities. This increase in property values may or may not be tax-exempt capital gain - depending on each owner's situation - and its timing is obviously critical to any analysis of present value.



Assuming our community ultimately chooses the bond financing route for this project, the bonds themselves might be an attractive investment option for some people, but this doesn't really change the cost-benefit analysis of for the project itself. More work needs to be done on understanding the actual terms of these bonds with respect to interest rate, security, and tax deductibility of interest.

This article is one property owner's view of the financial implications of the sewer project; others may view these matters differently, and we would welcome suggestions and other viewpoints.

Actual number of parcels could be as high as 350 \$79,000 for stage 1; \$1,440,000 for stage 2 without bond costs; and \$6,113,000 for stage 3 without bond costs \$374,000 for stage 2; and \$1,145,000 for stage 3

Sensitivity to interest rates:

- 4% - total payments are \$15.2 million
- 5% - total payments are \$17.0 million
- 6% - total payments are \$18.7 million

- Chris Mumford  
Sewer Committee

### Board Meeting Highlights

Note: Complete MWPCA Board minutes are posted online at:

<http://www.mounttam.org>  
password is: musty

**Sewer Committee Report  
June, 2009**

**SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS MAJOR ACTIVITIES**

October 8, 2004 – Initial public meeting chaired by Steve Thompson with participation by Supervisor Steve Kinsey and Dietrich Stroeh.

July, 2005 – MWPCA Community Survey. 372 Questionnaires mailed with 31 % returned; of these 33 % wanted sewers, 43 % wanted both sewers and septic, 44 % would join an assessment district, and 60 % were willing to contribute to an engineering study.

December, 2006 – Engaged CSW/Stuber-Stroeh to conduct a study to extend sewers to MWP (\$18,523 paid to date.)

May 23, 2007 – Community Meeting chaired by Lynn Hindley to present preliminary maps and listing of property owners for comments.

July 22, 2008 – Report issued by CSW/Stuber-Stroeh of three feasibility plans with conceptual cost estimates to (1) annex to Mill Valley sewers, (2) annex to Homestead sewers, and (3) partial annex to both.

**MARCH 26, 2009 COMMUNITY MEETING**

Meeting chaired by Lynn Hindley, included presentations by Dietrich Stroeh of CSW/Stuber-Stroeh, Peter Banning of the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), and David Escobar representing County Supervisor Steve Kinsey.

The message of the meeting was that it is decision time for MWP property owners to make a commitment of money to prepare and conduct the first of two elections, to move the project forward.

- The estimated first election cost is \$ 80,000, of which our Supervisor has committed \$ 40,000.
- All payments into this fund would be credited on the owner's tax bill if the election passes, and the engineering phase implemented.

Dietrich Stroeh described the overall process, with a focus on the two elections:

Election # 1 – To authorize an assessment district to issue bonds to fund the probable engineering cost of \$ 1,440,000

Election # 2 – To authorize an assessment district to issue bonds to fund the probable construction cost of \$ 5,760,000.

He stated that the current plan is to connect to the Homestead Valley Sanitary District system, at the yet to be determined fee, to upgrade their system for the increased volume. The total engineering and construction costs would be funded by bonds, to be repaid by property taxes on the owners, over the life of the bonds.

Other costs which must be paid directly by the owners include the installation of the connection pipe from the house to the sewer, and the annual Homestead Sewer Fee (\$ 400 in 2008.)

Peter Banning, of LAFCO, stated that they will support the project by approving the annexation of the MWP community into the Homestead Valley Sanitary District. In addition, LAFCO is currently evaluating the development potential of the MWP community.

- Bob Clemons, Sewer Committee

**MWP Sewer Election Pledge**

I own property at \_\_\_\_\_.

I will pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ toward the cost of preparing and conducting an election to form an assessment district which would fund the engineering phase for a sewer connection between Homestead Valley Sanitary District and the MWP community.

|                    |            |
|--------------------|------------|
| Date:              | Signature: |
|                    | Signature: |
|                    | Telephone: |
|                    | Email:     |
| Received by MWPCA: | Signature: |

Mail response to: MWPCA, 40 Ridge Avenue, Mill Valley, CA 94941

## Community Watershed Forum

"The health of our waters is the principal measure of how we live on the land."

—Luna Leopold

The April 1, 2009 event was hosted by 18-year resident Laura Chariton of the Hutchins Institute, Action for a Viable Future, Sonoma State University and Mill Valley Stream-Keepers at the Clubhouse. Featured speakers, great weather and wonderful donated food made for an enlightening and enjoyable evening.

**Terri Fashing of Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (MCSTOPPP)** spoke about her agency's responsibilities, including work with residents to improve creeks, storm water run off and habitat by preventing silt and pollution from impacting water quality and wildlife. Available were numerous brochures and pamphlets written for the layperson. MCTOPPP is a county agency that monitors the condition of the creeks and works in the community to enhance education and guidance. They frequently partner in restoration plantings with other agencies such as Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed (STRAW).

**Coast Miwok, Sacred Sites Chair of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR), Nick Tipon** gave a presentation about their history in the Mill Valley area. He showed beautiful images and spoke about important indigenous plants' traditional uses and abundant endemic food sources such as the coho and steelhead salmon. It was interesting to learn that the very site of our clubhouse was more than likely a sacred site to his tribe. Our community occupies land that was home to the tribe for over 8,000 years. The level of sustainability and peace they had achieved can be an example to us all. Water, plants and animals necessary for survival are still sacred to the Coast Miwok people.

**Mia Monroe, Site Supervisor of Muir Woods and Redwood Creek** whose intimate knowledge in the watershed spans 30 years, spoke about its significance to endangered coho salmon and threatened steelhead that occupy its waters. Massive restoration efforts of the Big Lagoon project at Muir Beach will begin in earnest this August to help these and other species, such as the red-legged frog. Our activities in the upper headwaters can be helpful or detrimental to habitat health and that it is important for us to develop a dialogue of community with the National and State Parks. Sedimentation from development run off, and clear cutting tree canopy and pollution are factors that negatively impact salmon and other species in Redwood Creek and its tributaries. The Park holds many opportunities for volunteering from stewards to working in the native plant nursery.

**Laura Chariton, an expert on riparian habitat restoration** for salmon, birds and native plants, spoke about recent human influences in Mill Valley's watersheds affecting significant critical habitat. Since our residents occupy two watersheds, our actions can highly impact downstream water quality and riparian health. She chronicled impacts occurring recently that have caused coho extinction in Mill Valley (Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio Watershed). Solutions exist for repairing the damage, individually and as a commu-

nity to improve conditions for neighbors, public health and safety, future generations, and animals that need these habitats.

Other guests included; Mill Valley Planner and aide to Charles McGlashan, Maureen Parton as well as educator, anthropologist, archaeologist and author of Chief Marin (2005), Betty Goerke. Other experts and community members attending the forum found it an opportunity for discussion regarding environmental protections, sustainability and health for future generations.

We hope you will participate and share your views at upcoming events. The next forum will be:

**Alternative Wastewater Treatment – Pipe and Dump it... or Create Habitat** and includes a one-hour documentary. There are many new and exciting possibilities for a truly sustainable future. Want to participate? Your input is welcome. Please call 388-7060 or e-mail [laurachariton@comcast.net](mailto:laurachariton@comcast.net).

## Fire Road Access Widened on Muir Woods Trail below MWPCA Clubhouse

The Nature Friends Tourist Club is widening Muir Woods Trail just below MWPCA property. Brad Silen on the MWPCA Board has worked as a liaison to assure everyone is satisfied. This will allow our fire trucks have access to the property below in case of fire. Steps are being take to assure that the work won't destabilize the hill.

They are covering the majority of the \$12,000 expense and have asked the adjoining neighbors, including MWPCA, to help. At the June Board Meeting it was agreed to contribute \$1,000 toward the project. Funds will come partially from the emergency fund and partially from exterior landscaping.



## Firehouse News

First let me address the question we get asked most often this time of year: "What kind of fire season are we going to have?"

Answer: "Potentially very bad."

Here is why: We have a long dry summer ahead of us, lots of dry fuel which will burn and depending on conditions can burn explosively; steep hillsides are thick with combustible vegetation and homes are intermixed with lots of people with limited transportation routes.

You may have already thought to yourself: "We have these conditions every summer," and you are right – every summer our neighborhood has potential for a very bad fire season. That being said, this summer, because of the timing of the rains, we have a bigger crop of grass than we have seen in recent years. These fuels light easily and burn quickly with lots of intensity. They also serve to provide "kindling" for the heavier fuels such as trees and brush.

Here is the most common follow-up question/statement: "If there is a fire up here there is nothing anyone is going to do. The conditions are so bad everything is going to burn including my house."

Answer: "NO, most of the fires we respond to are small and kept small because of the efforts of the firefighters and land managers (that's you). These fires don't make the news. Even the big fires, like the recent one in Santa Barbara, don't burn down every home. What you do NOW will make a huge difference on the outcome of a fire in your neighborhood!"

So, it is time to get ready for this summer's fire season. Be a responsible land manager and do your part to keep yourself and your neighbors safe. Check out the Fire Safe Marin Web site for information to help you do this. Remember too we are here to help you, give us a call at the fire house and we will be happy to discuss any questions you may have or help guide you with the fuels management around your home.

The fire department will begin our hazard fuel inspections of each and every home on Throckmorton Ridge soon. Prior to this you will receive a mailer detailing the code requirements and guiding you through a self-inspection process. Fire Code enforcement will be stepped up this year so start your work now!

Chipper day: One of the challenges most people face is disposal of cut vegetation. I have applied for a grant from Fire Safe Marin to help fund a "chipper day" for residents of Throckmorton Ridge. More details to follow but let's keep our fingers crossed we are awarded this money.

Emergency Siren: As you may know there is a system of emergency alert sirens in our area. Most of which are inside the Mill Valley City limits and fortunately we have one on the MWPCA clubhouse. These sirens are tested on the first Saturday of the month at noon. Next test day check out whether you can hear them at your home.

It's our hope that everyone has a safe and joyful summer.

Dave Carr, Captain  
Marin County Fire Department  
Throckmorton Ridge Fire Station  
388-5414

## Muirly Musings from Mia at Muir Woods

The woods is lush, green and full of bird song ...a perfect time for a walk in the forest primeval! Butterflies flutter through the sunlit openings along the creek and if you're very lucky, you might spot a steelhead trout fry growing up in a riffle. (The dark shadow over the forest is the harsh fact that no salmon came up into Muir Woods to spawn for second year in a row...a few might have made it into the very lower reaches so there is a tiny glimmer of hope BUT... )

Plan to visit soon to be among the first to see the park's new concession: the Muir Woods Trading Company. In a newly remodeled facility, the cafe promises delicious, fresh and local food. Helpful staff and high quality retail items are also highlights. Sip their special blend of bird-friendly coffee, admire the flooring made from redwood picnic tables that once were at Carlsbad Caverns and make this the perfect way to start your visit to the redwoods.

The Muir Woods shuttle just started its fifth season of operation. GGT buses still deliver the passengers but this year Muir Woods fees help Marin County offer this service through the Marin Transit Agency. This very popular service takes a large chunk of private vehicles off the road each weekend.

Check the park's website to see when major projects will be underway. As of this writing, grants and stimulus funds details are still being worked out to make the Dias Ridge Trail happen (a multi-use trail from Panoramic Highway to Route 1 at Muir Beach, with connections to the Miwok and Redwood Creek trails!) as well as really dig in to restore the lower beaches of Redwood Creek at Muir Beach.

Remember these local tips: the woods are all yours early in the morning or early in the evening (we're open 8 am to 8 pm) and Muir Beach is one of the only beaches that allows bonfires (check out our new fire rings...beach open till 9 pm).

Mia Monroe, Site Supervisor  
Muir Woods National Monument  
stay in touch by checking our website regularly  
([www.nps.gov/muwo](http://www.nps.gov/muwo))

## The Long and Winding Road

New brakes. Tailgaters. Clueless nitwits who cross lanes on a blind curve. Those are just some of the realities of driving on Mt. Tam. But when it comes to the twisting ride home, it apparently is well worth any obstacles.

"Every time I drive home, I get my view. It's heaven back up on the mountain," says Barb Siskin, an eight-year resident of Mt. Tam. "I don't mind the drive at all," concurs Elizabeth Richardson, a long-time resident. "It's always a wonderful feeling coming home." "I enjoy it most of the time, absolutely," says Laila Svendsen, who has lived on Mt. Tam for 20 years. "I look at the mountain and its beautiful scenery." "I love to drive the road!" enthuses Lila Daniels. "Bill [her husband] and I consider our driveway to begin at the Loring turn. Such fun!"

None of these residents is making the trip in a six-wheel truck or even a mini-van. In fact, Lila drives a great-for-curves Porsche and most of the others have relatively small cars. But whatever the size of the vehicle, the pot of gold at the end of the asphalt rainbow – a home high above Muir Woods, the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay – seems to make the trip more than worthwhile.

For one thing, say many residents, it's not that big a sprint from either Tam Junction or the 2 a.m. Club. "I have timed it and it actually takes less than seven minutes to get down to the 2 a.m. Club," says Laila Svendsen. "People sit in traffic much longer than that to go three miles sometimes." "I used to live out near Point Reyes and Inverness, so this drive is short to everywhere," says Barb Siskin. Compared to what I used to drive, this is nothin'."

Still, mountain dwellers tend to do more planning than their brethren within walking distance of Whole Foods or DeLano's. Barb tries to plan ahead so that she does a slew of errands when she "goes down the hill . . . so I don't have to make multiple trips." Elizabeth makes a regular call home when she gets off the bus after work to see if she should pick up something at the store. If she knows her brother-in-law is downtown or heading home (he also lives on the mountain), she doesn't hesitate to call and ask him to pick up a bottle of milk. On the weekend, "Our motto is 'Just don't go anywhere.' Don't leave the mountain on the weekends."

Sometimes weekend and multiple trips can't be helped, especially with children. "Just because we choose to live here doesn't mean our children have to suffer," says Lynn Hindley, who has lived on the mountain for 36 years and knew Edgewood before it had stop signs and Sequoia Valley before it had houses. She thinks her record might have been seven round-trips in one day in order to schlep one or more of her three children to and from school and then to music, dance, baseball or other after-school activities. "I could drive up and down the hill with my eyes closed," says Lynn. While she grinned and bore it (her children are grown and gone), she also found real benefits, such as long, uninterrupted conversations with them.

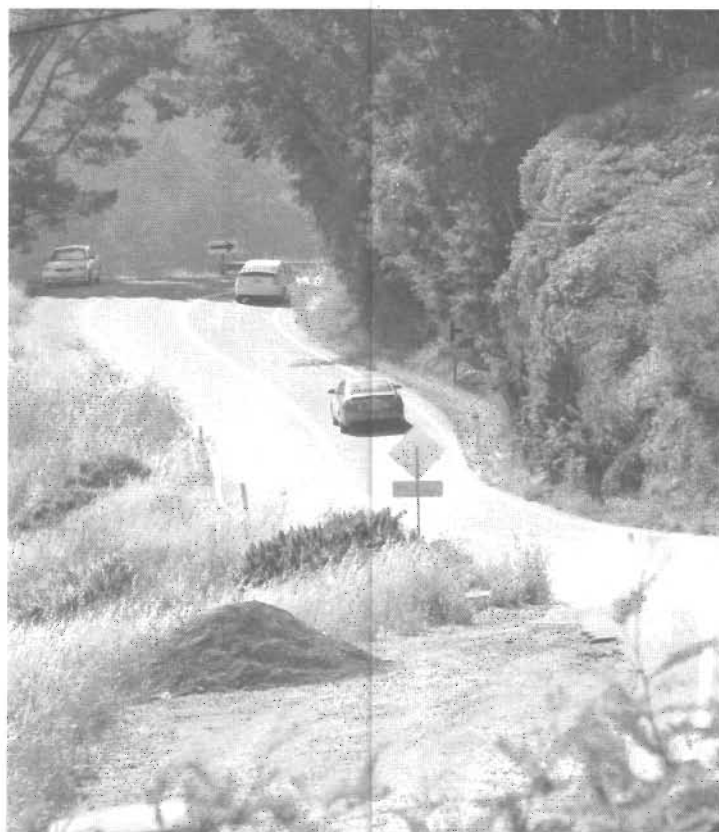
Brad Silen thinks he drives up and down the mountain about every other day and doesn't "consider it a big deal." It takes longer to get from Highway 101 to Kentfield, where he grew up, than it does to get from 101 to his ridgetop home on Mt. Tam. "We see the ocean. We're in the fresh air and on the edge of parkland. It beats dying a suburban death," he says.

What he doesn't like about the drive are drivers who put others at risk. "We have at least two close calls a year with people going over the yellow line," he says. "They're impatient because they don't want to wait for the cyclists. I have no problem with the cyclists; they have a right to use the road as well. Drivers need to wait until they have a safe place to pass. I'm coming the opposite way and they're on a blind corner. . . . It's a huge danger."

Elizabeth Richardson runs into those and other hotshots too. "I don't ever take the stress of someone tailgating me," she says. "I just pull over and wait."

Then there are brakes. "I go through a lot of brakes," says Kit Harris, who has lived on the mountain 14 years. "I came from Florida and I don't think I ever bought brakes." Still, it's worth it, she says. "I like the drive."

- Diane Curtis



## Remodeling

The walls rise skyward  
Like the wings of angels.  
Holding light and air and  
Giddy space.

But sheetrock mud  
Besmeared the walls,  
White plaster splatters  
On the plastic curtains,  
That cover everything.

We started long ago.  
Building our lives,  
We find light,  
We struggle with curtains  
That hide from each other's sight  
Our tender souls.

It is never finished,  
It is never perfect.  
But as the house rises  
We pull down curtains,  
One by one,  
And on many days  
The light fills the room.

- Arthur Deikman

## Bus Service in the Neighborhood

Marin Transit would like to remind riders of the availability of The Stage coming through our neighborhood. Call them at 415/526-3239 or go to the following website for schedule updates: <http://www.marintransit.org/stage.html>



## Your Emails Will Streamline Communications regarding Neighborhood Issues

Please send your Email Address to MWPCA: [webmaster@mounttam.org](mailto:webmaster@mounttam.org)

It will help especially with last-minute meetings or issues that arise like chipper days, emergency meetings, etc. Your address will not be distributed outside the community,

## Marge McQuiston Priest



Long-time resident on the Mountain died peacefully in her sleep on Tuesday, April 7, 2009 at 86 years of age, her beloved dog at her side.

Marge had a very successful career in journalism and public relations. While raising three children, she balanced personal and professional life, rising through the ranks in the League of Women Voters, serving on the Board of Directors as Publications Direction and

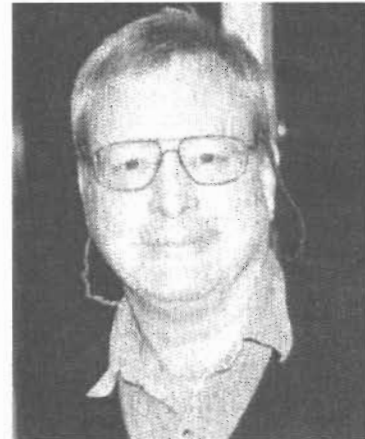
in Public Relations. Marge moved up here on Mt. Tam in 1974 and continued her work with legal field as public member and referee for the State Bar Association Court arbitration program.

Marge was also an artist, sketching and sculpting throughout her lifetime. As neighbors we will remember her daily hikes with her dog on the mountain trails .....and her indomitable spirit. She will definitely be missed.

## Thomas B. Combs

Our longtime neighbor who lived in his self-designed home here on the mountain died of leukemia on February 15<sup>th</sup>.

Tom always loved trains, working with Southern Pacific/AMTRAK for 14 years before he became a highly respected Marin County real estate appraiser which he did for over 20 years. His great pleasures were his award-winning H.O. model train layouts and the club that worked on them with him.



Tom is missed by his many friends, especially for his steadiness, humor, love of fun, unerring sense of the worth of people, generosity and deep kindness.



## "All About" Foo Kennedy

**John Faraher:** Our neighborhood greeter is taking a break from his duties. Many of us miss him and have been asking about what's happening. He's as healthy as ever, but his interests are divided. While he continues to live with his step daughter here on the mountain, his wife had a terrible stroke some time ago and now lives in a nursing home in Novato. For those children he has especially enjoyed greeting, you might like to send John a drawing or write him a post card to let him know how much you have appreciated him. Address: 40 Palm, MV 94941.

**Etta Deikman:** May 29-July 5: "Solo Show" Quicksilver Mine Company, Forrestville  
Curator: Jennifer Almodora  
For information: [deikman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:deikman@sbcglobal.net) or 383-2198  
(Several neighbors attended her opening and thoroughly enjoyed seeing her eight magnificent oils perfectly displayed. Forestville is just beyond Sebastopol on Hwy 116.)

**Alison Bond Shapiro:** appearing at Book Passage in Corte Madera on June 14, 2009 at 4:00 PM.

**Bonnie Himberg:** Bonnie will begin conducting 1-2 day workshops on various topics. For information regarding future dates, contact her at: 415/407-7010 or [bonikasani-mals@aol.com](mailto:bonikasani-mals@aol.com).

**Rima Vogenson** has gone back to work: Big change in the way the head hunting profession operates. She's enmeshed in using the new tools: Twitter, LinkedIn, and FaceBook. Her specialty? Technology and energy companies, especially software technology from startups to public firms. She's loving all the learning.

**Marge Priest's home** for sale by her family. For details contact their agent Heidi Hornberger, a local Mill Valley resident and broker, at [heidi.horn@comcast.net](mailto:heidi.horn@comcast.net).

**Marge's two tenants seek other residences here on the mountain** since her family is selling the house. If you have a unit or know of someone who does please leave a message at: [webmaster@mounttam.org](mailto:webmaster@mounttam.org).

**Lila Daniels has taken up knitting.** Anyone else? She's in learning mode and would like to meet experienced knitters. Contact: [lilasd@aol.com](mailto:lilasd@aol.com) or 383-8422.

**Susan Van Hise** is at work doing physical therapy and thoroughly her reentry into the labor force. She's working with a private agency serving the Mission District in San Francisco.

**Fire Alert for those with youngish children:** there have been two break-ins at the clubhouse in the last two weeks: remains of a couple of poorly built fires inside and outside (using paper towels?!), matches, broken window frames, missing water bottles, etc. If you think this might involve one or more of your children, please increase your supervision of them when playing outdoors, as this is a potentially dangerous situation.

Foo (AKA James/Jaime or Abel) is an American born New York pick and shovel laborer and long distance hitch hiker turned itinerant junk peddler (old tires and scrap metal) and rubbish hauler. Besides wallowing in filth for over 50 years Foo spent 2 years as an expatriate truck driver in Sydney, Australia and over 3 years as a rural development Peace Corps volunteer in the bush country of Botswana. After returning from Africa he spent 3 growing seasons translating for migrant farm workers in the state of Virginia.

Over the years Foo has traveled widely and wildly in North, Central, and South America, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the



Islands of the Pacific. When not at home or on the road he has worked on short term projects with Laotian refugees in California; habitat restoration in Virginia; howler monkeys in Belize; dry forest wildlife in Jalisco, Mexico; two Navajo Nation construction projects; dinosaur fossils in St. George, Utah; bookmobiles in Antigua, Guatemala; turtle preservation in Suriname; two Katrina hurricane building programs in Louisiana; animal rescue in Kanab, Utah; trumpeter swan and wetland restoration in Wyoming; orphans and migrant workers in Colima, Mexico; pre-European settlement patterns on Easter Island (Rapa Nui) and weekly for five years at Wildcare and the St. Vincent de Paul homeless food kitchen in San Rafael. Foo also served in the Israeli army at the Szifin-Psigot tank base.

Foo has lived on the mountain on and off for over 45 years. He has 2 children and 7 grandchildren.

- Foo Kennedy

### Call for Neighborhood Journalists, Writers, Photographers.....

Do you notice more writers/contributors to our Look-out Issue? That's deliberate.....and I'm looking for other contributors, too. Photographs are always welcome. And, please let me know if you enjoy this larger issue. Thank you so much for your input.

- Lila Daniels, [lilasd@aol.com](mailto:lilasd@aol.com)



## Come Join Us!

Breakfast Saturday and Sunday 8 am – 11 am

Lunch Wednesday – Sunday 11:30 am – 3 pm

Dinner Wednesday – Sunday 5:30 pm– 9/9:30 pm

Small Plates served Saturday and Sunday after lunch

Phone 415-381-9000

www.mtnhomeinn.com



### Yoga has returned to the Mountain

**Wendy Meideros** instructs a yoga class at the Clubhouse. Mats and equipment are provided. Monday and Thursday evenings from 6:00 PM—7:00 PM.

Thank you, again, Matthew, for your help with real estate listings the last couple of years!

Matthew Pouliot  
Pacific Union GMAC Real Estate  
60 Belvedere Drive  
Mill Valley, CA 94941  
Primary: 415/265-7020



### 2009 MWPCA dues are still due!

Please complete the form on the next page and return it at your earliest convenience. We are updating the Neighborhood Directory and want to make sure we have your most current information.....**especially your email address.** It will be used within the neighborhood only for short-term alerts regarding safety issues and

Listing and selling properties on Mt. Tam.  
Call me...Let my 20+ years experience on The Mountain work for you.

415/755-8300  
(EMAIL)



**Kathleen Delehanty**, member of MWPCA and former resident is once again providing the real estate updates for the neighborhood. Thank you, Kathleen!

### Active Listings – All Realtors

| Active                                   |             |           |
|--|-------------|-----------|
| 479 Panoramic                            | 2BR/1BA     | \$725,000 |
| 35 Castle Rock Dr                        | 1 BR/1BA    | 798,000   |
| 480 Edgewood Ave                         | 3 BR/1.5 BA | 799,000   |
| 740 Panoramic Hwy                        | 3 BR/2 BA   | 899,000   |
| 574 Panoramic Hwy                        | 2 BR/2 BA   | 950,000   |
| 139 Marin View Ave                       | 3+BR/2.5 BA | 1,375,000 |
| 98 Washington Park                       | 2 BR/2.5 BA | 1,950,000 |
| 667 Sequoia Valley Rd                    | 4 BR/3.5 BA | 2,800,000 |
| Contingent                               |             |           |
| 240 Parnoamic Hwy                        | 3 BR/2.5 BA | 845,000   |
| Sold                                     |             |           |
| 30 Monte Cimas Ave                       | 2 BR/2 BA   | 959,000   |
| 599 Edgewood Ave                         | 3 BR/2 BA   | 1,050,000 |
| 161 Bay View Dr                          | 4 BR/2.5 BA | 1,623,000 |
| 560 Edgewood Ave                         | 4 BR/3.5 BA | 1,760,000 |
| Lots—Active                              |             |           |
| Redwood Road                             |             | 249,000   |
| 650 Edgewood Ave                         |             | 350,000   |
| Sequoia Valley Road                      |             | 400,000   |
| 56 Mountain Lane                         |             | 559,000   |
| Please call Kathleen with any questions! |             |           |

## Help.MyComputer

Home & Small Office Consulting  
Installations Upgrades Tutoring  
Trouble-shooting Hand-holding  
Peter 383-1842 / 515-2642 cell  
PeterSpear@words-b-us.com

## GENE HAMILTON HANDYMAN & PAINTING

(415) 389-6030  
GRHamilton@sbcglobal.net



806 Edgewood Ave. Mill Valley, CA 94941

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3/4 ton PU truck  
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Percolation Testing, Regulatory Compliance  
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Oakland, CA 94602 Cell: (510) 390-3992  
e.environmental@sbcuc.net



**Jim  
Parker  
Electric**  
Electrical Contractor  
Lic. No# 410049

388 8720

## House/Pet-Sitter



415-505-1381  
Mill Valley

JimRichardson.com/jimsits

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architect...

## Massage on the Mountain

Traditional Japanese  
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Your Home or My Studio  
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or Special Events 388-9430



Catherine Mc Goohan

## Mountain Repair Service

Light Construction  
Home Maintenance, etc.  
Call Andy at 388-6226



ann matranga  
♦  
editor and writing  
coach  
books and articles  
"JUST WRITE"  
♦  
415.332.4924

Pgr # 784-5774



## Mountain Sewer Service

Pumping & Minor Repairs

(415) 381-5942  
(415) 383-6099

10 Pacific Way  
Muir Beach, CA 94965



## METROPOLE Mortgage Service

KEITH PAPULIAS  
Broker/Owner

"Lending Millions Since 1982"

TEL: 415.383.0269 FAX: 415.383.4126  
90 THROCKMORTON AVE. SUITE 22 MILL VALLEY, CA 94941  
RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION APARTMENTS COMMERCIAL

## LOOKOUT

Submit ad copy to:  
webmaster@mounttam.org  
or mail to 40 Ridge Ave.  
Confirm by phone:  
381-3119

## MWPCA MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS Due for 2009!!

\$45 Household \_\_\_\_\_ \$15 Senior \_\_\_\_\_ (both include newsletter)

General Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 Lookout subscription for non-residents \_\_\_\_\_

Specific Donation: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Facility Sewer Disaster Children's (circle)

Name/s: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

(Please complete the entire form to reconfirm your information as we are creating a 2009 Neighborhood Directory)

Mail to: MWPCA, 40 Ridge Ave., Mill Valley, CA 94941

# THE LOOKOUT

Muir Woods Park Community Association  
 40 Ridge Avenue  
 Mill Valley, CA 94941

Non-Profit  
 Organization  
 U.S. Postage Paid  
 Mill Valley, CA  
 Permit # 149

*Return Service Requested*

*Conley*

Tim & Jen  
 40 Brighton Blvd  
 Mill Valley, CA 94941

## 2009 MWPCA Board Officers

|                    |                |          |
|--------------------|----------------|----------|
| President          | Peter Hindley  | 383-7252 |
| Vice President     | Keith Papulias | 388-9219 |
| Recording Sec.     | Diane Curtis   | 383-7241 |
| Corresponding Sec. | Lynn Hindley   | 388-7252 |
| Treasurer          | Brad Silen     | 383-3612 |
| Director           | Bob Clemons    | 388-3641 |
| Director           | Lila Daniels   | 383-8422 |
| Director           | Harold Dittmer | 383-1112 |
| Director           | Kit Harris     | 388-0829 |
| Director           | John Lovell    | 383-4530 |
| Director           | (vacant)       |          |

## Committees

|                    |              |          |
|--------------------|--------------|----------|
| Clubhouse Rentals  | Lynn Hindley | 388-7252 |
| Membership         | Diane Curtis | 383-7241 |
| Safety/Emergency   | Brad Silen   | 383-3612 |
| Lookout Newsletter | Lila Daniels | 383-8422 |
| Parenting          | Kit Harris   | 388-0829 |
| Webmaster          | Diane Curtis | 383-7241 |
| Tech Consultant    | Peter Spear  | 383-1842 |
| Sewer Committee    | Lynn Hindley | 388-7252 |

## Clubhouse Available for Rent

Rates, rules, forms, calendar and all information about what is included are on the website: <http://www.mounttam.org>.  
 Special member discounts available.

## Community Calendar - check online for updates [www.mounttam.org](http://www.mounttam.org)

| ONGOING   |                 |                                   |         |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Mon/Thurs |                 | Yoga has resumed                  | 6:00 PM |
| JUNE      |                 |                                   |         |
| Thursday  | 11              | Board Meeting                     | 7:00 PM |
| TBD       | (notice coming) | Sewer Meeting                     | 7:00 PM |
| JULY      |                 |                                   |         |
| TBD       | 1               | Alternative Waste-water Treatment | 6:30 PM |
| Thursday  | 9               | Board Meeting                     | 7:00 PM |