

# Community Guide

## 2017



San Geronimo Valley  
Community Center

50th Anniversary  
1969-2019



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Our sincere appreciations go out to the Community Center's amazing staff and Board of Directors for their help and support.

Please note: It was our goal to offer the most useful, inclusive, and accurate information possible. The committee extends its sincere apologies for any inadvertent omission or error.

## Dedication

On behalf of the San Geronimo Valley Community Center Board of Directors the golden 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary *Community Guide* is dedicated to Barbara Swift Brauer and Anne McClain.

Because of the perseverance, persistence, skill, kindness and wisdom of these two remarkable volunteers, you hold a gem in your hands.



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# Welcome!



On behalf of the Board of Directors of the San Geronimo Valley Community Center, I would like to welcome you to this 50th anniversary issue of the *Community Guide* (formerly *Resource Guide*) and the rich legacy it represents. If you are new to the San Geronimo Valley and Nicasio, and this is the first *Guide* you've seen, you are in for a treat!

The first time I saw the *Valley Resource Guide*, having just moved to Forest Knolls from NYC, it was the "Millennium 2000" issue. I opened it thinking it was merely a telephone directory. After several hours of amazed reading about everything from Miwok History to advice on water-saving toilets, I felt informed and illuminated about the rich past and dynamic present of this beautiful place we live in. Over the years, that millennial *Guide's* corners, and those editions that followed, have grown soft with use, margins filled with jotted notes; to this day we still refer back to them for tips and information.

The Board and Staff of the San Geronimo Valley Community Center are extremely proud and grateful to again coordinate and fund the publication of this latest edition of the *Guide*. We are deeply thankful to the team of volunteers who've devoted countless hours and energy to the creation of this special anniversary edition.

As we approach our 50<sup>th</sup> year, the San Geronimo Valley Community Center Board of Directors is dedicated more than ever to ensuring that the Center and its programs are able to continue our mission well into the future. This anniversary *Guide* is an apt reflection of that effort.

This new *Guide*, like those before it, is bursting with information and resources, fresh stories and fascinating history about the San Geronimo Valley and Nicasio you may have never heard. I'm sure you'll delight in opening the pages of this *Guide* and the gifts and surprises within. No doubt, your copy too will grow soft and dog-eared. Use it well, and enjoy!

Sincerely,



Marian Cremin, President  
San Geronimo Valley Community Center Board of Directors

## A Unique Community



Our community is not only beautiful for its landscapes and diversity of thought, but also for the abundance of resources available to our residents. I am proud to serve all of you as your County Supervisor at the Board of Supervisors. The San Geronimo Valley is a unique and wonderful community, and all of you using this *Guide* exemplify what it means to be a community member. It is important, now more than ever, to continue to engage and be active in your surroundings. This *Community Guide* will provide you with the necessary information to be a successful resident of the San Geronimo Valley. If you need help or have questions, this *Guide* will lead you in the right direction.

This newly updated 2017 *Community Guide* is how the San Geronimo Valley demonstrates to our residents that we care. Remember, it will be a community effort to meet the needs and challenges of each new generation. As your Supervisor, I will always fight for all of you and be your resource.

Warmly,



Dennis Rodoni  
District 4, Marin County Supervisor



# Preface

by Barbara S. Brauer, Editor

How does one go about creating a collection of stories, histories, profiles, photos, and miscellany inclusive and rich enough to convey the vibrancy of the San Geronimo Valley and Nicasio communities? Very thoughtfully.

We began with the realization that the San Geronimo Valley Community Center, the organization responsible for financing and producing the *Guide*, would soon be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, a major achievement for the Center and all of us in the community who support it. Surely the 2017 *Guide* should be worthy of that milestone achievement, celebrating not only the Center's past and current role as "The Heart of the Valley," but also the communities it has served so effectively over the years.

Another major consideration at the outset was the fact that technology has revolutionized all aspects of the way we live, especially the way we obtain information, even about goings on around the corner. So, just as the loss of our exclusive 488 telephone number prefix and the advent of cell phones meant the demise of the local phone directory in the 2011 *Guide*, so, too, we know people often prefer to go online to access the resources they need.

So the question was: should this be print or online or hybrid? We weighed the advantages of an online format: easily updated information, color photos and graphics, and freedom from space limitations. Then the advantages of a print edition: more accessible (even in a power outage,

more than one person acknowledged), tangible and tactile. Asking ourselves to choose between an online or print format, we all agreed that there is something satisfying about holding a book in our hands, settling in to read and browsing through its pages.

So here is the print edition of the *Community Guide*, with all its benefits and drawbacks, with an online edition. One of the most beautiful things about the online edition is the fact that it contains everything from this print edition, but will continue to add new materials and updates in the months and years to come.

When we began, we issued a wide invitation to all in the community to submit stories, memories and photos. The items and photos you see here were contributed by many individuals throughout the community, for which we are very grateful. At the same time, we know there are many more stories, memories, and photos out there. We hope that reading this *Guide* will spur you to submit your own to be included in the *Community Guide Online*. See page 174.

Please note that we have tried to be as inclusive and accurate as possible. We sincerely regret any inadvertent omissions or errors. It is also important to acknowledge that the articles and items submitted by the contributors reflect their own viewpoints and are not necessarily those of the Community Center or *Community Guide* Committee.

We hope you will enjoy the wealth of material assembled here as much as we have.



## A Treasure Trove

In gathering and compiling materials for this special anniversary edition of the *Community Guide*, we wanted to include the many stories, events, personal profiles and miscellany relevant to both the Community Center and how it came to be, and the Valley and Nicasio communities it serves.

It wasn't long before we realized the incredible treasure trove of information buried in past issues of the Center's newsletter, *Stone Soup*. From 1989 to the present, each issue of *Stone Soup* records the events, pressing issues, celebrations and voices of the times. Eureka! We'd found a gold mine!

Throughout this *Community Guide*, we present some of the most notable profiles and tidbits from past issues of *Stone Soup*. Not unlike having our very own time machine.



# A Note Regarding Photographs for this Edition

by Anne McClain, Photo Editor

It is a time-worn cliché that a picture is worth a thousand words, but I think it is a truth. We were given access to many wonderful photos illuminating times gone by and pictures documenting the here and now. Hank Floyd gave us access to photos taken by his late father, Harlan Floyd, who not only built quite a few houses in the Valley, but also documented some of the wild times and personalities of the Valley in the '60s and '70s with beautiful photographs. He also allowed us to publish Harlan's photo of Jerry Garcia playing ball at the Woodacre Ball Field—the first and only time it has been published anywhere.

Images of earlier days were brought to us by Jim Staley, who allowed us to use photos and information that he collected and previously published in his book, *Railroads in the San Geronimo Valley 1874–1933*, and his 2005 calendar highlighting historical scenes from the San Geronimo Valley.

Newall Snyder, who collects antiques, paper items and ephemera, allowed us to scan the items from his personal collection related to the Valley and Nicasio. Amazingly, he found a photo of the Center's mural signed by Maurice Del Mué, the artist himself, and inscribed to Bobby Clever, the boy who posed for it. Newall came across this treasure the day after coming to the Community Center and seeing the mural for the very first time. The postcard's inscription appears in these pages.

David Wilson entrusted some of the old photos that he and his family have collected to Jean Berensmeier and told her stories of the old days to accompany them as well as giving an interview to Amos Klausner.

Tom Valens has taken many great photos of the community coming together to build playgrounds and to work at the school, as well as some of flooding streets when we get one of those years of deluge. Larry Brauer and Peter Oppenheimer contributed beautiful landscape and nature photos. Elaine Patterson Doss rounded up some wonderful historical photos of Nicasio. Art Rogers allowed us to publish several of his famous group photos commemorating moments in Valley life. Chuck Ford gave us permission to use photos from his collection as well as a wonderful picture he took of the Gratis Builders at Aneice Taylor's home. (You can find that story inside!)

Susan Gregg Conard gave us photos and drawings made by her father, Harold Gregg, of Forest Farm Summer Camp (now Serenity Knolls). Bob Baker contributed some fun photos of the Doggy Olympics from the 1980s, and Petra Martin Toriumi gave us some from her childhood in the 1950s. Where we found gaps in our photo record, San Geronimo School student Paloma Russ took the perfect photos to fill them.

As well as photos, I was able to collect some historic documents such as the Holly Fair 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary booklet from 2000 and some pages from the Worth While Club from the 1940s and '50s.

On behalf of the *Community Guide* Committee, I want to express our deep gratitude to these many individuals for the generous contribution of these amazing photos and documents. It has been a wonderful and eye-opening experience to get a look at all of these treasures, and I hope that you enjoy them, too!



# Introduction

by Dave Cort, SGV Community Center Executive Director



It is an honor to present this *Community Guide* to our community. Throughout 2017 the Community Center Board and staff have been engaged in preparations for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our organization that will take place in 2019. This *Community Guide* will kick off the celebration of this milestone. The *Community Guide* Committee under the leadership of Barbara Brauer has worked tirelessly for two years to prepare this wonderful guide as a gift to our community. Its historical information and photos provide incredible examples of how our community has evolved into the model community that it is today.

As I glance through our past *Resource Guides* from 1983, 1991, 1995, 2000, 2006, and 2011, I am so appreciative of our Valley community in both how much it has grown and changed while keeping its core values as a caring

community where our residents remain passionate about all of their fellow community members, and the stunning environmental beauty that we live in. At the same time I am honored to observe how the community continues to address the changing needs of our residents. I feel extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to be employed at the Community Center since 1991 and to experience the growth of our organization and our commitment to our mission:

*To foster healthy communities within the San Geronimo Valley and Nicasio by providing a dynamic center for locally based human services, arts and culture, education, health and wellness, and community building.*

It is critical that this mission is so much more than words on paper. Our Board of Directors, our staff, and our volunteers, along with our community partners from the public sector, the private sector, faith-based organizations, and from our fellow nonprofit organizations, work together in the healthiest ways possible to insure that we remain the caring community that is reflected throughout this *Community Guide*. See page 174.



SGV Community Center Staff and Board 2016 (Photo by Peter Oppenheimer)



# Part I: As We Are Today

## Chapter 1: The San Geronimo Valley Community Center



*(Photo by Donn DeAngelo)*



*Volunteers at the Monday Senior Lunch l-r Stephanie Fein, Elena Roncaglia, Linea Larsen, and Sylvia Cornejo*



*(Photo by Anne McClain)*



*Zoila Berardi reading at the new "Zoila's" Day Care Center, 2016*

*I love the Center because it gives you a sense of community. It's a place for meeting new friends and having delicious meals. What's not to love?*

KATHLEEN BROWN



*Tim Cain and fans at the Holiday Arts Faire, 2007*





# Programs of the San Geronimo Valley Community Center

Many think of the Community Center as the heart and soul of the San Geronimo Valley. Through an evolution as natural as the hills that surround it, the Center has grown from the creative seed planted by a few visionary residents into a thriving organization providing a wealth of ongoing services and events for residents of the Valley, Nicasio and beyond. It is impossible now to imagine our communities today without “the Heart of the Valley.”

In fulfillment of our Center’s mission to foster healthy communities within the San Geronimo Valley and Nicasio, the San Geronimo Valley Community Center offers a range of resources, information, and referrals for all Valley and Nicasio residents and the communities beyond.

Here is an overview of programs current as of September 2017. For more information and program updates, please call 415-488-8888 or visit [www.sgvcc.org](http://www.sgvcc.org).

## Human Services Programs

### Food Bank

In partnership with the San Francisco/Marin Food Bank the Community Center distributes food to 150 families and individuals on average every month. We also offer special distributions for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Chanukah. Health and Wellness Education and healthy food choices are important parts of our nutrition program. The Food Bank is open Mondays from 9:00AM–5:00PM and Thursdays from 1:00–5:00PM.



*Food Bank (Photo by Rebecca Teague)*

### Senior Lunch

This program is held on Mondays and Thursdays at noon and provides nutritious and delicious meals cooked by Good Earth Natural Foods for our community members age 60 years and older. At the lunch, seniors can enjoy live music, speakers, legal advice, blood pressure checks and a great opportunity to mingle, socialize, and enjoy the art in our galleries. Following the Senior Lunch, a free hot meal for the general public is offered, a program made possible through our partnership with St. Vincent’s Dining Hall.

### Senior Activities

Classes and gatherings are held at the Community Center throughout the week for our community members age 60 years and older. Growing Old Gracefully peer support group, Mah Jongg, Ping Pong, Exercise for Alta Cockers, and Tai Chi are all included in the Senior Activities programming.

### Health Fairs

In collaboration with Coastal Health Alliance, Kaiser, Marin County Health and Human Services, West Marin Senior Services, Dominican University, San Geronimo Valley Lions Club and other local health care practitioners, the Community Center offers Health Fairs, which are held in the spring and fall, providing free health screenings, immunization clinics, flu shots, homeopathic remedies, and health information and prevention services for adults and children. Dominican University nursing students participate in a community nursing class every Thursday at the Community Center during their spring and fall semesters. They collaborate with Center staff and volunteers in providing preventative services to our residents.

### West Marin Coalition for Healthy Youth

This Coalition addresses teen binge drinking, prescription drug abuse, and smoking. The Community Center is the lead agency for the Coalition that includes the Lagunitas, Nicasio, Shoreline, Tamalpais and Bolinas-Stinson school districts. The Coalition is funded by the County of Marin and includes other Coalitions throughout Marin under the umbrella of the Marin Prevention Network. The Coalition is currently working on Social Host Ordinances and parent education, and creating an array of healthy activities for our youth and teens.

## Children, Youth, Teen, and Family Programs

### Summer Bridge/School Readiness

In partnership with the Lagunitas School District, the Center provides a free five-week School Readiness Program, called Summer Bridge. This program offers kindergarteners



*Summer Bridge Program*



entering Lagunitas or Nicasio school districts a preview of the routine of their new adventure...school! This program runs Monday through Thursday every July.

### First 5 -Valley Playgroup

The free Ready, Set, Go Valley Playgroup is designed for families and caregivers with children 0-5 years. It meets every Tuesday and Thursday 10:00AM-12:00 noon in the East Room at the San Geronimo Valley Community Center. The playgroup has been funded by Marin First 5 since 2005. The program offers free health screenings, holiday parties, and weekly visits from Marin Literacy Program, the FLAGship bus on Tuesdays. The FLAGship bus provides bilingual storytime, songs, art projects, and School Readiness activities for families with children 0-5. It's fun learning on wheels!

The primary focus for Playgroup is emotional, social and physical well-being. Playgroup is a wonderful place to interact with other parents, and offers an array of toys, special events, books, art projects and overall support to Valley parents. In addition to twice weekly playgroups, the Center offers informative parent education: programs on nutrition, child health and safety, parenting skills, and child development.

### First 5 and SGVCC Events for Kids 0-5 Newsletter

The Community Center provides a calendar for families in the San Geronimo Valley and Nicasio, listing information on local events, programs, activities and resources. It highlights ongoing events such as playgroup, classes, and support groups, and special events such as speakers, free health clinics and other community resources. For calendar submissions or subscriptions call 415-488-8888 ext. 254.

### “Zoila’s” Licensed Childcare

This after school childcare program serves children in kindergarten through third grade on the San Geronimo School Campus. Named in honor of the program’s founder, Zoila Berardi, the Community Center staff runs this innovative program that includes healthy fun and adult and peer mentoring in a safe, nurturing environment where our young people learn skills they need to make positive differences in their own lives and in the world around them.

### Loft Youth Center

Located in the San Geronimo Valley Community Gym, our Valley-minded youth center, the Loft, is open Mondays through Fridays after school until 5:30PM on regular school days and serves students grades 4 to 8. Members enjoy the Loft for a “hang out zone,” open gym time, a healthy snack, and a place to be before going to sports, tutoring or any other after school activity. Special evening and weekend programming is also provided throughout the year.

### Valley After School Tutoring Program (VAST)

Started in 2001, this award-winning program offers one-on-one tutoring and homework help for students at affordable fees. This locally based program addresses the specific educational needs of elementary, middle, and high school students. The tutoring center is a place for students to get help with subjects that are difficult for them or subjects in which they want to excel. Tutors are matched to meet the specific needs of each child. Tutoring is offered on the Lagunitas School campus Monday through Thursday afternoons.

### After School Enrichment and Recreation

Throughout the year, the Community Center offers a variety of fun and enriching activities for children and youth of all ages. Classes are publicized through the Center’s *Stone Soup Catalogue of Classes* published quarterly and includes classes such as karate, kung fu, yoga, and more. The Community Center partners with St. Cecilia’s Church, St. Rita’s Church and Catholic Charities as a host site for CYO basketball throughout the fall and winter months.

### Summer Day Camp

The Community Center offers an exciting and enriching five-week summer program for children ages 5 to 10 years old, Monday through Friday. This is a great opportunity for kids to spend their days right here in our own beautiful Valley. We are proud to have an outstanding staff of talented, professional and enthusiastic counselors. This traditional, classic Valley camp is what brings campers back year after year. Weekly field trips to one of Marin County’s many wonderful nature spots for a few hours of hiking and fun are a highlight of the camp’s program. The program is located in the Loft and in the Community Gym.

### Holiday Camp

This program for children in kindergarten to eighth grade is offered in the Loft and in the Gym during school breaks.



Summer Day Camp



This is a donation based camp. Donations are greatly appreciated and support the sustainability of these camps. Holiday Camp hours are from 9AM to 5PM.

**Job Training**

In its third year as of 2017, the Job Training Program is for youth, teens and young adults and connects middle school, high school, and college students with local businesses and community-based organizations. Students gain firsthand experience in employment and mentorship with our partners. This program continues to grow and thrive.

**School-Linked Services**

These programs had their genesis in 1996 when the Lagunitas School District, in partnership with the Community Center, received a Healthy Start grant from the California Department of Education. Through these school-based services, the Community Center and the Lagunitas School District partner to provide programs in health, wellness, and social and emotional learning throughout the school day along with parent education in the evenings. Today, the school's wellness policy; the school garden program; healthy school lunches; reduce, reuse and recycling programs; and safe routes to school programs all continue to thrive.



*Halloween Carnival at the Lagunitas School  
(Photo by Anne McClain)*

**Wellness and Arts Classes For Adults**

Adults of all ages participate in a diverse array of programs at the Community Center and at the Community Gym. Open Gyms include coed basketball, men's basketball, ping pong, volleyball, dance and more. Every week there are classes in yoga, tai chi, core fitness training, and other types of movement and martial arts. The Community Center partners with the College of Marin in hosting a watercolor class taught by long-time Valley resident Marty Meade.

**Arts and Cultural Events, Performances, and Gallery Shows**

The Community Center is proud to nurture the creative talents of the Valley's outstanding artists showcasing music, painting, sculpture, photography, comedy and other works.

We support the careers of emerging, local artists by providing opportunities for community members to showcase their talent and to participate in arts activities.

Musical and theatrical performances take place in the Center's Valley Room, and larger events, often featuring regional and national acts, take place outdoors in the Courtyard.

The Maurice Del Mué Galleries in the Valley and West rooms feature monthly solo artist exhibits or group shows with receptions for the entire community and beyond. The long running annual Spring Art Show in May features the work of up to 100 Valley artists. Other annual group shows include the Senior Lunch Group Show, Pressing Matters: Printmakers Group Show, and the Annual Photography Show.

A new addition is the Valley Arts and Lectures series offering free workshops, talks and films on subjects of community interest such as environmental, social, political and spiritual issues.

As part of the Arts and Lectures program, the Center hosts a monthly Artist Film Night featuring a documentary on an individual artist or arts theme. The showing is followed by a discussion period.

Other major annual events include the St. Patrick's Day Talent Show, summer concerts, open mic nights, and the Holiday Arts Faire, which has taken place the first weekend every December for more than 40 years.

**Community Building: Healthy Community Collaborative (HCC)**

The Healthy Community Collaborative is made up of San Geronimo Valley, Nicasio, and other West Marin organizations and local residents who meet to exchange information, and identify and work together to address community needs and support collaborative implementation of programs. The Community Center has provided coordination and administrative support to the San Geronimo Valley's



HCC since 1996. Monthly meetings are held September through June at the Community Center. All West Marin organizations and individuals are invited to join.

Participants include Coastal Health Alliance, Marin County Health and Human Services, Legal Aid of Marin, West Marin Senior Services, Lagunitas School District, Gan Halev, St. Cecilia's Church, San Geronimo Community Presbyterian Church, West Marin Rotary Club, Valley Emergency Fund, Valley Toys and Joys, San Geronimo Valley Affordable Housing Association, TAPS, VERG, Valley Planning Group, IN SPIRIT, Marin County Fire Department, CYO Basketball, SPAWN, Wilderness Way, San Geronimo Valley Stewards, and others.

Call Center Executive Director, Dave Cort, at 415-488-8888, ext. 224 if you or your organization are interested in getting notices about the monthly meetings and becoming a part of the Collaborative team.

### Publications of the Center

The Center offers other online and print publications to keep the community up to date on its many programs and events.

“What’s Happening at the Community Center” is a weekly e-newsletter of upcoming events and programs. The “Senior Lunch Menu” e-newsletter is sent out monthly and includes useful quick links to other Center information, including Senior Programs. To sign up to receive either of these, email [info@sgvcc.org](mailto:info@sgvcc.org).

The quarterly print *Stone Soup* provides extensive articles on community and Center news and events, including the *Programs and Classes Catalogue* inserted into each issue. These are distributed free to every post office box in the San Geronimo Valley and Nicasio. View past issues online at [sgvcc.org](http://sgvcc.org).

### Facility Rentals

The Community Center has four rooms, a kitchen and a beautiful outdoor space, as well as the Community Gym

and Loft, available as rentals for classes, meetings, workshops, conferences, private parties, weddings, and events. The daily and hourly rental rates are among the most reasonable in the County. Please contact Poko Giacomini at 415-488-8888 ext 250.

### Volunteer and Community Service

The Community Center has many volunteer and community service opportunities for students and adults. The Center couldn't operate without our loyal volunteers. The Center is authorized as a Community Service site by Marin County Probation for Marin residents to work off Community Service hours.



(Photo by Paloma Russ)

### Central Park in Woodacre

In 2015, the Community Center was presented with the opportunity to become the owner of a parcel of land in Woodacre. A generous foundation offered to purchase the lot and set up payments for the long term to cover property taxes and insurance. It is intended to be a “pocket park” for the enjoyment of Valley residents. We are in the process of installing signage, landscaping, tables, benches, etc., and are maintaining the property. It is envisioned as a place to sit in the shade and read a book or meet your neighbors for a game of chess. We welcome the community to come to the park and enjoy the peaceful surroundings.



Supervisor Steve Kinsey (standing, in checked shirt) was honored by the San Geronimo Valley Healthy Community Collaborative at its annual celebration on May 16, 2016. (Photo by Samantha Davidson)



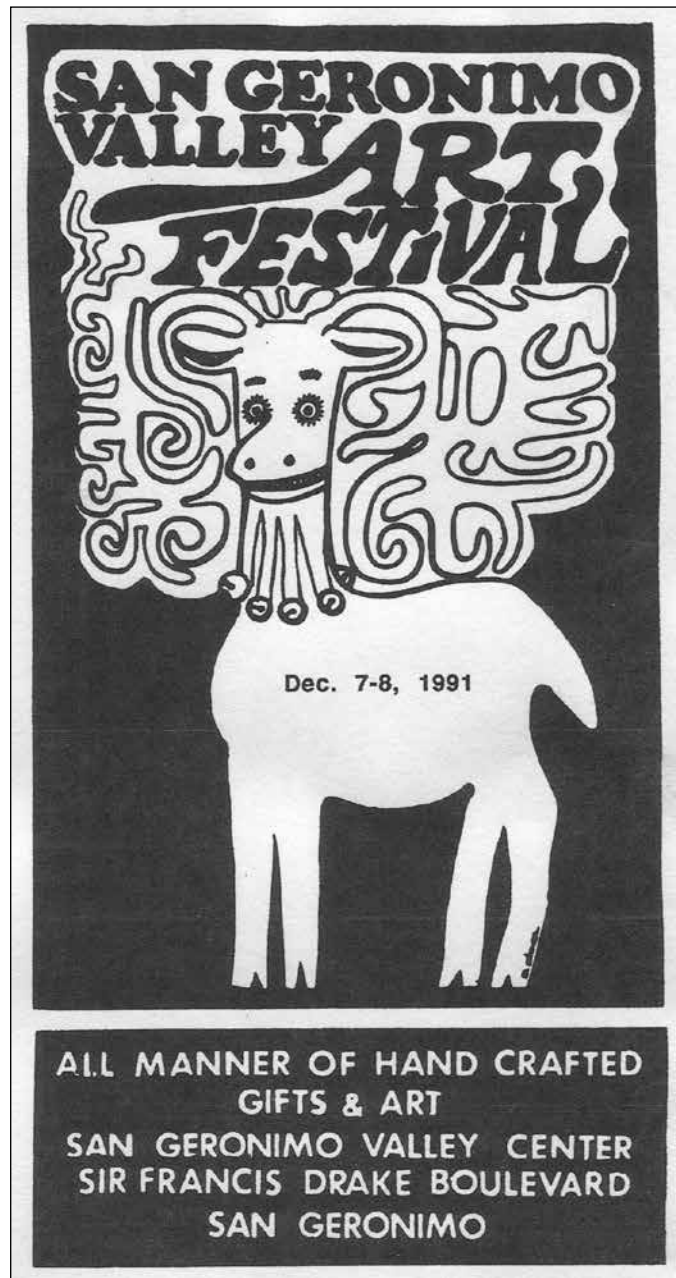
## A Calendar of Celebrations/ Annual Events of the SGVCC

Something is always happening at the Community Center. Among the most popular of all are the major events that have become popular Valley traditions.

- **The St. Patrick's Day Talent Show** fundraising event highlights Valley youth in an all-family, Saturday afternoon and evening event in mid-March. Proceeds go to fund the Community Center's youth programming. Parents and other community members provide volunteer support for set up, box office, concessions, and clean up. Center Board members donate lasagna to be sold at the event.
- **The Spring Art Show** is held for 10 days in May in the Center's Valley and West rooms, and features the art work of up to 100 Valley artists. The Friday night Opening Reception is one of the major social events of the year, attracting more than 200 people over the course of the evening. A lively fiddle band accompanies the event.
- **Golf Tournament and Oyster Feed Fundraiser**, held at the San Geronimo Golf Course, grows more popular every year. Business and community members are invited to sponsor the event in support of the Community Gym and Loft. Attendees enjoy a day of golf and an oyster feast, for which tickets can be purchased separately.
- **The Healthy Community Collaborative Volunteer Appreciation Potluck** is held the first Monday of June to honor the volunteers of the West Marin nonprofit organization members of the HCC. Barbecue and beverages are provided for this family event. The location rotates between the Center, St. Cecilia's and San Geronimo Presbyterian Church. Every other year, the Edie Robinson Awards Presentation is included in the program.
- **Heart of the Valley Gala** is the biggest event on the Center's calendar, hosted by the Center Board. Held in the fall at the San Geronimo Golf Course, the event features beverages and hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction, a fabulous dinner, the year's honoree acknowledgment, and live music and dancing.
- **Holiday Arts Faire**, a free event almost as old as the Center itself, is held the first Saturday of December each year, welcoming the community with fun activities for all ages: Live music performances by Valley youth, popular favorites such as Tim Cain; wreath-making; Santa visits; an arts and crafts faire; silent auction; and food and treats for sale in support of the Center and other Valley nonprofits.

*I love the Center because I've lived here 40 years and now that I'm retired, I'm finally meeting my neighbors and taking part in our art community and the holiday faire.*

MARIE EISEN



*For twenty years this hand-screened poster by Donna Sloan was printed by the hundreds in artist Fred (Lee) Berensmeier's art studio in Lagunitas by a crew of Valley residents. It was put up on telephone poles throughout West Marin and Fairfax to advertise the Community Center's Art Festival, the forerunner to the Holiday Arts Faire.*



# Heart of the Valley Benefit Gala

Each year the Community Center's Heart of the Valley Benefit Gala welcomes more than 200 community members for a wonderful evening of delicious food, live music, and conversation. It is the perfect occasion to honor outstanding community leaders.

**2006:** Dave Cort

**2009:** Founding Board of Directors: Jean Berensmeier,  
Jim Brown, Jack Dorward, Don Lethbridge, Jim  
Rawlinson, Donna Sloan, Judy Voets

**2010:** Gary Giacomini

**2011:** Al and Lisa Baylacq

**2012:** Ethel Seiderman

**2013:** Larry Enos and Sally Hutchinson

**2014:** Chuck and Grace Tolson

**2015:** Zoila Berardi

**2016:** Steve Kinsey

**2017:** Suzanne Sadowsky





Here, from the inaugural 1989 issue, is Arnold Erickson's story of how the Center's newsletter came to be known as "Stone Soup."

## The Name "Stone Soup"

The name "Stone Soup" is taken from a universal story. Some say that it originates in Eastern Europe. This version began with the Native American Chumash and became something different in the telling.

*Coyote approached town near the end of day. As usual, he was hungry. There was little fat on his bones to get him through hard times, and he had long since run out of food and money. Yet, after his last trick from a previous story, the people probably couldn't put up with another. "Nothing to eat but the stones," thought Coyote. And so he began to gather some rocks and put them in a pot of water that he drew from the village well. "Hey, Coyote!" called the woman. "I didn't know that your stomach was that powerful. What are you doing with those stones?" "Just making Stone Soup. It's the latest cuisine in the village over the hill. But, come to think of it, I could use a little seasoning." The woman happened to have some seasoning with her. Intrigued, she gave it to Coyote for his soup. Another person had potatoes, still another, carrots. And so it went. Each person in the village brought something different. And some even came back with fry bread. That night, everyone feasted on stone soup.*

(Reprinted in the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary issue, Summer, 2009)



Summer 2009

## Community Center Stained Glass Windows

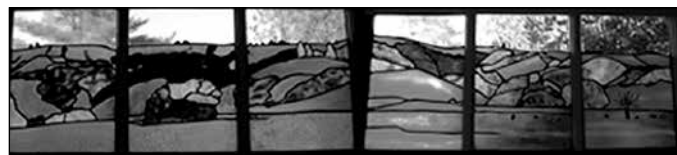
by Marty Meade

The stained glass windows in the West Room is my favorite commission ever, as it enabled me to bring in five apprentices (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders) to assist me. These five, Misha Lebell, Ari Piscatelli, Oscar Steiner, Nathan Dressler and Tommy O'Mahoney, had studied stained glass with me in my studio, and proved that they could take on the task.

After creating the design, I assigned one unit to each of them, and it was their responsibility to work with me individually until their piece was completed. Misha Lebell took on two panels. We made a trip to the glass wholesalers, and they selected the glass that would be used in their pieces. We cut out the pieces, prepared them for the sandblasted etching, foiled them for soldering, did the soldering and final cleanup . . . an immense amount of work on hot summer days.

My son, Kevin Meade, installed the windows which also proved to be a huge undertaking.

We were all excited with the outcome, and still look at the finished piece with pride.



A section of Marty Meade's stained glass series in the West Room

## East Wing Restroom Mural

by Zoila Berardi

The famous east wing restroom mural was painted the night before the 1971 Holiday Faire by some of the parents of the San Geronimo Valley Family Preschool. Donna Sloan created it and Sandy Dorward, Andrea Giacomini, Claire Felson, Jane Rawlinson, Niz Brown, Cummings Saunders, and I helped paint it. We scoured the Valley for brightly colored wall paint. Between, "Donna, is this okay?" and "Pass the wine up the ladders," we magically transformed the bathroom. Happily it was saved during the remodel of the Center in 1981 and still survives today.



## Spring Art Show

by Jack Kamesar

The Spring Art Show brings together people from the Valley who take this opportunity to share their creative work. Larry Rippee is the Arts & Events Coordinator who coordinates the show and publicity. He is steadfast in encouraging and receiving the art.

Some of the artists are professional. Some are inspired to do a piece every year just for the show. Some have only ever done the one piece that they bring. Others consider what they would create if they were to make something for the next year.

Artists deliver their work on Thursday morning. The Arts Committee curates and hangs 100 pieces that day. Some years 300 people come to the Opening Reception. It is inspiring to discover those who live in the Valley who choose to express themselves. The Spring Art Show is a great celebration of our community's creativity.



Sculptor and member of the SGVCC Arts Committee, Jack Kamesar (Photo by Donn DeAngelo)

## Sounds for Art

by Terry Garthwaite

As soon as a child enters your life it's a new world. It's a small world, after all. In the '80s and '90s I was pretty involved in the Valley community—first on the board of the Cultural Center (now Community Center), where my main interest was providing creative opportunities for kids. Artist Barbara Andino-Stevenson and I got grants from the Marin Arts Council for rehearsal space for a local boy band and for children's art shows, including one that would incorporate student music as an ambience for the work. Putting the music together was my job. I found kids in grades 1 through 8 to individually come to my house to record. They were nervous when they arrived—unsure of what lay ahead and how they'd do—yet excited to be part of a recording, part of the art show.

They each had their own special time to record their music—singers (including my nieces who lived in the Valley), a sax player, and a tap dancer. I used my 4-track tape deck so there'd be plenty of room for do-overs. To get the rhythms of the tap dancer I just pointed a mic on a boom stand toward her feet and let her go. And the others had an opportunity to be a star for a minute on the mic. I fixed and mixed the recordings and made a cassette tape (too soon for CDs), "Sounds for Art." And there they were at our Grounds for Art opening for all to hear, recorded for posterity. We sold the cassette at the opening and at our local video store. Still have a copy.

*I love the Community Center because it brings the community together for wonderful events and does a good job of taking care of those who have the least among us.*

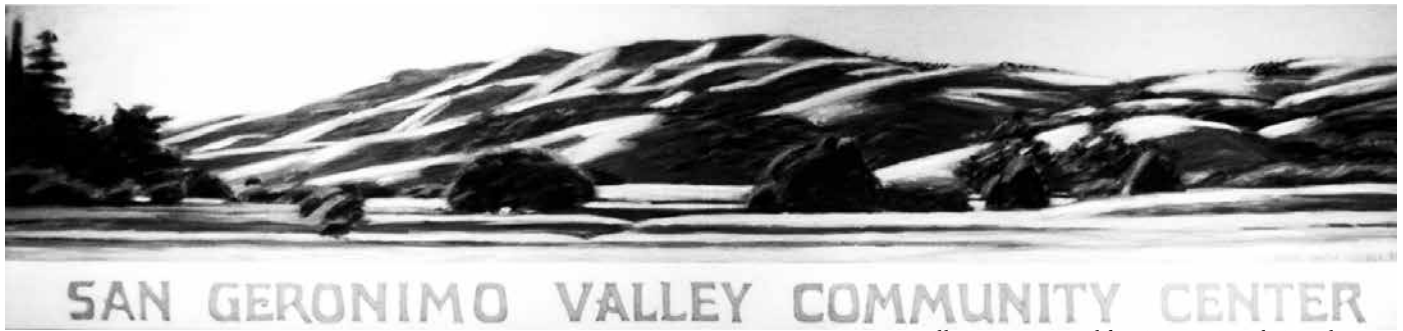
WENDI KALLINS



2015 Spring Art Show reception (Photo by Michel Kotski)







*Valley Room Mural by Connie Smith Siegel, 1981*

## Center Permanent Art Collection

by Anne McClain

Fifty years ago the San Geronimo Valley Community Center started life as the Art Center and those roots are alive and well today. The Center nurtures Valley arts and artists through exhibits, programs and our permanent art collection. Everyone who has ever walked into the San Geronimo Valley Community Center is aware of the beautiful Maurice Del Mué mural (see page 20). It is the centerpiece of the lobby, but did you know that the Center is also home to an entire collection of art? Having begun as the Art Center, and with the Valley bursting with creative energy, this really just stands to reason. The following is a guide to the art that is on permanent display at the Center—in addition to the wonderful monthly art shows happening year-round!

In the lobby of the Center, after you have absorbed the impact of the mural, look around to view the other pieces hanging there. Honoring the founder of the San Geronimo Valley Community Center, Jean Berensmeier, and the founding board members are two lovely brass plaques designed with special care by Jean's husband, Lee Berensmeier, who also designed the Center's logo (see page 67). The founders were feted in 2009 at the 40th Anniversary Gala which is the subject of an iconic Art Rogers photograph of 200 attendees hanging nearby. Look closely and you are sure to spot many of your friends and neighbors—and yourself! Another work in honor of the people who make our community so special is the colored pencil drawings commemorating the winners of the Edie Robinson Community Service Award by Valley artist, Anne McClain.

Other works that can be found throughout the Center are:

- Poster for the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual San Geronimo Valley Christmas Art and Music Festival (featuring Valley icons Terry Garthwaite and “Santa” Fred Berensmeier, Sr., father of artist Fred [Lee] Berensmeier)
- Untitled pastel of the San Geronimo Valley Community Center by Barbara Lawrence
- “Kate Wolf Linger in a Doorway,” print by MOT (the original painting currently hangs in the West Office)

- Sculpture titled “Recycled Bootie” by Debra Amerson featuring an array of recycled objects including an old leather cowboy boot that houses a vase of living Lucky Bamboo, intended to bring luck and prosperity to the Center. And don't forget to poke your head in the bathroom where “Bird Rock” a serigraph by Pesl, currently hangs.
- An original hand-printed silkscreen poster from the first year of the San Geronimo Holiday Art Festival in 1969 donated by former Board member, June Tolbert. It was designed by Donna Sloan and 600 were printed annually for several years by community members who turned it into a printmaking party in Lee Berensmeier's art studio. This delightful remnant of past days is one of only two or three posters still known to exist.

Over the years there have been several major art projects done for the Center in stained glass. Windows in the front of the Center and in the Valley Room were done as a result of an artist-in-residence program funded by the San Francisco Foundation and InterArts of Marin. They selected Shelley Jurs who designed the works titled “Architectural Glass Woven Interlude.” She was inspired by her interest in basketry and Native Americans. The Valley Room panels were executed by school children and adults who participated in a class given by Jurs. The panels on the front of the building were executed by adult community members, some of whom were Terry Shea, Bob Stansel, Murilla Parratt, Carel and Sarah Gillingham, Mike Finsterbush, Heather Blise, Brian Antonio, Tourne Jansen, Ami Erlich and Margo Klein.

In the West Room is the lovely stained glass series depicting our Valley landscape. You can recognize our local hills, cows and even Spirit Rock as the panels across the West Room take us through the seasons. It was designed by Forest Knolls artist Marty Meade and executed by Valley students under her direction. These apprentices were Misha Lebell, Ari Piscatelli, Oscar Steiner, Nathan Dressler and Tommy O'Mahoney. The piece was installed in 2002 by Kevin Meade.


The Valley Room is host to a huge acrylic on canvas by Connie Smith Siegel, “San Geronimo Valley Community Center.” Connie is renowned for her beautiful paintings



*Center Permanent Art Collection continued*

and pastels of the local landscape. Here she has portrayed the view from Sir Francis Drake Blvd. between Spirit Rock and Woodacre.

Another Valley artist who has made a reputation far beyond the Valley is Elly Simmons. She and Elizabeth Raybee completed the stunning mosaic tile murals that grace our kitchen in 2001. These mosaics are a colorful and lively rendering of the wildlife and natural environment of our Valley.



Summer 2009

## Valley Room Mural

by *Connie Smith Siegel*

The context for creating the mural of the San Geronimo Valley hills was far from the warm shelter of the Valley. I made the painting in the early '80s, a period in my life when I had dedicated myself to painting large landscape banners with quotes of Helen Caldicott, the anti-nuclear activist. I had been so unsettled after reading her book, *Nuclear Madness*, that work in the studio became difficult. The context for showing paintings in galleries and museums seemed to be covering up, rather than acknowledging our predicament. To find an alternative to this aesthetic context I decided to combine Caldicott's quotations with my landscapes on large canvases, to be hung in public places, such as anti-nuclear conferences, or even carried in marches. I had never put words into my paintings, but now quotations such as "*We are the curators of life on earth. We hold it in the palm of our hands*" gave the landscapes a larger meaning.

During this time I had started a large horizontal painting of the Valley from a drawing of the hills east of Flanders ranch. Because the composition didn't feel balanced, I painted the hills west of the ranch as well. When I put the two sides together it created a more complete panorama, but now the painting was too long to hang just anywhere. The space above the doors in what is now called the Valley room was the only space large enough, and I brought it to the Center. I painted the words: San Geronimo Valley Community Center just under the painting, as I had done with my other anti-nuclear landscapes.

Having this image so close to home has been especially gratifying—contributing to a community that had given me so much. Instead of protecting the earth, I am acknowledging its power, and celebrating the natural beauty of this special Valley. (See image on preceding page.)

A tile mural by Gage Taylor, "Rolling Hills of San Geronimo Valley," hangs in one of the Center offices. The tiles were designed by Gage Taylor and produced collaboratively with his Lagunitas neighbor, tile maker Fred Ross, in 1980. This mural is a suite of 12 individual tiles.

And let's not forget about the outside of the Center! At the front of the building is the Kate Wolf Memorial. (Kate was a much beloved singer/songwriter and former Center Board Member whose loss to leukemia in 1986 was felt deeply by the community see page 68.) The patio/stage with a beautifully symbolic dove formed in the concrete and the curvilinear benches were built in her honor.

There is also the Carol Meese Memorial Garden established in front of the East Room to remember this beloved young mother of two whose life was cut short by cancer in 1996. An apple tree grows there in her memory.

Our teens have been busy beautifying the Center as well with the large mosaic planter under the arches at the front of the building done by Jordan Chappell, Sadie Cort, Angie Notari and Leah Rippe as part of a Drake High School "Art is Everywhere" project.

The Gym and the Loft have provided more opportunities for enriching our community with public art. A committee was formed and the County provided a grant to make sure that art had its place in this new building and that the children of the community would be part of the projects envisioned for it.

Kathy Calloway designed and created the two tile mosaic pieces installed in the Gym, working alongside community volunteers. The "Wall of Fame," honoring those who donated to make the Gym a reality, is on view at the entrance to the Gym and the wonderful mosaic salmon graces the water fountain area just down the hall.



*Marty Meade and students Tessa Wardle, Lindsay Mobley, Ariana Dukkers, Maya Normandi, Sara Joseph and Kelly Pennypacker install the fused glass piece in the Loft, 2009. (Photo by Anne McClain)*



Marty Meade, once again, came up with a beautiful design for our community to enjoy in a huge fused-glass piece at the upstairs lobby of the Loft. She took as her inspiration a beautiful old oak tree. She and her student helpers assembled colored glass squares which were fused in a kiln and then assembled on a grid to form the image of the tree. Some of the squares include the names of those who participated in constructing the piece. You can glimpse the glass glowing through the front windows of the Gym on evenings when the lights are on in the Loft.

Inside the Loft hangs a series of wonderful fabric portraits. These were created by students ages 11 through 17 under the guidance of Lesley Gray, a Lagunitas resident, teacher and artist. Most of the students created self portraits, although some made portraits of family or friends. Some are dramatically realistic, inspired from actual photos. Others chose a more whimsical or fantasy approach to creating their image. They are delightful and add life to the vibrant space.

The Center is proud to have another Art Rogers photograph, "The Opening of the San Geronimo Valley Gym," in the Gym hallway. It depicts our new gym full of excited and proud children and adults. Also in the hallway is a colorful collection of posters from events hosted over the years by the Center. San Geronimo resident Lila Friday made a selection of these posters and got them framed and put on display for all to enjoy.

At this writing, the Center is busy sprucing up the East Room (formerly the home of Zoila's Afterschool Care—now operated by the Center on the school's upper campus). In the works are plans to showcase Valley history on the walls of this space. The Center has a series of black and white photos from the early 1900s from the collection of Chuck Ford.

While you are in a historical frame of mind, take a look at the 1961 San Geronimo Valley Master Plan. With freeways, homes for 20,000 residents, shopping center, and heliport, it's a cautionary tale of what might have been!

There is so much "heart" on display in the Community Center where artists have left their marks, even in something as small as electrical switch plates! The switch plates in the offices were hand-painted by Miriam Stafford in 1984. One shows an agricultural scene and the other depicts grazing deer.

The Center's latest physical addition is Central Park in Woodacre. As trees are planted and benches and tables are built for the park, you can be assured there will be something in the way of art there as well.

As you come to the Center, the Gym, and the Loft to participate in the many activities here, please take a moment to look at the art on display and appreciate the history, life and beauty that these many works add to our enjoyment of the Center and our community.

## The Road Kills in West Marin

by Richard Lang  
for Sterling



A gold and black lump,  
a levantine tapestry abandoned  
by a female mallard,  
a gown shrugged off in a heap  
by the blasé sultana.

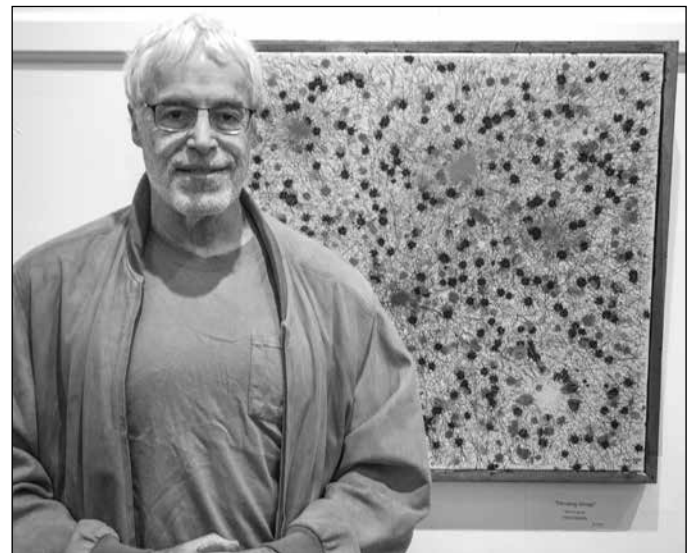
Sergeant skunk headed back to camp,  
his insurrectionary foray strewn purple,  
I'm breathing through the last embers  
of his burning leaves.

A three spike buck  
with two vultures riding tandem—  
twin surfers hanging ten  
while the colossal tsunami of Shiva rolls under.

The raccoon's one paw lightly  
lifted in stop motion,  
salutations from the shining pool  
at the end of time.

Everyone is so restless in the fall.

*From "Commuter Poems," a series written while on the road, musing, during my daily drive from West Marin to San Francisco.*

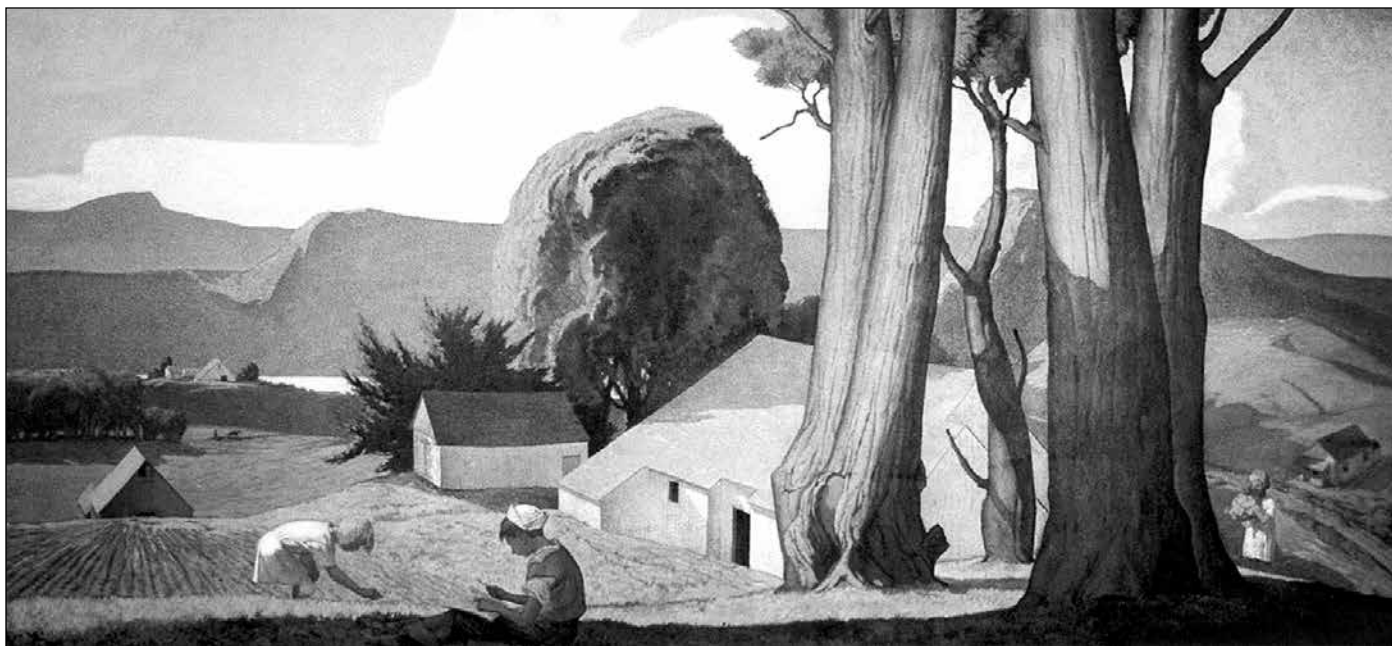


Tom Tabakin at 2017 Spring Art Show (Photo by Donn DeAnglo)

*I love the opportunity for the artist and the art.*

TOM TABAKIN





*The Maurice Del Mué Mural, 1934 (Photo by Donn DeAngelo before restoration)*

## Maurice Del Mué Mural

by Anne McClain

The Valley clearly is blessed with more than its share of creative people—artists, writers, musicians and theater people. The Community Center, once known as the Art Center, has had a large role in nurturing the creative spark. It is also home to a beautiful mural painted by Maurice Del Mué in 1934 when the Center was the Lagunitas School. It was a Public Works of Art Project for the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This treasure was restored by art conservator Anne Rosenthal in 2004 after a fundraising effort by the Center spearheaded by Arts and Events Director Susan Lahr, and aided by artists Richard Lang and Judith Selby Lang.

Del Mué was born in Paris in 1875, grew up in San Francisco and lived in Forest Knolls on Resaca from 1924 until his death in 1955. He studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, an essential for anyone serious about being an artist in those days. He returned to San Francisco making his living as a painter of landscapes, still lifes, and portraits. He also did commercial work that is still in use today, including designing the Hills Brothers Coffee man in the yellow robes and the Arm and Hammer Baking Soda logo.

The Center just recently became aware that the first Lagunitas School is depicted in the mural—the little white house on the far right. Just faintly you can see a flagpole out front. In January of 2017 Kira Thelin presented a black and white photo of the mural to the Center. On the back it is signed by Maurice Del Mué and inscribed “To Mr. and Mrs. Clever and also Bobby for his good heart in posing for me.” So now we know who the boy is in the mural. Coincidentally, the Clevers lived across the street from Del

Mué’s studio, in the Red House, Kira’s home!

Del Mué’s great-nephew, Thomas Wood, also an artist, who lives and works in Nicasio, gave a talk about his uncle at the Center in the autumn of 2004. This is how he closed his remarks:

*The mural in this building, one of his best, was close to his heart because it was for a grade-school. It was his gift to the children. He said he liked the idea that it was at the eye-level of the kids, and he knew that they would go by it every day and look at it, and that pleased him. In the painting he makes a point about education, too; a subtle point, that nature is the great teacher—the kids in the mural are gathering plants and flowers, and one is consulting a botanical text—and that art facilitates our awareness of the world around us. He would be delighted to know that his painting will continue to be appreciated, and will be around for many decades to come, for both kids and adults to enjoy!*



*Anne Rosenthal restoring the Maurice Del Mué mural, 2004*

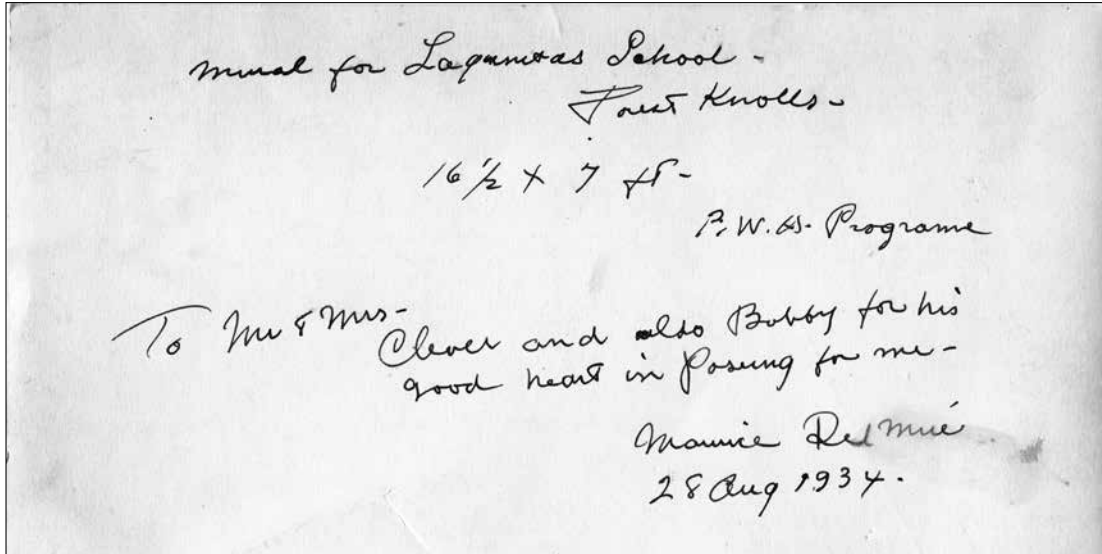




Del Mué photo - front, 1934



Maurice Del Mué Studio



Del Mué photo - back. Photo discovered by Newall Snyder one day after first being introduced to the mural.

## Marty Meade, An Original

by Judy North

I moved to San Geronimo in 1969. I was just about to give birth to my daughter Rachel. When she was about three months old, I found an ad in the *Independent Journal* for a cake decorating class at the YWCA. I'd always wanted to see what that world was like, so I signed up for it. My teacher was Marty Meade.

I was so taken with the fact that she designed each project, even the most fancy and complex cakes, with the student's success in mind.

Then I found that Marty lived in Lagunitas, so I offered to carpool. On our trips to and from, I told her I had been working with glass for many years and offered to teach her stained glass.

I wanted to give her the same experience she had given me, helping her to design a successful piece. Marty designed a large, complex Thunderbird image. It was to have a necklace of abalone shell. I knew it was going to be hard to put this together, but I encouraged it, because when she finished this window, she would know everything there was about designing and constructing a stained glass window.

When completed, her piece was just beautiful and her husband Bud Meade made a new front door for their home to receive her window.

Marty went on to work with glass from that day to this, and to give that gift to countless others. She and I have continued to be dear friends and to work together on many wedding cakes and many parties and celebrations.

I have gone on to paint.



l-r: Judy North, Dian Allen, Marty Meade, 1978



# An Epic Tale . . . The Journey to the San Geronimo Valley Community Gym and Loft Teen Center

by Liza Crosse

Have you stopped by the Gym and Loft lately? Take a look one day, and be amazed. No doubt the facility will be buzzing with activity. The sound of bouncing balls, music, or young voices will fill your ears. The colors of beautiful tiles, a sparkling mosaic, or unique glass wall will dazzle your eyes. Wonder at the list of contributors on the “Wall of Fame,” and be struck with thankfulness for our unique community, and what we can do when we pull together.

If we had known how hard it would be and how long it would take, we might never have started. Yet now that this amazing facility is built, and enjoyed by so many people every day, we’re so grateful that we did.

The tale starts long ago, in the early 1960s, when the need for a gym in the Valley first was discussed. Then, in the early 1980s two groups formed to pursue a gym, and spent hours, even years, developing a vision for the Art Recreation Culture Complex, or ARCC, including designs for a beautiful gym complex.

The wish for a gym next emerged in various planning documents in the 1990s, but it wasn’t until 2001 when a dynamic group of middle-school students submitted a petition with 500 signatures supporting a gym, that the new Gym Committee was formed. Led by Andrew and Susi Giacomini, this steely-eyed group included John Beckerley, Denise Santa Cruz-Bohman, Dave Cort, Liza Crosse, Mike Davidson, Anne McClain, John Smithyman, Reede Stockton and Jasper Thelin.

Uncounted hours were spent in planning. A first design by Lemanski and Rockwell Associates was adapted by Steve Kinsey, who created a revised design that included an upstairs Youth Center and Loft. Persinger Architects facilitated a community dialogue on the design and took the project to construction drawings. Lila Friday, Anne McClain and Denise Bohman focused on interior and exterior colors and worked with an Arts Committee, that included Kathy Sullivan and Marty and Bud Meade, who worked to fund and create the beautiful art which graces the building.

A necessary but not very glamorous part of the project was the creation of a “Joint Use Agreement.” The Lagunitas School District Board, the Gym Committee and the Community Center Board and staff worked many hours to ensure that the school’s needs were supported while also making the facility available for other community uses. The agreement spells out maintenance and funding responsibilities, and includes a commitment to well-managed

after-school programming, appropriate staffing, and the promise of the Gym Committee’s ongoing support to fund programs and maintenance. The agreement is still the basis for the building’s management today.

A Gym funding committee worked for literally years, chasing ever rising project costs, on a campaign that has no equal in the Valley’s history. Ultimately \$4.1 million dollars was raised. Led by Andrew and Susi, we pursued every grant and contribution imaginable. Thanks to the foresight of Lagunitas School, we were kick-started by a state grant of nearly \$1 million. Local hero, Gary Giacomini, at the time a board member of the Marin Community Foundation, was able to raise two grants from the Foundation for a total of \$945,000, and then Supervisor Steve Kinsey facilitated \$445,000 from the County of Marin. And hundreds of local residents came through, contributing checks large and small, and many grants came from private and family foundations.

In spite of the fact that the project was only partially funded, the decision was made to build the project in phases, so that we wouldn’t lose the state funds. In the Fall of 2007, the construction began, and some of the project’s most outstanding leaders emerged. Phase 1, the site work, was a remarkable blend of volunteer work and contractors who donated much of their work. Mark Warner played a key role in the site work. Greystone West was the project manager, overseeing all construction. Then in Phase 2, the contractor Alten Construction built the primary structure.

Phase 3, the finishing phase in 2008 and 2009 was led by contractor and life-long Valley resident Joe Brown and his company Brownco Construction and Development. Local contractors Jim Purkey, Tom Carmody, Rick Scarborough, Eddie Joe Chavez, and Dominic Berardi played key roles. Marin-based companies like Good Earth Natural Foods, Waste Management, Dutra Materials and Big Four Rents made in-kind contributions. Phase 3 included another extraordinary outpouring of in-kind contributions, and dozens of people, small and large, turned up to finish the job, painting, cleaning, installing equipment, and more. Their contributions saved more than one-third of the project cost.

Under Andrew and Susi Giacomini’s leadership fundraising continued at a frantic pace in 2008 and 2009. An anonymous challenge grant came in, and more funding from the Marin Community Foundation and Marin County arrived. There were periods where construction came to a halt. At these moments, the Gym Committee redoubled its efforts. In classic Valley style, some unique





*Lagunitas Bobcats with Coach James Tolbert*

funding strategies lent excitement. The Chavez Family 49-hour Basketball Free Throw Shooting Marathon, and a hunger fast by Dave Burns of Woodacre inspired even more contributions.

Finally the big day came, the grand opening of the Community Gym and Loft on August 29, 2009. Hooray! Jubilation reigned! The event was kicked off by Valley Games, chaired by Mike Davidson and Jasper Thelin. Over 400 happy people participated, and the event raised \$10,000 from tickets, T-shirt sales (still have mine) and food (thanks, Good Earth!). Village teams—the Lagunitas Lightnings, Forest Knolls Trolls, San Geronimo Leapin’ Salmon and the Woodacre Wild Turkeys— duked it out with the Non-Native Invaders from over the hill, and lots of laughs were had. At the triumphant moment, the gym doors were thrown open and hundreds of cheering kids and adults stormed the amazing space, chanting their team songs at full volume! *We are the Turkeys, the mighty, mighty Turkeys!*

Still, there was more work to be done, and money to be raised. In the fall of 2009 a new campaign by the tenacious leaders focused on installing the special gym floor and outfitting the gym with equipment and bleachers. Today, work still needs to be done—a storage facility for equipment is essential and will be built in 2017. Old leaders and new continue efforts to support the Loft programs, and an annual Golf Tournament led by Jay and Liora Soladay is the mainstay event for raising funds for operations and maintenance. The job of caring for the Gym and Loft goes on, and will, we hope, forever.

## Well done, Valley!

In the summer of 2007 site work for the Gym commenced. The official groundbreaking took place on September 15, 2007.



# The Valley Games

by Jasper Thelin, Inter-Village Organizing Committee Co-Commissioner

Originally created to help build the buzz for the San Geronimo Valley Community Gym, the Valley Games have become a solid biannual tradition in our Valley community. While finalizing plans and raising money, the Gym Committee held a successful “Gym Jamboree” 3-on-3 basketball tournament at the Lagunitas School outside courts in 2006.

For years I’d dreamed about having a recreational sports league in the Valley in which one’s village of residence determined one’s team. These two things sort of merged, and alongside Co-Commissioner Mike Davidson, it led to the formation of the Inter-Village Organizing Committee (IVOC), that continues to produce this unique event in the spirit of cooperative competitiveness in support of our Gym and its programs.

Every Games brings somewhat different events, depending on the inspiration of the IVOC and input from villagers. These are some of the perennial favorites: Parade of Villages (judged event), Amoeba Race, Basketball Hot Spot, Frisbee Disc Toss, Super Ball Bullseye Bounce, Volleyball, Hacky Sack Rally, Obstacle Course, Paper Airplane, Bed-Making-and-Getting-Dressed (speed, precision and aesthetics; judged event), Table Tennis, Nine Square, Corn Hole, Waltzing, Scrabble, Chess, Bike Short Course,

Soccer, Dessert Bake Off, Hula Hooping, and even the Wacky Heptathlon.

The inter-village rivalry between orange-clad juggernaut Woodacre and the scrappy green Forest Knolls underdogs has been pronounced since the inaugural games in 2007, which was the only games to include full-court, full-speed basketball and had its share of controversy and buzzer-beaters. In Valley Games II the Trolls were able to pull off the upset win, but that is the only year in which the Wild Turkeys have failed to raise the triumphant banner.

Most events have three age brackets: Under 10, 10-17, and 18+, with 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place awards given for each. Adding up all the events’ medals, with three points for a 1st, two for a 2nd, and one point for 3rd, the aggregate medal count through the first five Games has Woodacre 178 points ahead of the Knolls, 452 to 274.

On the other end of the table, although the Invaders team technically has access to seven billion people who are qualified as Valley outsiders (including LeBron James and Serena Williams), they’ve only mustered 107 total points over the five Games. In individual performances, the sole member of the Hall of Fame is Jeff Smith of Lagunitas, who has won first place in the individual Hacky Sack event all five times. Congratulations, Jeff.

If any Villagers wish to join the IVOC to influence the choice or structure of games, or nominate someone for consideration into the Hall, or file any petitions or complaints (must be done left-handed, in triplicate, with different colored paper), please let us know!

## Valley Games All-time Results

Village	VG I	VG II	VG III	VG IV	VG V	Commulative Points
	5/7/2007	8/29/2009	10/11/2011	10/19/2013	8/29/2015	
Woodacre Wild Turkeys	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	452
Forest Knolls Trolls	4 <sup>th</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	274
Lagunitas Lightnin’	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	216
San Geronimo Runnin’ Salmon	5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	124
Non-Native Invaders	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	107

Valley Games participants sporting their Valley Games Tee Shirts l-r: Alexander McQuilkin (Woodacre Wild Turkeys), Poko Giacomini (San Geronimo Runnin’ Salmon), Jean Kinsey (Forest Knolls Trolls) and Nicole Ramirez (Lagunitas Lightnin’)







Those attending the ceremony were, from left to right: Dr. Tom Peters, Marin Community Foundation (MCF) President; Bob Schiro; Stephanie O'Brien, Lagunitas School Trustee; Richard Sloan, Lagunitas School Trustee; Don Holmlund, Community Center President; Kerry Pierson, MCF; Goldie Curry, Lagunitas School Principal; County Supervisor Steve Kinsey; Carlos Porrata, MCF; Dorene Schiro; Dave Cort, Community Center Executive Director; Susi Giacomini; Andrew Giacomini



Building the Gym, 2007 (Photo by Traver Normandi)



Ping Pong in the Gym (Photo by Dave Cort)



San Geronimo Valley Community Gym (Photo by Anne McClain)



Toasting the Gym after the first game, 2010 (Photo by Samantha Davidson)



CYO Girls Basketball with Coach Tolbert (Photo by Anne McClain)



# Deb Hubsmith: A Ball of Energy

by Wendi Kallins

Deb Hubsmith lived in the Valley for only a short time, but she made her mark. She started in 1995 as the Arts Coordinator at the San Geronimo Valley Cultural Center (now the Community Center) where she worked for three years. Even then everyone who met her saw that there was something remarkable about this young woman—not just intelligent, but insightful, organized, balanced, and vivacious. She developed the first summer concert series and created the San Geronimo Valley Music Festival featuring the “Positive Band,” including Terry Haggerty, Terry Garthwaite, Tim Cain and other local notables.

Deb was a consummate promoter. She was never off the job. Wherever she went she had a bundle of flyers that she handed out to everyone in sight. “She was a ball of energy,” remembered Community Center Director Dave Cort. “We balanced each other well. I was a little slow and process oriented. She would come in every day talking fast, loaded with ideas.”

Deb also resurrected Kate’s Café open mic. She and Anny Owens worked together to make it fun and brought in huge crowds. Sometimes, to liven things up, Deb would pop in doing gymnastics and blow everyone away with her hand flips and cartwheels. (Deb was a champion gymnast in high school before a knee injury put an end to that path.) “She brought so much joy and fun,” said Dave. “She took a small sleepy open mic on a Sunday night and turned it into a blast.”

Deb also joined the Planning Group and became their secretary. Jean Berensmeier recalls how “Deb’s effusive energy was like a magnet. Whatever she did she did better than anyone before her.” As Secretary of the SGV Planning Group in 1995-96 she was meticulous in recording motions, the flow of each meeting and writing letters. Her organizational skills helped speed mailings and were effective in developing a membership renewal system.

Then Deb dove into the issue that would become her life’s work. Go Geronimo was born out of a Healthy Start Survey where transportation was the number one issue. Working with other members of the Go Geronimo Steering Wheel (Anny Owen,

Jasper Thelin, Peter Oppenheimer, and others) they came up with the Go Geronimo “Reg”—a casual hitchhiking scheme where drivers and riders would register and get background checks in order to find safe ways to get over the hill by flashing their Go Geronimo card.

This was a subject that affected her personally. When Deb first moved to the Valley she was commuting to San Francisco to her job at Planet Drum. Then, the director of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition remarked that by driving such long distances every day she was hardly being bio-regional. That got to her. And a momentous event caused her to change her life. She got in a car accident. As her car was careening out of control she made a vow. “If I live through this, I will never own a car again.” And she kept that promise for the rest of her short life.



*Deb at the entrance of the CalPark Tunnel (Photo courtesy of Andy Peri)*



This led to our working together to promote alternative transportation in schools. We cooked up a scheme to do outreach in schools, and she concocted an electric bike (still a novelty back then) powered by solar panels on the bob trailer she pulled filled with activity books for the kids. Simultaneously, in 1998, Deb began working with a group of bicyclists to form the Marin County Bicycle Coalition, ultimately becoming its executive director. In that role she grew the organization into a powerful force advocating for more bicycle infrastructure countywide. We teamed up again to establish the first national model Safe Routes to Schools program. She also got federal funding for the Non-Motorized Pilot Program, which brought \$25 million each for Marin and three other communities to develop plans for a seamless bicycle/pedestrian network. You can see the results of this work everywhere from bike lanes to major pathways like the CalPark Tunnel and the Lincoln Pathway.

Deb's accomplishments were achieved by a combination of quiet diplomacy and aggressive activism. Someone once described her as part cheerleader, part drill sergeant. Even those staff and elected officials, who faced her unwavering demands, admitted that she had a way of making everyone her friend even as she opposed them. Her infectious optimism and tenacity won her respect and ultimately victory. Her motto was "Never take no for an answer!"

But she wasn't done. She lobbied Congress and successfully achieved \$1.1 billion for a national Safe Routes to Schools program that helped launch a movement. Having established herself on the national stage, Deb formed the Safe Routes to Schools National Partnership—a coalition of 750 bike and pedestrian organizations, and national health and education programs. It grew into a multi-million dollar agency that continues to this day, promoting Safe Routes to Schools and providing technical assistance to communities across the country.

Deb was at the peak of her career when she was struck down by leukemia. She tried to use her boundless energy to fight for her life, but after a valiant two-year struggle, she found that this was one battle she would not win. In August 2015, at the age of 46, she peacefully departed, surrounded by family and friends, and held in love by hundreds of supporters throughout the country.

She left us way too soon. But then the brightest stars often burn out. Yet her legacy lives on. The Safe Routes National Partnership is thriving, Marin enjoys countless bike and pedestrian facilities, San Geronimo now has a regular bus, and hundreds of her protégés continue her work around the country. Think of her when you board the Stage; every time you see kids walking and biking to school; as you ride through all the incredible bike/ped facilities she helped to create. Deb is there. She will always be with us, in the work that she did and the love that she shared.



Summer 2009

## Kate's Café

by Anny Owen

When I was a single mama, I did my community service in the food pantry. It was a great opportunity to get first dibs at the free food giveaway and sometimes meet folks who were struggling even more than I. Mostly, however, it was a peak moment in my life with regards to making friends in the greater community that is the SGV. Plus, my little boys could go to Zoila's while I worked.

The kitchen began to feel like a friendly home to me: the fridge and freezer were mine to explore and use, the dishes, silverware, coffee pots and twist ties were mine to share and show, when events were happening there and folks needed kitchen know-how. This seemingly little step was big for me.

From there, I met my great friend, the now-well known bike advocate/activist Deb Hubsmith, who was the events coordinator at the time. Dave Cort asked us to co-produce the open mic, Kate's Café. I expressed concern at my lack of emcee experience and he gave me that famous, relaxed grin and said, "It's *your* baby, Anny!" Cool, I love babies! The rest is herstory: Deb and I had a blast there for three expanding years, eventually enjoying a Valley room bursting with performing kids and adults alike. We still speak so fondly of that time in our lives, where we carried on the late-night Valley music jam tradition right into my bungalow living room. The Cultural Center became a household word for my sons to own as a really happy part of their childhood. *We needed* a place to call our own. And that is the genius of Dave, Howie, Zoila and the Valley tribe vibe. It's so accepting, non-judgemental, full of joyous hope, and just generally "super chill" as the teens say. Though I'm living in Bolinas for now, our loving extended family is in the Valley and my boys have told me that they will always consider the "The V" their home. Driving in at night on a visit back from college, Hobie takes a deep satisfying breath, "It is the moment I cross White's Hill that the scent of nature tells me I'm home."



Volunteers including Richard Sloan, at center, installing the Kate Wolf Memorial in front of the Community Center, 1987



# Chapter 2: Community Organizations and Services



Valley Toys and Joys 4th of July 2014 parade float



St. Cecilia's Church (Photo by James Sanders)



SGV Lions building the Forest Knolls bus shelter (Photo from website)



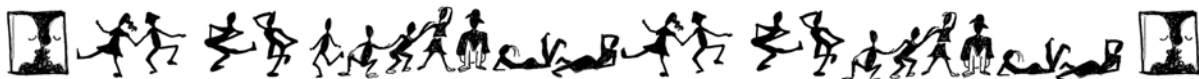
CERT volunteers



KWMR marching in the 4th of July parade 2014



Salmon crossing sign at Devil's Gulch



# Down in the Valley

by Terry Garthwaite

I wrote a song with the Valley in mind, but we hope the hopes of all people—to live in peace and harmony without the wars of petty differences and indifference; to disagree without being disagreeable; to find amicable resolution to thorny problems. We share a love of the land and an appreciation of individuality. We care what happens in and to our community. We are a large extended family, on some common ground.



## DOWN IN THE VALLEY 1998

*Down in the valley I call my home  
The people are family, it's where I belong  
There's fussin' and feudin' and building a wall,  
But the love and affection will overcome all.*

*For it's love and affection  
will heal the heart  
We all need connection  
right from the start  
And it's love and affection  
will heal the heart  
and I'll do my part.*

*I talk to my neighbors, I know them by name,  
Though our lives may be different,  
the spirit's the same  
The land we all live on is dearer than gold,  
It's the home where my heart is,  
a joy to behold.*

*For it's love and affection  
will heal the heart  
We all need connection  
right from the start  
And it's love and affection  
will heal the heart  
and I'll do my part.*

# Special, schmecial

by Fred Mundy

You hear it all the time . . . “The San Geronimo Valley is a special place.” Many years ago, as a resident of Fairfax, I heard this often and scoffed at the notion. Then, in 1981, I moved to Lagunitas and the scoffing stopped.

Here's a thought . . . how many communities do you know of, with a population of 3,600 or less, where residents care enough to put together a *Resource Guide* like this? Or, have a Food Bank? Or a vital, buzzing Community Center? Or a gymnasium? Or a variety of school curricula? Or a community newsletter? Or a seniors' lunch program, an affordable housing committee, a trained disaster council? This “Or a” list could go on for pages!

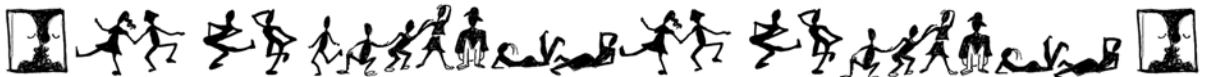
There are so many good people helping in uplifting programs, making good things happen in this Valley, it is difficult to catalog them. This place is different, and different in the best ways imaginable. Count your blessings for having found yourselves here. For many, there will likely come a day when you'll look back on this period and realize you were living among an amazing and rare group of folks. I count myself as a newcomer, and I've lived here for 35 years. I continue to learn from those who have been here longer than myself, and I continue to marvel at the tenacity and will and creativity of our leaders.

From the Woodacre Improvement Club to St. Cecilia's Church in Lagunitas, and everywhere in between, exceptional people are making life in this Valley unique, providing services for the needy, opportunities for the youth, and a helping hand for our seniors, keeping it clean and beautiful, and just being kind to their neighbors. Add to that, a vast network of hiking/biking/riding trails, affordable classes of all types, traditions like the Holly Fair and Valley Toys and Joys, coho salmon and river otters, Spirit Rock, Woodacre Improvement Club, the Lions Club, a mass transit system. . . .

Okay, enough with the lists already. I am just so happy to be here! I hope that everyone reading this will consider contributing some time and energy to these causes. Your efforts will be warmly welcomed, and you'll take away more than you give.

*A bird does not sing because it has an answer. It sings because it has a song.*

CHINESE PROVERB



# San Geronimo Valley Organizations

Nonprofit San Geronimo Valley organizations offer programs, services, and facilities of all sorts, and testify to the creative diversity and heart of Valley life.

*Please note: Every effort has been made to include all relevant nonprofit Valley organizations whose primary focus is to support the welfare, activities, and interests of Valley residents. We apologize for any inadvertent omissions.*

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

### IN SPIRIT

In Support of Paralytics In Really Intense Times

Founded: 1987

2 Grant Avenue, Woodacre

Box 383, Woodacre 94973

President: Aneice Taylor, 415-488-0477

Hours Open 1:00 - 5:00 pm

Monday through Friday

[www.inspirit-marin.org](http://www.inspirit-marin.org)

IN SPIRIT is a nonprofit organization that assists quadriplegics in receiving the attendant care and other essential services they need to live independently and safely in their homes. It serves quadriplegics throughout Marin County and provides grants for attendant care, adaptive equipment, peer support and resource information. With grassroots support, it was formed in 1987 by Valley resident Aneice Taylor after she received a spinal cord injury in the storm of 1982.

### LEAP - Lagunitas Schools Foundation

Lead, Enrich, Achieve, Progress

Founded: 1980

[www.leap4education.org](http://www.leap4education.org)

LEAP is the Lagunitas School District's non-profit, all volunteer, fundraising foundation. We raise the funds that close the gap between what our district receives from state and federal funding and what our kids truly need for a well rounded education. Our goal is to provide all of the kids in our small, progressive district with access to high quality enrichments; particularly in the areas of art, music, environmental education and sciences. We believe the future of our world is in our classrooms today.

### Rotary Club of West Marin

Founded: 2005

Contact: Michelle Clein, Charter President

415-686-8544 or 415-482-3121

[info@westmarinrotary.org](mailto:info@westmarinrotary.org)

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

Around the world, there are at least 1,200,000 members in 33,000 Rotary Clubs located in more than 200 countries. Its members form a global network of business, professional and community leaders who volunteer their time and talents to serve their communities and the world. Rotary's motto, *Service Above Self*, exemplifies the humanitarian spirit. Each club is autonomous, non-governmental, non-political and non-religious.

Rotarians enjoy fun and fellowship while addressing critical issues locally, nationally and internationally. Rotary is only limited by the imagination of those wishing to make a difference.

### Safe Routes to Schools (SR2S)

(A program of the Transportation Authority of Marin)

Founded: 2000

Contacts: Safety issues Wendi Kallins, [wkallins@igc.org](mailto:wkallins@igc.org), 415-488-4101

In-school programs Gwen Froh: [gwen@marinbike.org](mailto:gwen@marinbike.org) 415-456-3469 x104

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

Safe Routes to School is a safe, fun and educational method of encouraging more children to find green ways to school, including walking, biking, carpooling or bus. School volunteers organize regular Walk and Bike to School Days, and are provided materials to run challenges within the school, and to compete with other schools to increase green trips. The Teens Go Green Program empowers middle- and high-school students to foster change in their communities. Trained instructors teach bicycle and pedestrian safety during PE. Safety issues are identified, and SR2S makes recommendations to the local jurisdiction to address these issues.

### SGV Affordable Housing Association

Founded: 1983

Box 152, Woodacre 94973

415-488-4890

[info@sgvaha.org](mailto:info@sgvaha.org)

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

The San Geronimo Valley Affordable Housing Association owns and operates three shared housing units rented to six low-income seniors on Sage Lane and the Forest Knolls Trailer Court with 20 affordable homes. Our mission is to create, preserve and manage affordable housing in the San Geronimo Valley and beyond. We envision a culturally diverse and vibrant San Geronimo Valley community that retains its unique rural and natural qualities while offering housing opportunities for people of all income levels and walks of life. In the future, it is our intention to develop and preserve



additional affordable housing in the Valley. We welcome your involvement in our organization and your financial support via tax-deductible contributions or a property donation.

### San Geronimo Valley Community Center

Founded: 1969

6350 Sir Francis Drake Blvd.

PO Box 195

San Geronimo 94963

Contact: Dave Cort, Executive Director

415-488-8888 ext. 224

dcort@sgvcc.org

Since its founding, the Community Center has served the four villages of the San Geronimo Valley—Woodacre, San Geronimo, Forest Knolls and Lagunitas—and Nicasio and the surrounding communities in western Marin County. The Center has become a focal point for programs in the arts, youth programming and human services, as well as community events and activities. The Center's Human Services Program is now the home for the Tina Action Project (TAPS).

### San Geronimo Valley Land Trust

Founded: 1997

Contact: David Bernard

415-999-9213

The San Geronimo Valley Land Trust serves the Valley by acquiring parcels of high natural resource or community value to conserve and protect them, in perpetuity.

The Land Trust works with Valley property owners who may wish to donate or sell land, or easements over land, and may be able to provide tax benefits to property owners. The Land Trust owns several parcels and is currently focused on preservation of streamside parcels and Blueberry Ridge.

### San Geronimo Valley Lions

Founded: 1958

Contact: Allison Puglisi

415-456-0147

[www.e-clubhouse.org/sites/sgvlions](http://www.e-clubhouse.org/sites/sgvlions)

Since 1958 the Lions have helped to make our Valley a better place to live and work by participating in community events and contributing to local organizations such as The Emergency Fund, Valley Toys and Joys, IN SPIRIT, LEAP, Drake Senior Scholarships, West Marin Senior Services, the SGV Community Center and many others. Our projects include annual blood drives, Food Bank donations, Christmas in April, and Recycle for Sight. We raise money by hosting an annual crab feed and auction, and we co-host the Fourth of July Dickson Country Fun Day and Parade. If you are interested in keeping our Valley community vital and strong, please give us a call!

### SGV Stewards

Founded: 2009

Box 276

Lagunitas 94938

Contact: Ann Seramin

Email: [info@sgvstewards.org](mailto:info@sgvstewards.org)

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

The San Geronimo Valley Stewards work to represent property owners in restoring our creeks through collaborative volunteer efforts. The Stewards are working to talk to the entire SGV to develop a clear picture of the residents' needs, desires, and abilities for creek restoration; build a diverse community coalition as a resource to support Valley residents' responsible improvement of their properties; rally around individuals so no one feels bullied, or that they don't have a voice in the future of their home; bring information and resources to the Valley because we trust our neighbors to make wise decisions if they have resources and good information.

### VERG - San Geronimo Valley Emergency Readiness Group

Founded: 1974

Contact: Jim Fazackerley 415-300-7170

or Brian McCarthy 415-613-6435

<https://www.facebook.com/VERG4SGV/>

This is the volunteer citizens' disaster group for the San Geronimo Valley communities of Woodacre, San Geronimo, Forest Knolls, and Lagunitas. We work to encourage and strengthen disaster preparedness in the community through training, education, and maintaining a supply of radios and equipment. See article page 141.

### Woodacre Garden Club

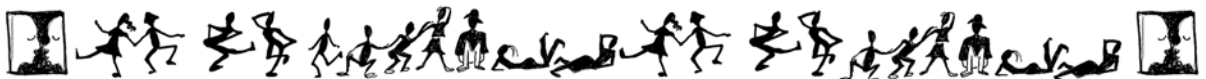
Founded: 1996

Box 485, Woodacre 94973

[pshene@comcast.net](mailto:pshene@comcast.net) or [nphanson@comcast.net](mailto:nphanson@comcast.net)

Mary Brenner 415-488-9536

Visit our Oval Garden on Park Street demonstrating waterwise gardening and plants suitable for Valley habitat. The Garden Club is open to everyone with an interest in gardening. We landscape and maintain the bus shelters and common areas of Woodacre. You are welcome to join in garden tours, seminars, seed and plant exchanges, and social gatherings. Our volunteer activities are supported by neighbor contributions and donated plants and materials. Please contact us if you would like to help keep Woodacre beautiful by donations, by adopting plants to water, or by joining us for a few hours on monthly work days at our pocket parks.



## Woodacre Improvement Club

Founded: 1940

1 Garden Way Box 405

Woodacre 94973

Contact: Carol Foti, Manager

415-488-0708 Fax: 415-488-0787

Email: woodacrepool@att.net

The Woodacre Improvement Club (WIC), a private membership supported nonprofit center located in the heart of Woodacre. Facilities include a 60-foot swimming pool, a baby pool, two tennis courts, a ballfield, a small gym, yoga room, volleyball sandpit, basketball courts and a children's playground. A gym trainer and swim/tennis lessons are available. The main hall is a multipurpose space with a stage—excellent for classes, member events and meetings. It is the local polling location and is designated as a community's emergency disaster center.

## HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

### Coastal Health Alliance

Founded: 1988

Box 910, Point Reyes Station 94956

415-663-8666

www.coastalhealth.net

Rooted in West Marin, the Coastal Health Alliance (CHA) is committed to providing quality, comprehensive primary health care services to all. CHA operates Community Health Centers in Point Reyes Station, Bolinas, and Stinson Beach (see locations below). CHA provides (bi-lingual) primary care, including medical, dental and behavioral health services; accepts Medi-Cal, Medicare and most major forms of insurance, including Kaiser Permanente; and offers a sliding fee scale for those of limited income.

Locations are:

- **Point Reyes Community Health Center**  
3 Sixth Street, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956
- **Bolinas Community Health Center**  
88 Mesa Road, Bolinas, CA 94924
- **Stinson Beach Community Health Center**  
3419 State Route 1, Stinson Beach, CA 94970

### San Geronimo Valley Emergency Fund

Founded: 2004

Box 242 San Geronimo 94963

Contact: Zoila Berardi 415-488-1906

The SGV Emergency Fund is dedicated to providing financial respite to qualifying individuals with hardship due to unforeseen circumstances. Our intention is to assist Valley

residents with needs that aren't covered by other county agencies. This fund can cover car repair, pay for a winter tank of propane, or help to subsidize the costs of an illness by paying for adaptive equipment or a medical bill. Our disbursement committee decides awards on a case-by-case basis. This is a grassroots effort to formalize what our community has been doing for so many years.

### Valley Toys and Joys

Founded: 1990

President: Barbara Hernandez

PO Box 496, Woodacre 94973

415-488-0454

Valley Toys and Joys is a nonprofit trust created to bring the magic of the holidays to local children. We assist low-income families and those who are in temporary crisis. We are funded by wonderful individuals who are suddenly transformed into holiday elves capable of making all kinds of dreams come true. This is a very personal program. We attempt to fulfill the wishes of the children, whether it be a bike, jacket, book, or Barbie doll. Santa Claus is alive and well in the San Geronimo Valley.

### West Marin Senior Services

Founded: 1976

Laura Sherman, C.M.C. Care Manager

Office: 415-663-8148 x102 (Fax: 415-663-1268)

laura@wmss.org

www.wmss.org

For over 40 years WMSS has helped older adults remain safe with dignity in West Marin by providing a range of in-home, assisted living, and community services for persons 60+ years that fosters independence and participation in our community. Services include comprehensive, confidential care management, individualized plans of care, adult social services coordination, caregiver referrals, family member respite, transportation assistance, meals, homecare equipment, home-safety repairs, community education and wellness programs. If being cared for at home is no longer the best option, WMSS offers assisted living for up to eight seniors at Stockstill House, a state licensed residential care home located in Point Reyes Station.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

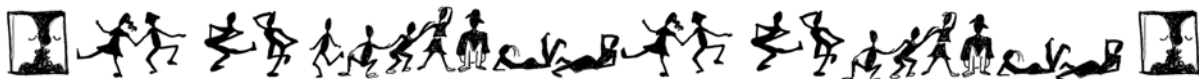
### Salmon Protection and Watershed Network (SPAWN)

Founded: 1997

Contact: 415-663-8590

info@spawnusa.org

www.spawnusa.org





SPAWN works to protect endangered salmon in the Lagunitas Watershed and the environment. SPAWN's approach to accomplish our mission includes grassroots action, habitat restoration, policy development, research and monitoring, citizen training, environmental education, strategic litigation, and collaboration with other organizations and agencies. SPAWN offers walks to view spawning salmon, homeowner consultations on creek restoration and protections, educational seminars, training and volunteer and internship opportunities. Please join us!

### San Geronimo Valley Planning Group

Founded: 1972  
PO Box 57  
Forest Knolls 94933  
Contact: Chairperson  
Lagunitaslinda@gmail.com  
www.sgvpg.org

We are the oldest environmental organization in the Valley serving the community and are all-volunteer. We played a major role in the development of the 1977 Community Plan (updated in 1997) that guides us in advocating our mission to protect and preserve the Valley's natural resources and village rural character. The annually elected Steering Committee represents the membership. Meetings include county requests for design reviews and open discussions about community projects and programs. We organize educational presentations by experts, host a Speaker Series and work closely with the County of Marin and Marin Municipal Water District. Members receive a monthly agenda and vibrant newsletter. The membership meets at the Wilderness Way Environmental Center, at 1 Lagunitas School Road, the 2nd Monday of the month at 7:30PM from September through June. Membership is required to vote. Valley residents are welcome.

### Wilderness Way

Founded: 1999  
1 Lagunitas School Road  
San Geronimo, CA  
Contacts: Paul Berensmeier 415-488-1964  
kokopauli@sbcglobal.net  
Jean Berensmeier 415-488-9034, jeanberens@comcast.net  
www.sgvwildernessway.org

Wilderness Way is an environmental organization serving the Lagunitas School District, community and other schools. The Valley's creeks and unique preserves provide opportunities for hands on experiences that create a deep understanding and lifetime connection to the Valley environment that surrounds where students live. Activities revolve around salmon, steelhead trout, native and non-native plants, wildlife, habitat

restoration and maintenance. These activities evolve into art, crafts, music, poetry, literature, math, science projects and film documentaries. Ongoing programs include a tracking program in the Larsen Preserve, watershed programs, creating and installing salmon crossing signs and a Native American studies program that includes stories, games, pump drills, cordage, arrowheads, tule boats, flutes and overnights. Wilderness Way recently created a library that includes environmental books and films for all ages including teacher resource materials.

### Zen of Weeding

Samuel P. Taylor State Park Volunteer Habitat Restoration Program  
Weeding the Woods since 2010  
Contact: Nancy Hanson, Volunteer coordinator 415 488-4202  
nphanson@comcast.net

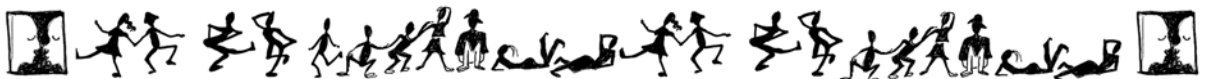
We do relaxing, restorative weeding the second Friday and second Sunday of every month at our neighborhood state park. Easy work in a gorgeous setting. Enter the park at the main gate by the Camp Taylor sign on Sir Francis Drake. Tell the kiosk staff you are a volunteer to get your parking pass. Inquire at the kiosk to find our location if you come late. Meet our group at the far end of the main picnic area a little before 1PM. We finish at 3PM. Zen Mission: To improve the health of our redwood forest and enhance the enjoyment of native riparian habitat for every park visitor, including the fish, birds and insects, by eradicating invasive weeds.

### FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS

#### Gan Halev, the Jewish Congregation of the San Geronimo Valley

Founded: 1992  
PO Box 280  
Woodacre 94973  
Contact: 415-488-4524  
shalom@ganhalev.org.  
www.ganhalev.org

We come together in community to celebrate Jewish life, to worship, educate, and socialize, and to share and explore our religious and cultural heritage. Membership in Gan Halev involves a desire to participate in a vital community and a commitment to make this unique community continue to thrive and grow. We gather for High Holidays, Shabbats and Jewish holiday celebrations throughout the year. Gan HaLev is a member of the Marin Interfaith Council and the Marin Organizing Committee. Our members are active participants and volunteers for local Valley nonprofit and social service organizations.





### San Geronimo Childcare Center

Director: Sharon Dahme  
 Location: San Geronimo Valley Community Presbyterian Church  
[www.sangeronimopreschool.com](http://www.sangeronimopreschool.com)

### West Marin Montessori

Co-Directors: Alyssa Gleason and Lhasa Yudice  
 Location: San Geronimo School Campus  
[www.westmarinmontessori.com](http://www.westmarinmontessori.com)

## YOUTH SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS

### CYO Basketball

Founded: 1976  
 Contact: John Beckerley  
 415-488-0558  
[jbeckerley@comcast.net](mailto:jbeckerley@comcast.net)

St. Cecilia's Catholic Church in Lagunitas sponsors the CYO basketball programs for the San Geronimo and Nicasio valleys. The program is open to boys and girls in the 4th through 8th grades. Practices start the first week of November. Games begin the first weekend of January and end the second week of March. St. Cecilia's also offers an Instructional League for 3rd grade boys and girls. St. Cecilia's CYO Basketball has been entering teams from the Valley for the last 40 years.

### West Marin Little League

Founded: 1983  
 Box 1168, Fairfax 94978  
 Phone: 415-721-1910  
[www.westmarinlittleleague.com](http://www.westmarinlittleleague.com)

West Marin Little League offers an exciting and fun co-ed instructional league for kids ages 5 to 14 with both a Spring Season (March-June) and a Fall Ball Season (July-August). The goal of the program is for kids to develop a love of the game, make new friends, learn new baseball skills, and experience the rewards of being on a team. The League welcomes players throughout West Marin from San Anselmo to Pt. Reyes. Board members and committee leaders organize all families in the league to help maintain and improve the fields, operate the snack shacks, manage the registration process, coach, cheer on the teams, and have fun!

### West Marin Youth Soccer League

P.O. Box 84  
 Fairfax 94930  
 Contact: Dylan Arroyo  
 Email: [dyarroyo@yahoo.com](mailto:dyarroyo@yahoo.com)

WMYSL is the designated California Youth Soccer Association affiliated League for the San Anselmo/Fairfax, San Geronimo Valley/Nicasio, Point Reyes/Inverness, and Bolinas/Stinson Beach areas. Teams in our League come from West Marin communities that have wonderful soccer fields and great local support. Our teams are divided by age and skill levels, and coaches evaluate players in each age group and seek to achieve team balance by selecting players from all skill levels. Regardless of skill or past playing experience, all players receive significant playing time, and sportsmanship is emphasized throughout our program.

## Nicasio Organizations

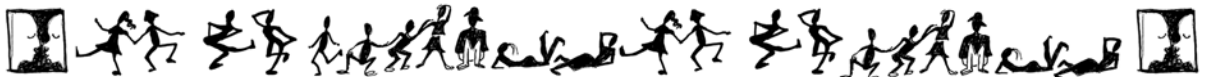
### Halleck Creek Ranch

Founded: 1979  
 Molly Scannell, Interim Executive Director  
[msscannell@halleckcreekranch.org](mailto:msscannell@halleckcreekranch.org)  
 415-662-2488  
 P.O. Box 159  
 Nicasio 94946

For nearly 40 years Halleck Creek Ranch has used the powerful therapeutic benefits available through horseback riding in nature to create a better quality of life for children and adults with disabilities, and for the people who care for them. As one of the largest and oldest weekly therapeutic riding programs in the Bay Area, Halleck Creek Ranch is a



*San Geronimo Childcare Center at the San Geronimo Community Presbyterian Church. Note the original train depot at left.*



pioneer in the field.

For more information visit: [www.halleckcreekranch.org/](http://www.halleckcreekranch.org/)

### The Nicasio Design Review Board

For information on Development and Design Guidelines, Horse Management Guidelines, and Membership, visit [www.nicasio.net/ndrb](http://www.nicasio.net/ndrb)

The Nicasio Design Review Board (NDRB) is a committee appointed by the Nicasio Land Owners Association. Its purpose is to review development proposals in Nicasio from the perspective of the Nicasio Valley Development and Design Guidelines. The NDRB provides comments to the Marin County Community Development Department as part of their public comment process, and often works with applicants to modify projects to bring them into conformance with the Design Guidelines.

### Nicasio Disaster Council (NDC)

Contact: Kirby Wilcox, Leader ([kirby\\_wilcox@yahoo.com](mailto:kirby_wilcox@yahoo.com)) [www.nicasio.net/ndc](http://www.nicasio.net/ndc)

Like other communities in West Marin, Nicasio has a disaster plan; it has been developed by the Nicasio Disaster Council in conjunction with the Nicasio Volunteer Fire Department and West Marin Emergency Services.

The Plan establishes 17 geographic neighborhoods in Nicasio, as shown on the Site Map page on our website: within each are two volunteer "Neighborhood Liaisons" whose role is to help prepare for a disaster by keeping a neighborhood record of properties, their residents and any emergency skills and equipment.

To download a copy of the Current Disaster Plan, and for information on how to be included, trainings, and useful links, visit: [www.nicasio.net/ndc](http://www.nicasio.net/ndc)

### Nicasio Historical Society

Museum on the Nicasio Town Square  
Saturdays and Sundays from 1:00 - 3:00PM or by appt.  
P O Box 111, Nicasio 94946  
Contact Elaine Doss, President, [eddoss@mac.com](mailto:eddoss@mac.com)  
or Martha McNeil 415-662-2307  
[www.nicasio.net/nhs](http://www.nicasio.net/nhs)

We are a non-profit, public benefit California Corporation that already has significant archives consisting of photographs, documents, and written and recorded material



*The Rodgers & Co. General Merchandise store in Nicasio, later destroyed by fire, was located on the town square where the Druid's Hall is today. Note the milk cans. (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)*

relating to life in Nicasio during the past century and a half. Our entire Board of Directors is a dedicated group of unpaid volunteers who are devoted to pursuing our Mission: Researching, documenting, preserving, sharing, and celebrating the rich history of the Nicasio Valley.

The Nicasio Historical Society welcomes anyone who has an interest in Marin history.

### Nicasio Land Owners Association

Contact Stephen Lewis, NLOA Board President  
[NicasioLandOwnersAssociation@gmail.com](mailto:NicasioLandOwnersAssociation@gmail.com)

When the Nicasio Land Owners Association, Inc. (NLOA) was founded in 1961, it stated the following key goals in its Articles of Incorporation:

1. To aid in the preservation of the beauty of the Nicasio area
2. To study the possible future development and planning of the Nicasio area so as to take advantage of the natural beauty and topography of the area
3. To assist so that the Nicasio area may develop in a pleasing, well-planned and orderly manner
4. While recognizing that the development of the Nicasio area is inevitable and while not desiring to impede progress, to aid so that the future development is accomplished in a manner that will enhance the value of the community and preserve as much as possible its natural beauty.

### Nicasio Land Preserve

[www.nicasio.net/nlp](http://www.nicasio.net/nlp)

The Nicasio Land Preserve (NLP) is a charitable corporation under the umbrella of the NLOA. The NLP is the vehicle through which the NLOA conducts specialized efforts of land and land rights acquisition. The NLP gives the NLOA and the Nicasio Valley a focused tool for preserving key features of Nicasio.



Community members created the NLP when they determined that the town needed a more active way to preserve the ambience of the community. In special cases, written standards were insufficient to preserve unique characteristics of the town atmosphere and landscape. As such, the NLOA spearheaded a community-based effort to purchase key properties whose development could disproportionately affect the ambience of the community.

### Nicasio School District

Tom Lohwasser, Superintendent, [superintendent@dixieschooldistrict.org](mailto:superintendent@dixieschooldistrict.org)  
 Barbara Snekkevik, Principal, [bsnekkevik@nicasioschool.org](mailto:bsnekkevik@nicasioschool.org)  
[www.nicasioschool.org](http://www.nicasioschool.org)

Nicasio School serves approximately 50-60 students in grades TK-8. Students learn in multi-grade classrooms with highly skilled teachers and support staff who prepare them for transition to high school and life outside of Nicasio. While many graduating 8<sup>th</sup> graders attend Sir Francis Drake High School in San Anselmo, many others attend private high schools in Marin County and San Francisco.

Nicasio School belongs to one of the few remaining single-school public school districts in Marin. The district itself was established in 1866 with the first Nicasio school-house constructed in 1867.

### Nicasio School Foundation

Contact: Mark Burton, President  
 PO Box 543  
 Nicasio, CA 94946  
 415-237-3218  
[info@nicasioschoolfoundation.org](mailto:info@nicasioschoolfoundation.org)  
[nicasioschoolfoundation.org](http://nicasioschoolfoundation.org)

The Nicasio School Foundation (NSF), an all-volunteer, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, was established in 1996 by a group of parents who were committed to maintaining essential enrichment programming that had disappeared out of California public school budgets. Driven by the belief that children deserve a well-rounded and complete education, these parents started the Foundation to seek charitable donations to bridge the gap between what the state sees as acceptable for children and what our community believes is best for children.

### Nicasio Volunteer Fire Department (NVFD)

Contact: Eric Blatz, Chief, [eblatz@nicasiofire.org](mailto:eblatz@nicasiofire.org)

Established in 1946, the Nicasio Volunteer Fire Department (NVFD) is the only all-volunteer fire

department in Marin County. The NVFD supports the Marin County Fire Department on emergency calls within the Nicasio response area and, because most of our ten members live in the community, we are often first on-scene to help those in need. Our diverse membership includes long-time residents as well as newer transplants, men and women, hi-tech professionals and professional firefighters, young and, well . . . less young. In addition to our training for medical and fire related emergency-response what unites us is our shared commitment to serving the Nicasio community and to helping those in need. If you might be interested in becoming a volunteer, or wish to learn more about the NVFD visit [www.nicasiofire.org](http://www.nicasiofire.org)

### Nicasio Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary

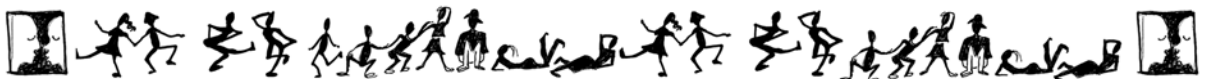
Co-presidents: Mimi Lewis [mimi.r.lewis@gmail.com](mailto:mimi.r.lewis@gmail.com)  
 and Madeleine Sloane [madeleine94946@gmail.com](mailto:madeleine94946@gmail.com)  
[www.nicasio.net/nvfdla](http://www.nicasio.net/nvfdla)

An important part of the NVFD responder team is the NVFD Ladies Auxiliary, the organizational engine for a range of important fundraising and community-building activities.

The Auxiliary first convened in 1959 to raise funds, feed and otherwise support our firefighters. The Auxiliary has since evolved into a major community-building organization. The group provides an opportunity for new neighbors to get acquainted and involved; and for founders to share and inform community history and tradition.



*St. Mary's Church and Will Lafranchi Field in Nicasio. The plaque reads, "The field is dedicated to the memory of Will Lafranchi, an enthusiastic coach and supporter of Little League Baseball and a devoted family man. He was a lifelong dairyman, committed to the preservation of the rural Nicasio Valley. He was a St. Mary's parishioner and served as a longtime school trustee. Will Lafranchi was a friend to all. Dedicated April 2002." (Photo by Michel Kotski)*



# Volunteering in the Community

by Suzanne Sadowsky

The nonprofit and other community organizations in the Valley and Nicasio offer abundant opportunities for people of all ages to become involved in community life and meaningful activities that support our residents and our environment. Indeed, our communities would not be the beautiful and vital places that they are without the help of volunteers. We would not have excellent schools, access to recreational services, churches and other faith organizations, and protection of our natural environment without the support of the hundreds of volunteers who donate their time and their expertise to the work of these organizations.

The community organizations listed in this *Community Guide* are places where people can volunteer. Anyone who is interested in becoming a volunteer can contact any one of those organizations to explore the ways that they might become involved. Keep in mind that some volunteer jobs require a long-term, ongoing commitment, while others might be short-term or seasonal jobs. Some of the jobs might involve a steady week-to-week job commitment while others might be helping for a short time for a once a year special event. Think about what you are interested in and what you are able to offer.

It's important to consider your availability, your strengths and your capacity to do the jobs that are needed by the organizations that you are interested in helping.

Some of the jobs might be administrative or desk jobs, others might require physical stamina, and still others might require special skills like maintenance and repairs, or computer or design skills, or management or fundraising.

Several years ago the San Geronimo Valley Community Center was awarded a two-year grant from the Marin Community Foundation to support a program to engage senior adults in volunteer activities. As a result, the Center was able to offer many more programs and activities for seniors to become socially engaged in community life and healthy activities, e.g., a book club, mah jongg, ping pong, exercise classes, Growing Old Gracefully peer support group, and a needlework circle. Each of those activities is volunteer led. An outgrowth of the MCF grant was the *Telling Our Stories Project*: individual seniors were interviewed by 8th grade students who recorded the life stories of community members who made contributions to the Valley over their lifetimes. Those stories are available as part of the online version of this *Community Guide*.

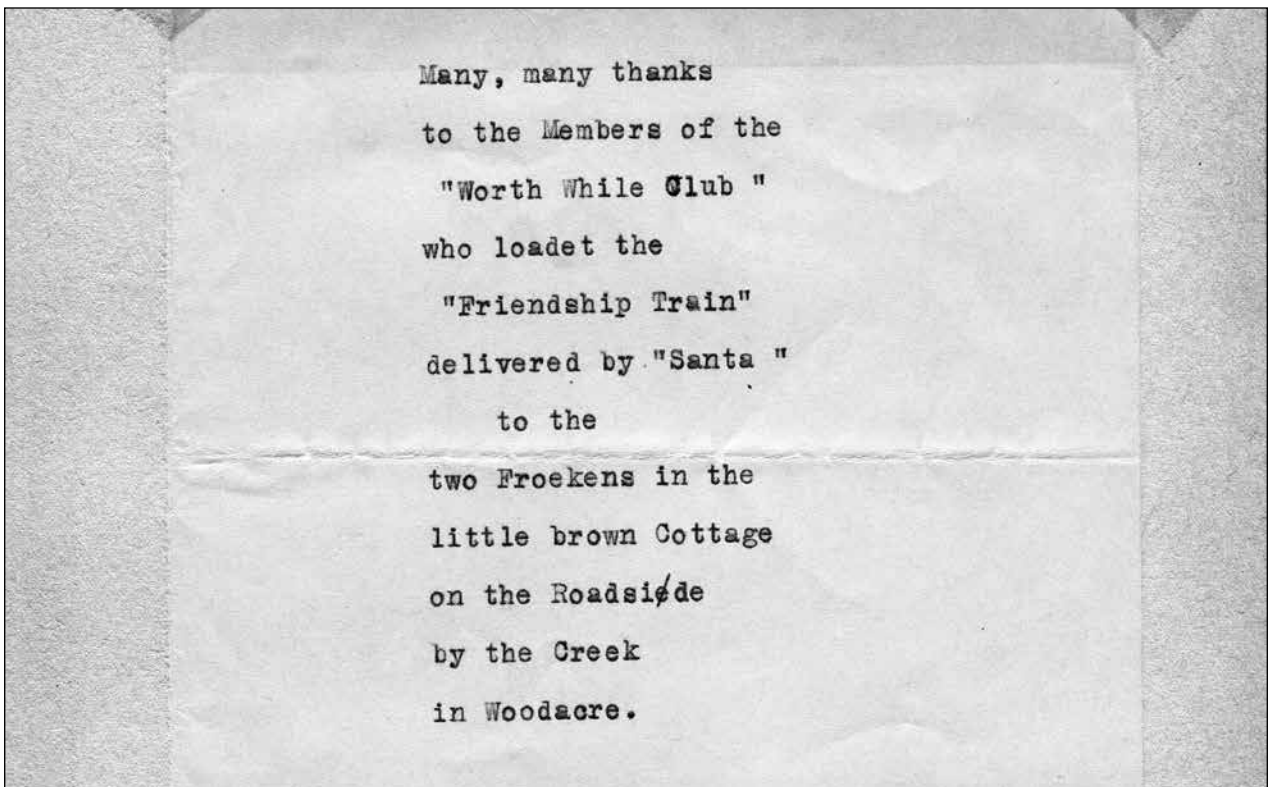
While a lot of the volunteer work is done by senior adults, probably because they have more time than the rest of the folks in the Valley, there are also many opportunities for young people to do community service and for parents volunteering for the schools. Volunteers who need to do community service because of minor offences like traffic violations are also welcome at many of our Valley organizations.

Volunteers are the life blood of our Valley nonprofits. They could not fulfill their missions without them.



Volunteer Appreciation Day, 1998

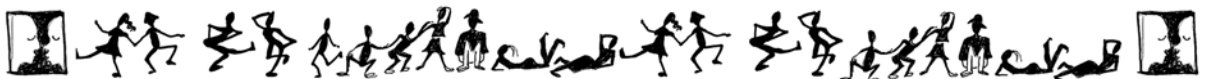




*The Worth While Club, active in the 1940s, was a women's group devoted to service, including an annual Christmas party for children, baking and delivering treats to wounded sailors at Mare Island Naval Hospital, running a blood drive, and, as shown in the above poem, providing Christmas presents as a forerunner to our current Valley angel, Valley Toys and Joys.*



*Teacher Appreciation Day, Lagunitas School, 1940s*



# The Edie Robinson Awards

The Edie Robinson Community Service Award (ERCSA) was created in 1999 as a way of permanently honoring Edie Robinson's many years of community service and honoring residents of the San Geronimo Valley who make outstanding long-term contributions to life in the Valley. The award recognizes positive achievement, devotion, and community building. Every second year, the ERCSA committee initiates a broad community nomination process to choose two recipients, one for the current year and one for the year just ended. The recipients' portraits are rendered by Anne McClain and added to the beautiful ERCSA triptych that hangs in the Community Center lobby.

The Edie Robinson Awards are presented at the annual San Geronimo Valley Healthy Community Collaborative End-of-Year Barbecue, which honors the many individuals and families who volunteer at the HCC nonprofit organizations.

*We must be the change we wish to see in the world.*

GANDHI

# Past recipients of the ERCSA:

- |                              |                         |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1999 Edie Robinson           | 2009 Diana DeBardeleben |
| 2000 Jean Berensmeier        | 2010 Marty Meade        |
| 2001 Grace Tolson            | 2011 Cia Donahue        |
| 2002 Suzanne Sadowsky        | 2012 Amy Valens         |
| 2003 John Beckerley          | 2013 Phil Sotter        |
| 2004 Zoila Berardi           | 2014 Richard Sloan      |
| 2005 Steve Pinkney           | 2015 Aneice Taylor      |
| 2006 Ken Naffziger           | 2016 Melvyn Wright      |
| 2007 Margaret and Kit Krauss | 2017 Joseph Walsh       |
| 2008 Dave O'Connor           |                         |



*Artist Anne McClain and honoree Zoila Berardi at the Healthy Community Collaborative celebration where the art piece commemorating the awardees was unveiled, 2009*



*Three-part drawing by Anne McClain honoring the Edie Robinson Community Service Award winners*



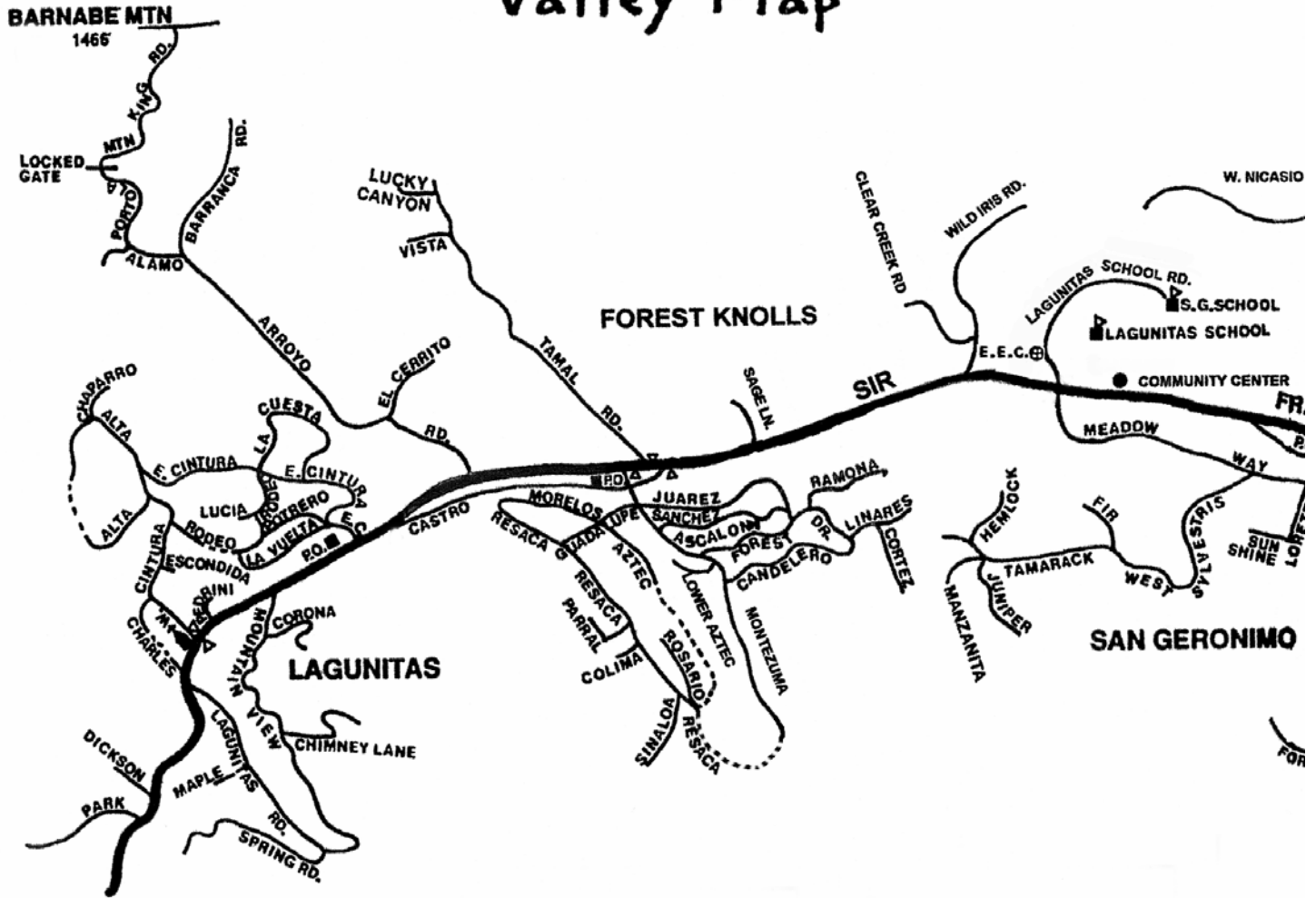


# Annual Events in the Valley & Nicasio

Event	Date	Location
Lagunitas School Kindergarten Orientation Night	January	Community Center
Lions Club Crab Feed	February	WIC
Lagunitas School Bingo Night	February	WIC
Community Center St. Patrick's Day Talent Show	March	Lagunitas School
Lagunitas School Book Fair	March	Lagunitas School
St. Cecilia's/St. Mary's Palm Sunday Brunch	Spring	St. Mary's, Nicasio
Valley Clean Up Day	Spring	Entire Valley
Interfaith Forum	Spring	Rotates
Spring Art Show	May	Community Center
Open Classroom Dinner & Dance	May	Lagunitas School
LEAP Valley Visions	May	Varies
Community Gym Golf Tournament	May	SG Golf Course
San Geronimo Preschool Pancake Breakfast	May	SGV Preschool
IN SPIRIT Plant Sale	May	Woodacre
St. Cecilia's Golf Tournament	May	SG Golf Course
MALT Ranches and Rolling Hills	May	Druid's Hall, Nicasio
Nicasio Land Owners Assn. Annual Meeting	May	Rancho Nicasio
HCC End of the Year Community BBQ	June	Rotates
Marin Firefighters Pancake Breakfast	July 4	Woodacre Fire Station
4th of July Parade	July 4	Railroad Ave., Woodacre
4th of July Family Fun Day	July 4	Dickson Ranch
Valley Toys and Joys Barn Dance	August	Dickson Ranch
NVFD Ladies Auxiliary Potluck and BBQ	August	Druids Hall, Nicasio
Community Center Heart of the Valley Gala	Fall	SG Golf Course
Gan HaLev Rosh Hashanah	Fall	Community Center
Gan HaLev Yom Kippur	Fall	Community Center
SGV Affordable Housing Assn. Housing Fair	Fall	Presbyterian Church
SGV Emergency Fund Jazz on the Lawn	September	Zoila's Lawn
Halleck Creek Fundraising Dinner	September	Rancho Nicasio
St. Cecilia's Rummage Sale Plus	October	St. Cecilia's
Montessori Fall Festival	October	Varies
Valley Health Day	October	Community Center
Nicasio School Foundation Walk-a-thon	October	Nicasio School
Wilderness Way Calling Back the Salmon	October	Varies
TAPS Deli-to-Deli Stroll	October	Woodacre to Lagunitas
Lagunitas School Halloween Carnival	October	Lagunitas School
Rotary Club of West Marin Hike	October	Heart's Desire Beach
Presbyterian Church Holly Fair	November	Presbyterian Church
Interfaith Thanksgiving	November	Rotates
Thanksgiving Food Distribution	November	Community Center
Community Center Holiday Arts Faire	December	Community Center
Valley Toys and Joys Distribution	December	Community Center



# Valley Map

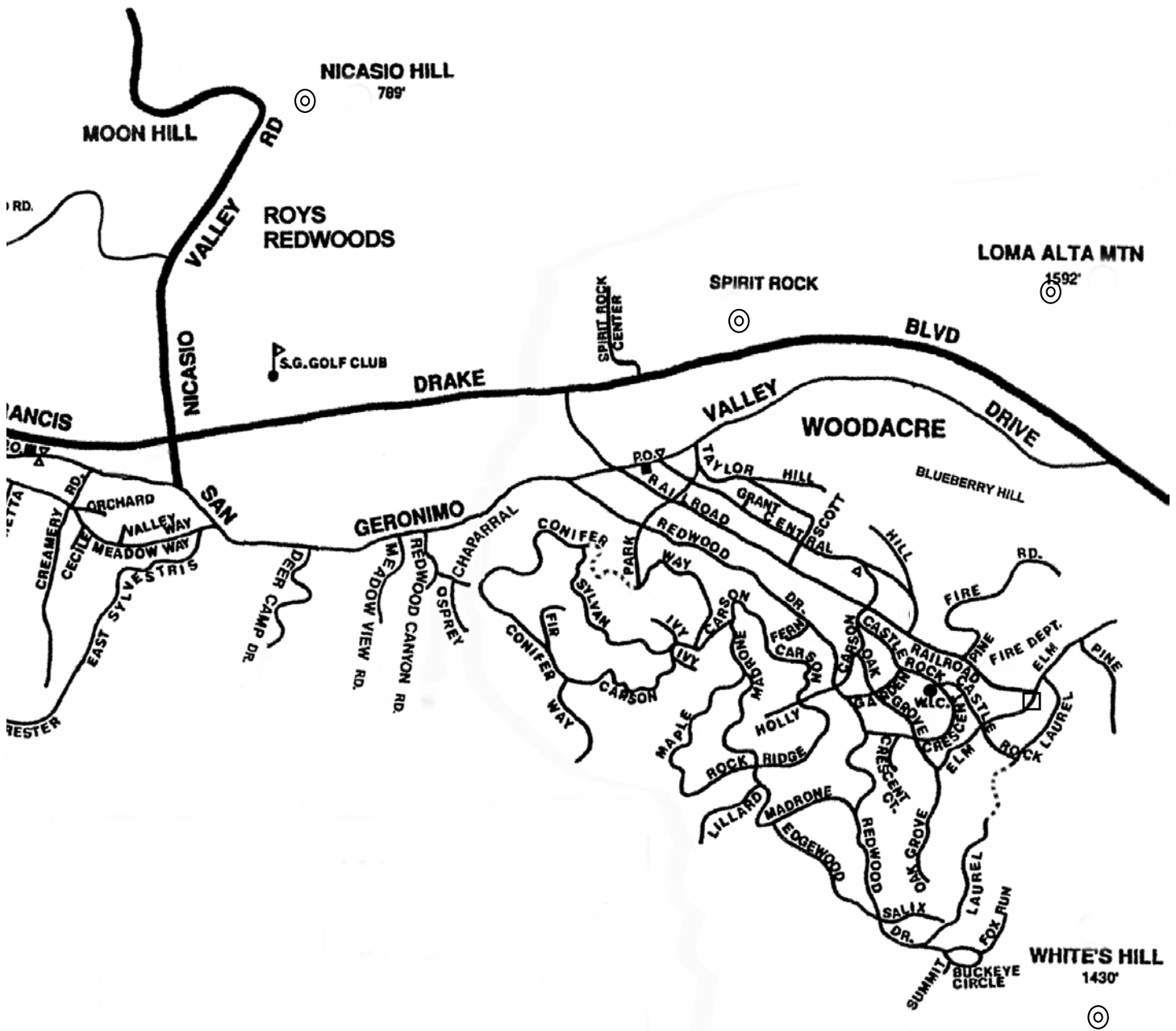


## LEGEND

- |  |                                  |  |                                    |
|--|----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
|  | Paved, unpaved roads             |  | Community Center                   |
|  | Sir Francis Drake Blvd           |  | Woodacre Improvement Club          |
|  | Often impassable or closed roads |  | Spirit Rock Center                 |
|  | School                           |  | Wilderness Way Env. Center         |
|  | Church                           |  | Parks (Woodacre and Forest Knolls) |
|  | Golf Course                      |  | Geological Feature                 |
|  | Transit Bus Stop                 |  | Post Office                        |
|  | School Bus Stop                  |  | Fire Dept.                         |

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## About Valley Roads

The San Geronimo Valley is an oval-shaped bowl, enclosed by ridges. Sir Francis Drake Blvd. is the main artery through the Valley. Roads through the villages, Woodacre, San Geronimo, Forest Knolls and Lagunitas, are generally narrow and not well maintained, so care is needed in driving. Severe storms or fire can change the status of roads in your area so check them for your own safety.

### Notice!

Some Fire Department vehicles and ambulances cannot drive on all Valley roads. Be prepared.

Call them at 415-499-6717.

Give them your street address and ask which fire vehicles can access your home during an emergency.



## San Geronimo Valley and Nicasio Post Offices

	Zip Code	Office Hrs	# Boxes
Lagunitas 415-488-9708	94938	M-F 7:30-11:30AM 12:30-4PM	536
Forest Knolls 415-488-0533	94933	M-F 8AM-noon 12:30-4PM	648
Nicasio 415-662-2000	94946	M-F 8AM-4PM	257
San Geronimo 415-488-4644	94963	M-F 7:45AM-12:30PM; 1-4 PM	322
Woodacre 415-488-9337	94973	M-F 8AM -4:15PM	980



San Geronimo Post Office (Photo by Laurence Brauer).

## Emergency Notification System Upgrade

If you live, work or go to school in Marin County and are 18 and over, you may now register your cell phone or VoIP (voice over internet protocol) phone to receive emergency alerts sent by call, text, email, or smartphone application from the County of Marin.

Listed and unlisted/blocked Marin County landline phone numbers are already included in our emergency notification system. Cell phone and VoIP numbers are not included and will require your registration in our Self-Registration Portal.

Text "AlertMarin" to 888-777 or visit [alertmarin.org](http://alertmarin.org) to register.

## The Community Email List

The SGV Community Email List has become an invaluable way to communicate with Valley residents or just to keep your finger on the pulse of life in the Valley. The list was the brainchild of Cheryl Fromholzer, growing out of her work managing email lists for the Open Classroom and the Middle School. You can join the list at: [groups.yahoo.com/group/sgvcommunity](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/sgvcommunity).

The San Geronimo Valley Yahoo Group was created to serve the members of our community . . . kind of like our own mini - "craigslist." Postings must be limited to happenings put on by, or including people from the Valley, with some limited exceptions for other areas of West Marin, including Fairfax. That means: For Sale / Wanted / Lost & Found / Open Studio Announcements / Rentals / New Business Announcements / Classes / Salmon Sightings . . . you get the idea.

This is NOT a discussion forum, nor is it a place to express your passionate opinions or politics. That said, we are a diverse group of friendly, community-minded folk.

**Moderator's note:** This is an important *free* service. Be sure to check your listing *before* posting so that all the information is included and correct. Please *recheck* your email for accuracy and details before posting to avoid resends that clutter inboxes.

## KWMR

We're located in downtown Point Reyes Station and at 90.5 FM in Point Reyes Station, 89.9 in Bolinas and 92.3 in the San Geronimo Valley on our newest frequency on your radio dial! KWMR is a vital resource for building and sustaining community, standing ready to serve in times of emergency, airing locally relevant information and entertainment to listeners, creating a forum through which every voice can be heard. The station offers instruction and experience in radio production and broadcasting skills to members of all ages. The Youth DJ Project is a great way for young people to learn great skills.

To listen to program archives, for current programming, and for information on events and to sign up for the weekly newsletter, please go to [www.kwmr.org](http://www.kwmr.org)



## About the Lagunitas School District

Located in the beautiful San Geronimo Valley of Marin County, California, the Lagunitas School District comprises three public school programs, a K-6 Open Classroom, a K-5 Montessori and a Middle School.

**Open Classroom:** Members of the Open Classroom community see social, physical, emotional, and academic growth as being interrelated and of equal value. In order to meet the needs of the total child, we emphasize respect for the individual and individual learning styles, emotional growth and freedom of choice. More at <http://lagunitas.org/open/>

**Lagunitas Montessori:** Dr. Montessori believed that learning is an exciting process of discovery, leading to concentration, motivation, self-discipline and a love of learning and peace. More at <http://www.lagunitasmontessori.org/>

**The Middle School Program** is a semi-departmentalized program. Students rotate through several different teachers to receive a core curriculum in language arts, math, science and social studies. A variety of enrichment activities are infused into the students' daily schedule including art, drama, foreign language, music and technology. A "Social Skills" class is included for one trimester for all students in each year of Middle School as part of the enrichment activities. Emphasis is placed on individuals experiencing success by developing self-confidence and heightened sense of self-esteem. More at <http://lagunitas.org/middleschool/>

### Contact:

Lagunitas School District  
415-488-4118 x 201  
415-488-9617 (fax)  
[lagunitas.org](http://lagunitas.org)

Lagunitas School Office  
415-488-9437 x 203  
415-488-9617 (fax)

San Geronimo School Office  
415-488-9421 x 301  
415-488-1011 (fax)

### Mailing Address:

Lagunitas School District  
PO Box 308  
One Lagunitas School Road  
San Geronimo 94963

## Marietta Larsen Memorial Nature Preserve

by Anne McClain

This swath of protected land surrounds Larsen Creek, bisecting the Lagunitas School District campus. It is intended to be both a protected natural area and an outdoor classroom for the students of the school district. Spanning Larsen Creek is the Salmon Bridge where there is informational signage about the salmon and steelhead trout who arrive every winter to spawn. Beside the creek are grasslands and an oak forest. The preserve trails provide opportunities to see birds, spot signs of wildlife, and identify native plants. The Preserve was established in 1965 with funds from Marietta Larsen and others. She died in 1966. It is now a testament to her memory.

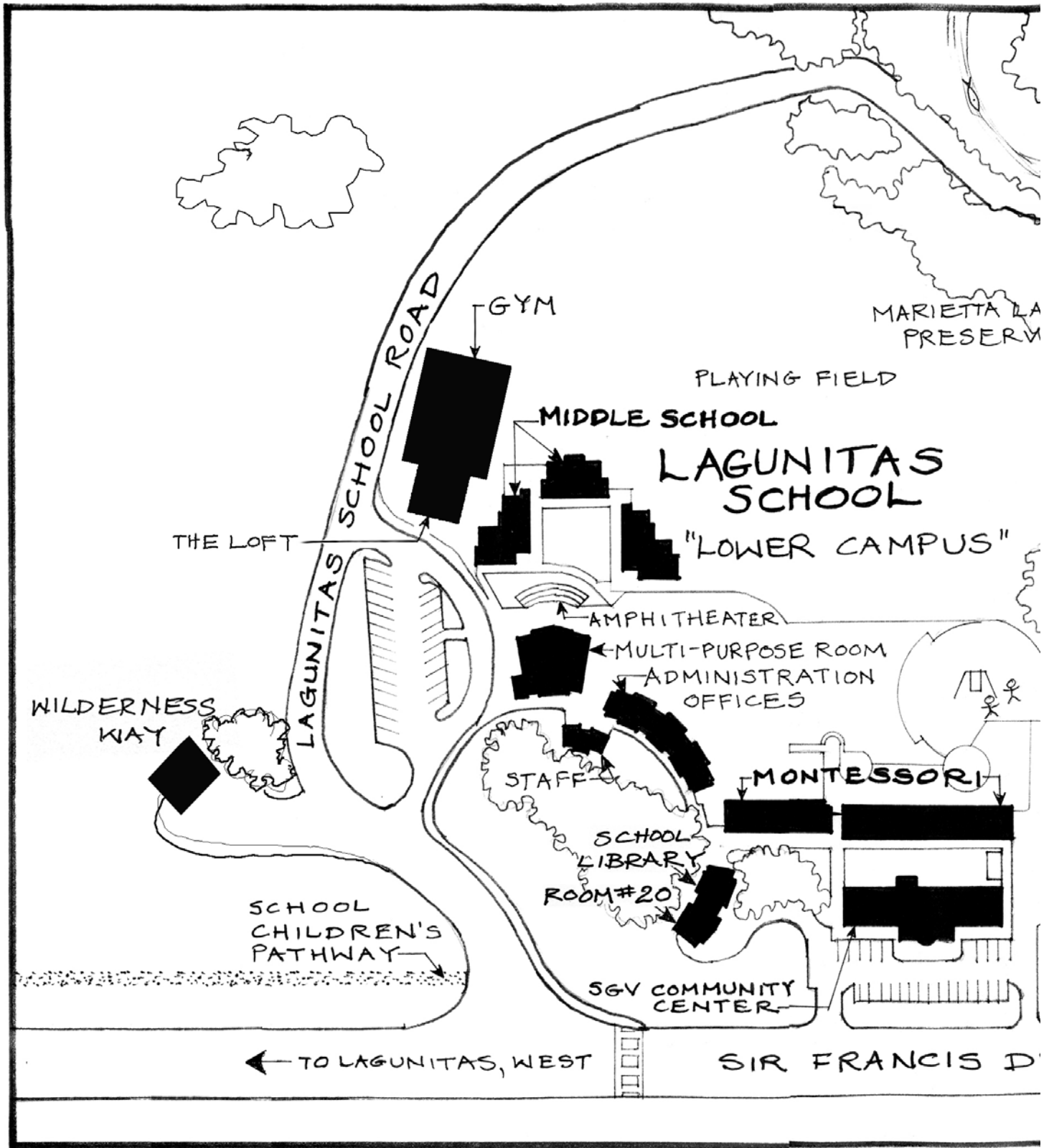
Marietta Larsen was born in 1906 in Denver, Colorado, and moved with her family to Palo Alto, California, as a teenager. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Stanford and then went on to graduate from Stanford Law School where she met her first husband, Russell Harriman. Living in Pasadena, they had two sons, Thomas and Jeffrey Harriman. A life-long volunteer, she was active with the Huntington Memorial Hospital and the Huntington Library.

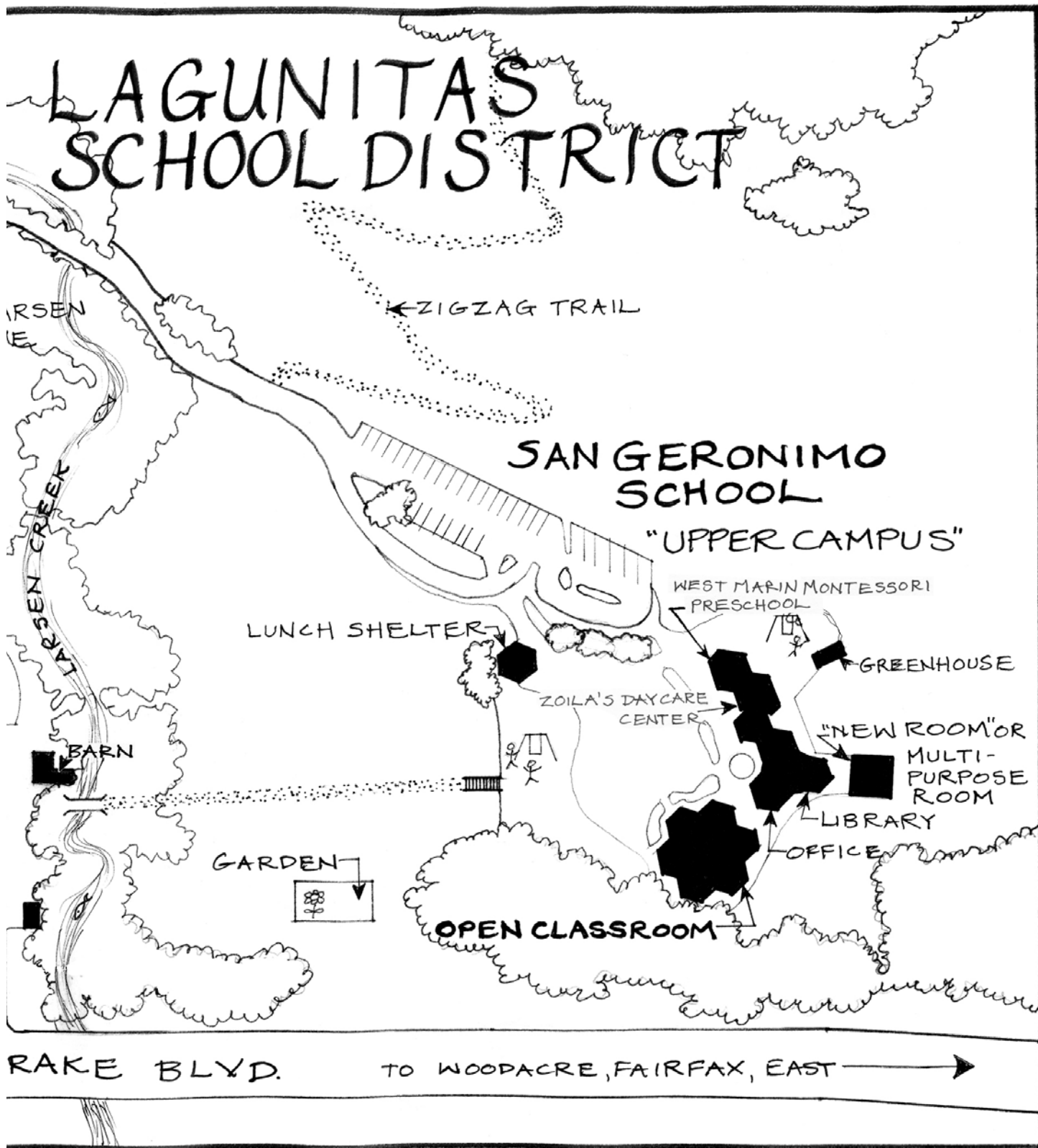
In 1952, Marietta married Dr. Albert Larsen and moved to Woodacre where she became involved in her sons' schools, Lagunitas Grammar School and Drake High School. She was a long-time trustee of the Lagunitas School District and then of the Tamalpais High School District. She was also a life member of the Lagunitas and Drake High School Parent Teachers Associations, a member of the San Geronimo Valley Association, and the Junior League of San Francisco. She was interested in promoting school district unification and was a member of the Marin County Committee for School District Organization. She clearly had a deep connection to the value of education and to enriching the students' educational experience. The Preserve stands as the embodiment of her commitment.

In 1999, Wilderness Way learned that teachers had concerns about poison oak on the trails. Every fall, since, Wilderness Way has cleared the poison oak and taught classes about the Preserve's native plants, wildlife (especially birds and salmon) and Native American skills in seeing and hearing in the outdoors. Children helped build two tracking boxes on the trails for wildlife identification, plaster cast making and telling the stories the tracks tell. Students made Salmon Crossing signs for the creek and bridge, and put Wishing Poles on the bridge every fall to call back the salmon. Wilderness Way has worked in partnership with the County on creek restoration projects and is currently updating the Preserve Handbook.

Plans are afoot in the fall of 2017 to restore and revitalize the Preserve. The Lagunitas School District in partnership with the Marin Resource Conservation District and the family of Marietta Larsen are coordinating this restoration. Please see the *Community Guide Online* for updates.





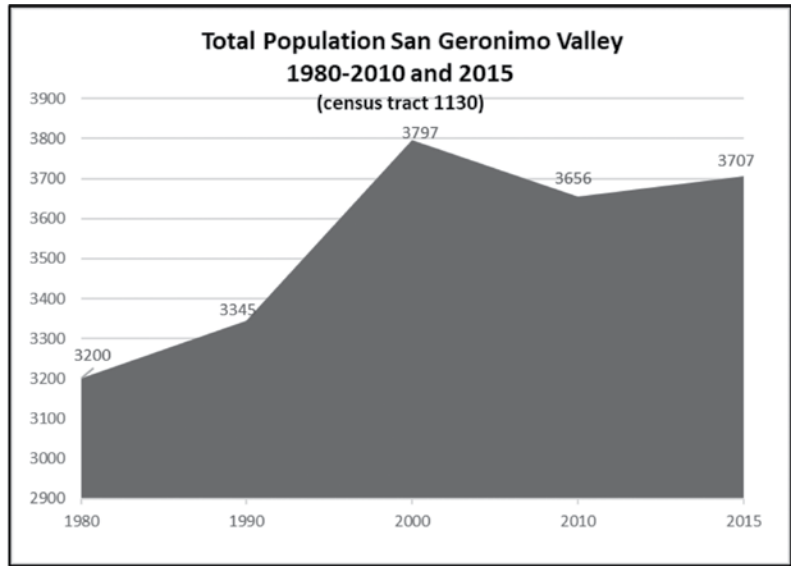


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# Valley Population and Housing

The population of the San Geronimo Valley grew by nearly 600 people between 1980 and 2000, but remained relatively unchanged from 2000 to 2015.



In 2015 nearly half of the Valley population lived in Woodacre. In addition to the 3,707 Valley residents, an estimated 747 people lived within the boundaries of the Nicasio ZIP code.

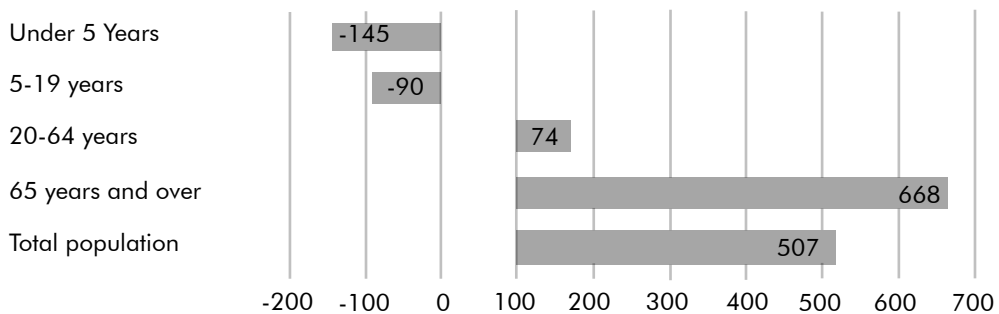
## Population in San Geronimo Valley Zip Codes and Nicasio

Geography	Total population	Male	Female	Median age (years)	Total housing units
Census Tract 1130 San Geronimo Valley	3707	1762	1945	52.3 years	1776
Zip Code 94933 Forest Knolls	812	406	406	47.6 years	342
Zip Code 94938 Lagunitas	636	287	349	40.2 years	382
Zip Code 94963 San Geronimo	701	327	374	42.4 years	269
Zip Code 94973 Woodacre	1653	821	832	55.8 years	799
Zip Code 94946 Nicasio	747	347	400	52.4 years	369

There were significant changes in the age distribution of the Valley population.

## San Geronimo Valley

### Change in Valley Population by Age, 1980 – 2015





**Population and by Age 1980-2015**

	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015
Total population	3200	3345	3797	3656	3707
Under 5 years	215	220	169	135	70
5-19 years	693	599	764	582	603
20-64 years	2104	2321	2590	2397	2178
65 years and over	188	205	274	542	856

**The Valley Population is Aging**

There were 507 more people living in the Valley in 2015 than 35 years earlier. However, the number of young children ages 0-5 years dropped substantially: in 2015 there were 145 fewer 0-5 year-olds in the Valley than in 1980. At the same time the population of senior adults, 65 years of age and over, grew dramatically from 188 in 1980 to 856 in 2015. By 2015, one in four Valley residents was 65 years and over.

The Valley is considerably less ethnically diverse than Marin County as a whole. Eighty-eight percent of Valley residents were white non-Hispanic compared with 72% county-wide. Five percent of Valley residents were Latino or Hispanic; that population group accounted for 16% of the County’s population. Only 2.9% of the Valley’s population were black or African American and 1.8% were Asian.

**Social and Economic Characteristics of the Valley Population**

Of the 1,643 households in the Valley in 2015, 57% were families and 30% of the households were single people living by themselves. Of the 490 single-person households, 172 were 65 years of age and over. One in five Valley households had children under 18 years. There were 358 men and 590 women who were widowed, divorced or separated living in the Valley accounting for 30% of the population 15 years and over. The equivalent percent in the County was 20%

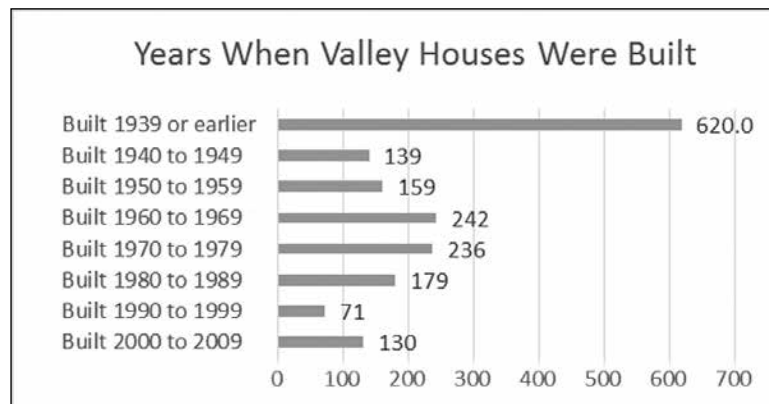
Household income in the Valley is below the Marin County average. Median annual household income in the Valley in 2015 was nearly \$11,000 a year less than the County-wide average (\$82,540 vs. \$93,257). One in six Valley households had incomes less than \$35,000 a year. Seventy-two percent of residents 16 years of age and over were in the labor force. Median earnings for male full-time workers was \$62,075 compared with \$52,350 for women. Ninety-four percent of the population had health insurance coverage. Twenty-six percent of Valley workers were self-employed compared with 15% in the County.

Two-thirds of people 25 years and over in the Valley had earned a Bachelor’s Degree or higher. Fifty-four percent of Valley residents were born in California. Thirty-five percent were born in another state.

**Housing in the Valley**

The Census Bureau recorded 1,776 housing units in the Valley in 2015 of which 1,643 (93%) were occupied. Twenty-nine percent of Valley homes were rentals, compared to 38% countywide. More than 90% of Valley homes were single family units. The Census Bureau recorded a 0% vacancy rate for rental in the Valley in 2015 and 2.9% county-wide

Homes in the Valley are on average older than elsewhere in Marin. Eighty-nine percent of Valley houses were built



before 1990. Thirty-five percent of all housing in the Valley is more than 75 years old—built in 1939 or earlier. This compares to 12% countywide.

Twenty-eight percent of Valley residents had moved into their present homes since 2000 and 2015. Twenty-six percent of Valley residents had been living in their homes for 25 years or more. Valley houses are on average smaller than in the rest of the County. Nineteen percent of Valley dwellings are only one or two rooms compare to 8% county-wide. Forty-two percent of Valley houses have three or more bedrooms. Larger houses—those with eight or more rooms—comprise only 7% of the Valley housing stock, but in the County as a whole 19% of dwellings are eight rooms—or larger.

More than half of Valley houses are gas heated, another 20% are heated with electricity, and 21% are wood heated. (Less than 2% of homes countywide are wood heated.) One percent of homes in the Valley were solar powered.

Monthly rents in 2015 averaged \$1,482 in the Valley—\$196 a month less than \$1,678 countywide; however, average household income of Valley residents was \$893 a month less than the County average. Forty-three percent of Valley renters were paying 35% or more of their monthly household income for rent. The average value of owner-occupied homes in the Valley was estimated as \$673,400, compared to \$815,100 countywide. One-quarter of homeowners living in their own homes in the Valley did not have a mortgage on their homes. Median monthly housing costs for those without a mortgage averaged \$663 while the median monthly costs for those with mortgages was \$2,767.

*Note: This article by Suzanne Sadowsky provides a brief summary of some of the information available about the Valley from the U.S. Census Bureau. Data in the article were compiled from the Census Bureau website. Data for 1980 to 2010 are from the U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Population Survey. Data for 2015 are from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts a complete Census every 10 years which provides a count of people and housing units. The American Community Survey (ACS) data are based on sample surveys and are subject to sampling variability. More detailed information on the ACS data and sampling variability are available on the American Community Survey website: <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>*

## Affordable Housing

by Suzanne Sadowsky

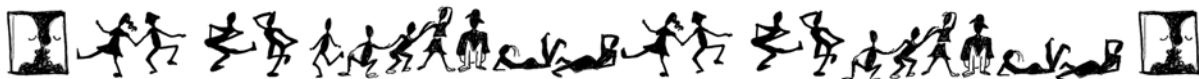
The San Geronimo Valley has historically been an affordable community for both homeowners and renters—people of diverse economic circumstances. Working people, families with young children, artists, musicians, craftspeople have contributed to the vibrant culture of the community. Skyrocketing home prices and rental market costs in recent years are making it increasingly difficult for young families and public services workers to live here, and for seniors and those who grew up in the Valley to remain part of this vibrant community.

The San Geronimo Valley Affordable Housing Association (SGVAHA) was incorporated as a non-profit community organization in 1983, but local folks including Joe Walsh and Bill Blanton had been meeting as early as 1978. The mission of the association is to create, preserve and manage affordable housing in the San Geronimo Valley and beyond. The organization envisions a culturally diverse and vibrant San Geronimo Valley community that retains its unique rural and natural qualities while offering housing opportunities for people of all income levels and walks of life.

In 2001 as part of the French Ranch development in San Geronimo, six affordable dwellings for seniors were

created in three buildings on Sage Lane in Forest Knolls. The properties were purchased by the SGVAHA with support from the County of Marin. In 2014 the County purchased the Forest Knolls Trailer Park from the Yerion family so that the 19 owner-occupied mobile homes on the property could remain affordable for the existing and future tenants. With support from the Marin Community Foundation, the Workforce Housing Trust and the County of Marin, the SGVAHA purchased the property in December 2015, and in 2017 completed needed repairs and renovations of the property. An additional one-bedroom mobile home was purchased to serve as an affordable rental at the Trailer Park.

The SGVAHA is a resource for information on new California laws that took effect on January 1, 2017, affecting second units, now called “accessory dwelling units” (ADUs). The new legislation and accompanying County ordinances make it easier to get approval to build an ADU and radically cut costs to create it. The SGVAHA, in collaboration with other affordable housing advocacy groups, is also looking at such issues as renter protection measures and the impact of short-term rentals on the availability of permanent affordable housing in our communities.



## Rolling Stones June 2004 Coming Together

by Dave Cort, Center Director



This spring, I had a series of experiences that are (I believe) connected. Maybe by the end of writing this Rolling Stones article I'll be able to figure out how these experiences relate.

I had the great honor to attend a gathering of the Fertile Crescent at the Center for Ecoliteracy in Berkeley (CEL). The gathering was facilitated by Valley resident Janet Brown who works at CEL and "in her spare time" grows some of the world's finest tomatoes right here in the San Geronimo Valley. I spent the entire day with 25 people from six Bay Area counties as part of an action group working on ways to make this a healthier world for our children. Our guest speaker was the Executive Director of Commercial Alert, Gary Ruskin. Gary spoke about ways that parents, community members and activists can "restore to parents some measure of control over the commercial influences on their children." Check out their website at [www.commercialalert.org](http://www.commercialalert.org).

I returned to the Valley from Berkeley and that same evening I participated in a gathering of 12 dads and daughters. Our group of dads came together to share experiences and to learn from each other. Our daughters ranged from 5 to 28 years old. Joe Kelly in his book, *Dads and Daughters*, said "Fathers influence how daughters see themselves. With a father's positive words and support, a daughter can be safe and healthy, and can thrive no matter where life takes her. A girl whose father listens to and respects her will expect her life partner to treat her well." By the end of the meeting, I sure felt like I was on a healthy path with my daughter. The group is planning a Dad's and Daughter's beach day in early June and other gatherings in the fall.

In early May, my own dad's health took a turn for the worse. He experienced a series of falls and ended up in the hospital. The time this happened to him, I also ended up in the hospital suffering a severe anxiety attack around my worries about my dad. I handled this latest challenge much better. My sisters and I and our spouses realized that we really have to support each other in caring for our dad. We all have our own strengths and weaknesses in dealing with our parents, and how we take care of each other helps us best support our dad in life's challenges.

So I guess that's what this is all about, supporting each other in our own families and in our community. People coming together in healthy, caring, loving ways can make for positive changes in our world.

I feel so fortunate to have these life experiences.

## Enjoy This Special Place

by John Beckerley

I have so many great memories of living in the San Geronimo Valley. Number one, it was a family place, and such a wonderful place to raise our children and to watch them become adults and then have children.

I have always experienced Valley-raised children to be kind to each other, to respect one another and their parents and other adults. I have enjoyed coaching soccer, basketball, and Little League throughout many years. I never had a child on my teams that I disliked.

One of my favorite memories is being invited by a neighbor to play pick up basketball in 1976 at the Lagunitas school yard on Saturday morning at 10:00AM. The game continues on every Saturday at 10:00AM. I have met so many wonderful people and have had so many lasting friendships throughout the years.

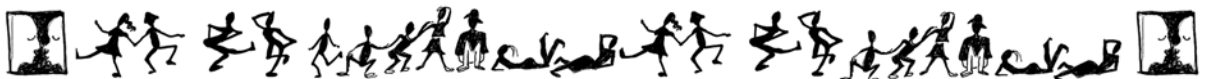
Now as the oldest continuous player on the court, I have and still play with three generations of players. Some of us have played with fathers, sons and grandsons.

As twilight is setting in on me, I am so thankful that we moved to this wonderful Valley and experienced all the joy of wonderful community. I say to you, "Be thankful and appreciate the blessings you have, be good to everyone, and enjoy this special Place."

## The Valley Food Co-op

by Amy Valens

The Valley Food Co-op started at the Community Center in the early 1970s heyday of buying clubs. It happily returned to the Center this year. The people who participate have always recognized the benefits (financially and socially) of coming together for this basic task. Currently we meet once a month. Everyone has a task that takes about three hours to complete. In the early years we met more often, and for a while some folks even rose at the crack of dawn to drive to San Francisco for produce and fresh bagels. For a long time now Valley resident Terry Fowler (co-owner of Fowler Brothers Food Distribution) has kept us going by delivering products at close to wholesale prices. The size of the group has varied from 12-20 families, usually being around 16 of us. In the process of sharing cases of chickens or bags of rice we share ideas about the whys and hows of the food we put on our tables in an informal and direct fashion. **New members are welcome!** For more information contact Belynda Marks at [belyndaw@yahoo.com](mailto:belyndaw@yahoo.com) or 415-987-9202.



# Sports in the Valley

by Don Holmlund, John Beckerley and Dave Cort

Some type of sports activity has undoubtedly been played in San Geronimo Valley as long as humans have lived here. Small groups of Miwok Indians resided in the Valley, and young men played games on teams with sticks with the purpose of advancing a piece of buckskin or rock toward a goal—sort of a precursor to field hockey or soccer. Swimming was also enjoyed in the warm weather months.

As settlers moved into the Valley, swimming continued to thrive. Popular gathering places were the Inkwells and the swimming pool at what is now the Woodacre Improvement Club, which was built on the site of the Mailliard Mansion, one of the first houses in the Valley. Some Valley teens joined the swim team at Drake High School. One of them, Al Giddings, was a Marin County Swim Champion and went on to the California All State Meet in the early 1950s. As there were no good football fields in West Marin, a great deal of athletic energy was spent on basketball courts, sandlot baseball diamonds, and grass soccer fields with many ruts.

Little League Baseball began in the 1960s, and still goes on today. Generations of Valley boys and girls have played baseball at Will LaFranchi Field in Nicasio, Lagunitas School Field, and, more recently, on Warner Field in Woodacre. Warner Field was built in the early 2000s next to the Woodacre Improvement Club, thanks to generous contributions by Valley residents. Many players have gone on to play in high school and college, and some even made it to the professional level. In fact, a great baseball film, *Touching Home*, was written and directed by local Little Leaguers Noah and Logan Miller who played at Drake, in college, and professionally. Noah and Logan star in the film along with actor Ed Harris.

Soccer has long been a popular sport in the Valley. Informal games on Sunday mornings at the schoolyard have been played for many years and continue to this day. In the late 1960s, the West Marin Soccer League was formed, bringing together teams from the Valley, Nicasio, and West Marin. The league continues to the present time, and with approximately 130 San Geronimo Valley boys and girls participating in any given year. The teams are grouped by age level: under 6, under 8, under 10, under 12, and under 14. The soccer community, including the Sunday players, and the children and families of the league, have been very involved in upgrading the field at Lagunitas School. The first upgrade in the early 1990s was an all-volunteer effort by this community, and the second upgrade, extending and realigning the field, also involved the players and their families as volunteers.

Saint Cecilia's CYO Basketball began in the early 1970s serving the San Geronimo and Nicasio communities.

Approximately 100 boys and girls have played each year over the past 46 years. Many players have gone on to star in high school, and some in college. In the past, games were played in various gyms throughout Marin. After approximately 40 years of planning and talking about a gym in the Valley, the dream came to fruition on August 29, 2009. Thanks to the many Valley residents who contributed so many hours and funds, the gym became a reality.

With the San Geronimo Valley Community Gym on the Lagunitas School campus, practices and games are now played in our Valley throughout the year.

Saturday Morning Basketball on the outdoor courts at Lagunitas School began in the mid-1970s when a few men began meeting every week around 10:00 to play basketball. The game is still being played every Saturday at the same time. Some players show up from over the hill. Three generations of players take part in this tradition.

There are also a large number of ongoing grassroots community sports activities in the Valley. These include:

- Sunday morning soccer game
- Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday pick-up basketball
- Ultimate frisbee
- Table tennis
- Co-ed softball
- Pick-up Volleyball
- Masters swim class
- Forest Knolls Freewheelers (bicycle)
- Numerous golf tournaments benefitting Valley groups at the San Geronimo Golf Course

As you can see, there is quite a history of athletic involvement in the San Geronimo Valley, and that history is still being written.



*The celebrated Saturday morning basketball game is still going strong. (Photo by Jeff Lippstreu)*



## From the West Marin Citizen

# What's in a game?

2008

by Cyndi Cady

Multi-generational camaraderie, blood, a lot of gravel, and the inspiration for the San Geronimo Valley Gym, that's what.

Lynn Reeser had no idea what she'd started when she gave her husband Richard a basketball for his birthday in 1975. "I think she thought he needed more exercise," the Reesers' neighbor Don Holmlund laughs. "Anyway, he got this basketball, and he got Steve Adams, Walter Kassoway, and me, and we started playing on Saturday mornings."

John Beckerley moved his young family to the San Geronimo Valley in 1976 and quickly got roped into the game. Joining Holmlund, Reeser, Steve Adams, Walter Kassoway, and occasionally Gary Giacomini, Beckerley boosted the game to a 3-on-3 competition. The Saturday Game began to grow. Beckerley recalls, "People from all over the county were coming out."

Some players literally grew up on the game. Al Baylacq started playing in 7th grade and is a current regular. A few of the longer-term players watched their kids go from riding their trikes around the court, to joining the game, to becoming Drake High basketball hotshots, to starting families of their own . . . and they still show up every Saturday.

The original courts at Lagunitas school were made of cement and gravel, and were badly cracked. If players fell or slipped, they got up bloody. "Everyone has gravel embedded in them somewhere," says Dave Cort, another longtime player.

In the late '80s or early '90s, fed up with the injuries, the game moved to the Forest Knolls playground . . . less than ideal, as it had only one court and there were now too many players. When the school asphalted the two original Lagunitas courts and added a third, the group returned in force and continues to this day. Holmlund dropped out several years ago due to a bad knee, but Beckerley, dubbed "The Commissioner" by the other players, still makes nearly every game. "I see John riding his bike every Saturday, just before 10, heading to the school," Holmlund says.

At 33 years [42 as of 2017] and growing, how does the game rank in terms of longevity against others in the country? When asked if he'd checked out the Lagunitas Saturday Game for his book *Hoops Nation*, a field guide to pickup games across the U.S., *Sports Illustrated* Senior Writer Chris Ballard was intrigued.

"Hmmm," he said. "I didn't know about that one." Ballard has found games that have been going on for a longer stretch, but, "It's hard to say what's the longest-running game in the country," he says. "It depends how you define

it. This one's definitely within the upper realms." He paused. "So . . . what's the level of play like?" Hoops junkies. They're all the same.

On a recent Saturday, two courts of players run sweating from hoop to hoop. A few guys wait on the sidelines for their turn to play. There's lots of gray hair and several faces that haven't met a razor yet. Buck Chavez drops in a 3-pointer and Steve Singh, knuckles on hips, walks away from the flurry of action, head down, breathing hard. Two of Buck's sons, 13-year-old Lucas and 15-year-old Neil, are playing, as well as John Beckerley, now 65 years old. A little kid practices alone on the third court, occasionally stopping to watch the action.

In today's game, there are several sets of fathers and sons: Andrew and Nico Giacomini; Buck, Lucas, and Neil Chavez; John and Austin Smithyman; and Steve and Duane Singh. Duane comes from Walnut Creek every week to play with his dad and the other guys. He never misses a Saturday. When asked if there weren't courts in Walnut Creek, if there weren't other games closer to home, Duane says, shrugging, "It's not the same."

Jake Monson is the little kid practicing alone. He's seven. He likes basketball, "A lot. Ninety-nine percent," he says. Jake wanders closer and closer to the two active courts, and finally stands on the sidelines, holding his basketball. Someone waves him in, and he trots onto the court, gamely keeping up with the rest of the guys even though his line of sight is roughly the level of the navels of the other players.

Not long after the game's inaugural year, the players began talking about building a gym. Through the '70s, '80s, and '90s, there were several attempts to get the project off the ground, but it wasn't until 2002 when a number of pieces fell into place, and Saturday players Dave Cort and Andrew Giacomini pressed forward with what proved at last to be a successful community gym project.

Commitment to the gym project was high among the Saturday ballers, sometimes to the extreme. Dave Burns' 21-day hunger strike to raise funds is now legendary. "I made Gandhi look like a little girl. Hey, don't print that," Burns says, laughing.

Today, the gym stands, nearly completed, visible from the courts where the game first began. And while the Saturday players are thrilled that the dream's become a reality, there's an ironic twist: they don't want to move indoors. What?

After 30 years of struggle, after players dropping out due to ground-down knee joints, after scrapes and scuffs and countless bits of gravel dug out of whatever part hit the ground, why the heck not?

Buck Chavez sums it up easily: "We just like playing outside."



## Rolling Stones Spring 2013 Taking Care of our Children and Families



by Dave Cort, Executive Director

Our quarterly *Stone Soup* editorial meeting took place shortly after the horrific shootings at the Sandy Hook Elementary School. At this meeting, we decided what to include in the upcoming paper. Our editorial committee, like most people who care about kids, schools and communities, was in shock over the shootings and at a loss to understand how this could happen in any community. Could this happen in our community? What are we doing to prevent a tragedy like Sandy Hook?

My college major at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, was called Human Development and Social Policy. My focus was juvenile justice and I interned at Cook County (Chicago) Juvenile Probation, Cuyahoga County (Cleveland) Juvenile, California Youth Authorities, San Francisco Parole Office, and the Youth Guidance Center in San Francisco. In the late '70s into the '80s, I worked at the Marin County Juvenile Hall and Probation, and at Full Circle School's group home for emotionally disturbed boys in Dogtown (West Marin). By the mid-1980s, I was burned out and came to grips that I was working with youth and families who had little chance of any kind of rehabilitation. The damage that had been done was almost impossible to overcome. Some of the youth I worked with found some incredibly deep inner strength and were able to live a healthy adult life. Unfortunately, the majority of the youth I worked with became institutionalized and struggled throughout their adult years.

In 1991, I was blessed to be hired at the Community Center. Over the past 22 years I have been able to work "upstream," or on the prevention side, with dedicated teachers and principals, social workers, counselors, family advocates, nutritionists, gardeners, parents, promoters, and other community heroes. Together we have developed and implemented wellness programs, school gardens, preschools, youth and teen centers, community recreation programs, social and emotional literacy programs, student meetings, Youth Court, and other restorative programs that focused on diversity, healthy transitions to high school, drug and alcohol prevention programs, community wellness days and food security. We have had amazing speakers like youth advocate Michael Pritchard, Holocaust survivor Eva Schloss, author David Scheff, and other speakers who discussed cyber bullying and other 21st century challenges to children and family.

Our hearts go out to communities throughout the world who join us in taking care of our children and families.

## Tender Bones

by Molly Giles

"My dad?" The babysitter's young voice trembles as I drive her home. "My real dad? Remember how I told you he's always getting hurt?" I nod, concerned. Her father is a once-famous rock musician who has been in and out of rehab for years. "Once a fan hugged him too hard? And broke all his ribs? He has tender bones. Then last night, at this club in L.A.? He fell off the stage and cracked his skull. So now he can't play and his girlfriend's gone back to Vegas and the cops are keeping his car." How'd the cops get into this, I start to ask, but the babysitter interrupts. "He's all alone." My mouth opens—surely the man has friends, people to help him. "Anyway," the babysitter continues, taking a deep breath, "I wanted to tell you so you can find someone else for next week 'cause I won't be here. I'll be in L.A." I start to protest—you can't leave school to keep house for a drug addict, you're only fourteen years old!—but again the babysitter stops me. "I'm all he's got. Without me, he'll start to use again. I know he will. He has no will power. He can't be alone." She touches my arm. "You know how it is when you see someone you care about make bad decisions? You can't just watch." No you can't, I think, so when she asks to be dropped off at the crossroads to hitchhike to L.A., I shake my head and drive her straight to her mother's small house instead. The babysitter won't look at me as she gets out of the car. Then she turns. "I hope your life gets better," she says. I watch her shoulder her heavy backpack, knowing, as I drive away, that she has already begun the long trudge south in the dark.



Girl wins bike race, mid 1970s (Photo by Harlan Floyd)



*Wes Wilson in his studio. He was part of the wave of poster artists doing the psychedelic concert posters that were so iconic in the 1960s and '70s. (Photo by Harlan Floyd)*

## The Road Through Flanders Farm

*by Anne Faught*

A still fog lingers over the muted winter fields  
Wooly cows, wild turkeys working the icy stubble  
A seasonal spring coils through a gush of green  
itself a gurgling, twisting, newborn life

This ribbon of rain-stained road  
divides the valley like the spine of a great book  
The wide pages to the north fanning out and swelling to  
the sky  
in soft, gray-green bellies  
The southern pages dense with brown stalks, yellow willow  
an indigo forest running towards the ridge

The layered rhyme these pages hold  
is an invisible, softly sung song  
Remnants of a train moving west  
a century ago still rest in the frozen soil  
Generations of animals feeding, birds vigilant,  
salmon flashing upstream  
Families living, working, singing and  
dying in this clearing we have made home

We are a line of cars in the quiet, daily procession  
windshield wipers, headlights, taillights,  
Early morning in years of mornings,  
driving in the fog through Flanders Farm.

*I love the warm, safe, caring space for kids to take risks and share their growing talents year after year at the Talent Show with an audience that cheers them each step they take.*

*I love the intentional fun-sake space for older kids in the LOFT that has an amazing and creative staff.*

*I love the fun community events, Valley Games, and the Holiday Camps are awesome!*

JENELLE FERHART



*Manzanita Fire Rd. in the Gary Giacomini Open Space (Photo by Larry Brauer)*



## Rolling Stones Autumn 2013

# Growing Old Happily

by *Dave Cort, Executive Director*



Recently, I had the opportunity to participate at a Marin County Division of Aging conference which was titled “It’s Never Too Late to Live, Love, Laugh, and Learn.” The Marin County Commission on Aging cosponsored the event, and I attended with some of my fellow Community Center staff members. Two of the speakers at the conference were *Marin Independent Journal* columnist Beth Ashley and her husband Rowland Fellows. I have been a big fan of Beth’s columns in the *Marin IJ* for years. I was especially appreciative of Beth in the early 2000s when she wrote an in-depth feature story on the Community Center’s Arts and Events program. This article really helped us increase our audience and countywide interest in the Community Center’s arts activities.

Beth retired a few years ago, but she continues to write columns for the “IJ” twice a month. Many of her recent columns have been about her marriage to Rowland and their travels around the world. Beth is now age 87 and Rowland is 88. They were married a few years ago after being out of touch with each other for over 50 years. I find their story fascinating. Beth, through her columns, gives a tremendous amount of insight into a loving relationship as a couple approaches their 90s. I have been blessed to be with my wife, Howie, since we were in our early 20s. Last month we celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary, and I’m really hoping that we have at least 30

more to celebrate. I think that Howie has the same vision, so we look to couples like Beth and Rowland for guidance.

With all of this in mind at the conference, Rowland shared his “10 essentials for growing old happily.” Here’s Rowland’s list which I jotted down; it also appeared in Beth’s *IJ* column on May 28, 2013.

- Good health—exercise regularly, get those hearing aids, make sure you eat a healthy diet, and don’t forget to take your meds.
- Have enough money to head off misery, starvation or debilitating stress.
- Have at least one strong relationship with another human being—spouse, relative or friend.
- Have or get a pet.
- Grow something. Vegetables, fruit or flowers.
- Improve something in and around your home.
- Learn something—read, take a class, or attend a lecture.
- Keep your sense of humor.
- If you’re annoyed at someone or angry enough to explode, count to 10 before you say anything.
- If you’re really annoyed, count to 100.

I thought this would be an excellent list to share with all of you. I am getting to work on it. I feel extremely blessed to be in a 30-plus year relationship right here in our beautiful San Geronimo Valley.

## Being Home

by *Diana Rocha*

After starting a string of businesses, including Elephant Pharmacy, while living in San Francisco, my husband, Stuart, and I wanted to slow down and leave the city. He had lived in Lagunitas over 30 years ago and always wanted to return. He would regale me with stories about the incredible beauty of the Valley’s flora and fauna. In one story, he recounted how, because he lived at a certain spot next to the creek, he would be woken up by the sound of coho salmon splashing around in just one inch of water.

Three summers ago, we relocated to the Valley and it was as beautiful and special as Stuart described it to be, with two additional surprises. For 14 years now, I’ve had a practice focused on helping Lyme patients get better.

It began with my own recovery from late stage chronic

Lyme disease. Here in the Valley, because it is a Lyme hot spot and many of us enjoy spending time outdoors, I’ve been pleased to find out that people want to learn about prevention. I’ve had the opportunity to share the latest information on effective Lyme prevention at the Valley Health Fair, in meetings with neighbors, and in the Lyme article in this *Community Guide*. The feedback I’ve received has been great and the work has been very gratifying. For any Valley residents interested, I offer free Lyme prevention education through my Lyme coaching practice.

The second discovery I’ve made while living here has been that I’ve been able to get more in touch with my Native American roots. Various aspects of the nature that surrounds us here will, unexpectedly, remind me of stories and rituals my grandparents spoke to me about when I was a very young girl. It is at moments like these, I feel a profound sense of being home here in the San Geronimo Valley.







*"In the spirit of 'waste is not waste until it's wasted,' David Hoffman's THE LAST RESORT is an environmental model of sustainable and harmonious living. It attempts to assimilate both natural methods from the past with modern know-how to create a living system that effectively demonstrates possibilities of thriving in a non-polluting healthy environment. Its mission is to discover and perfect practical low-cost sustainable methods for waste management, water re-use, and food security." Read David Hoffman's story in the Community Guide Online. See page 174.*

## Profile: Ramon Ramirez

by Nicole Ramirez

Ramon Ramirez has lived in Nicasio for over forty years working on dairy farms. Ramon was also employed by the Lagunitas School District for close to twenty years. Ramon is currently a Board member at the San Geronimo Valley Community Center and has been involved with many local organizations for decades.

Ramon came to this country when he was 18 years old. He was born on March 3, 1942, in Jalostotitlan, Jalisco, Mexico. His journey here was not so simple. He swam across the Rio Grande with only 10 cents in his pocket and arrived in Texas. He is the eldest and sole male in his family of sisters. From early in his life he felt an obligation to help and support his mother and sisters.

Ramon's life experience is an amazing novel of a journey of hope and possibilities. He traveled several times back and forth to Mexico in his initial years here. He finally settled at the La Franchi Ranch in Nicasio in 1967, bringing his first wife and eight children. Ramon expressed that he had one intention during this time and that was to have a better life in a land with so much opportunity. He wanted a good life for himself and not only his family, but extended family and friends. He has become a conduit for many arriving here in need of work and housing. And what an asset he has been for those unclear how to navigate this country without

speaking the language.

Ramon worked diligently on the ranch until he was in an accident and had to cut back his dairy workload. In 1984, Ramon began custodial work at the Lagunitas School. He worked for 17 years and he says those years connected him with the San Geronimo Valley forever. He said they were the "happiest days of his life." He said this community gave and continues to give him so much love and support. In 1990, Ramon met his second wife, Laura Flores, while visiting Jalostotitlan, Mexico. They were married in Vista Hermosa, Mexico, in 1993 and that same day they left Mexico. In 2005 Esmeralda, his youngest daughter, was born.

Ramon continues to work and live on the La Franchi Ranch raising Esmeralda who attends Nicasio School. He expressed a sense of pride and happiness when I asked him what it meant to him to be on the SGVCC Board. He voiced a certain sentiment about the importance of giving back to this country and community because it has and continues to give his family so much. He said his one struggle being on the Board is his English skills. The Board members are patient, and he appreciates them for that. Ramon became a U.S. citizen on November 2, 2016. He was so proud and accomplished, he came to the SGVCC to share his great news with us. His connection with this community is authentic.



# Part II: Looking Back: Histories, Stories and Profiles

## Chapter 3: How We Became "The Heart of the Valley"



*San Geronimo Valley Community Center*



*Community Center Sign Board*



*Middle schoolers at a LOFT planning session 2009*



*Revivir la Cultura dancers 2012*



*Spring Art Show*



*Poster for Peace Love and Action Festival 2017  
(Designed by Anne Cutler)*



# History of the SGVCC

Today's San Geronimo Valley Community Center plays a unique and vital role in the Valley, offering myriad resources and activities. Seemingly light years from its origins in the '60s, the Center, then as now, reflects the multiple needs and priorities of Valley residents. How we got to 2017 is a fascinating story . . .

## From Art Center to Community Center 1960s–2000

by Founder Jean Berensmeier

### School Building Condemned

In the 1960s the Lagunitas School District learned that the old school built in 1924 did not conform to the State Education Code's earthquake standards. By condemning it, the Trustees got State funds to construct San Geronimo School. As a parent with a child entering kindergarten I felt duty bound to attend my first School Board meeting, which was held in the "old school." I was daydreaming of volunteering for the PTA and baking cupcakes when the Trustees announced they were going to demolish the old school building and build a parking lot. I heard someone in the back of the room say, "Tear down this school building? I'll lie down in front of the bulldozers first." Oops . . . it was me! After some discussion, the Trustees agreed that it was a shame to destroy the building with its wide porticos, arches, and historic WPA mural, and agreed to lease it to me for \$1.00 per day per classroom for after school art classes! The kid's classes were wildly successful. Adult classes were added and the groovy place was dubbed "the Art Center."

But, to my surprise, it was strongly opposed by vocal conservatives of the Valley. People began to take sides . . . point fingers . . . make threats . . . say nasty things. The controversy came to a head when parent supporters of the Art Center incorporated and proposed a new, long-term lease. The hastily formed Concerned Citizens Committee countered and proposed a Sheriff's Substation, offering to staff it day and night. After long hearings and many heated words, the Trustees, under the leadership of Gary Giacomi- ni, leased the condemned building to the Art Center, Inc., and have renewed those leases regularly ever since.

### A Changing Time

I didn't immediately understand the reason for such vehemence and hostility. But consider the times of the 1960s — The post-Kennedy era, nuclear proliferation concerns, the Vietnam War, Summer of Love, the sexual revolution, proposed Countywide Plan, educational changes at the school, the water moratorium, the drought, developers

fixated on freeways and growth unleashing a backlash of grassroots concerns about the environment and our quality of life. A liberal, agricultural preservationist, and former Lagunitas School District Trustee, Gary Giacomini was elected Supervisor. His was the third vote needed to adopt the Countywide Plan that changed Marin forever. Just before his election there was a community outcry by the newly formed SGV Planning Group opposing the 1961 Master Plan for the San Geronimo Valley that called for 20,000 people and 5,000 homes roller coasting the ridges and hills.

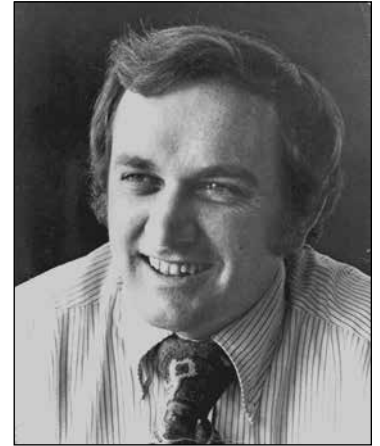
After Giacomini's election the '61 Master Plan was booted, and the Planning Group spent five years working on the first Community Plan that replaced it. The Community Plan set a boundary around each of the four villages. It protected the Valley's rural character, ridges, streams and natural resources. A 20-acre zoning requirement for development outside the villages protected the rural character of the valley and assured minimal development in agricultural lands and open space.

These changes had a staid segment of the community reeling, but worst of all was the daily contact, eyeball to eyeball, with back-to-the-land hippies that had defected from the Haight Ashbury after the Summer of Love and settled in run-down cabins, lived in hillside encampments on private property or funky buses. They smoked pot, had long hair, food co-ops, community gardens, tie-dyed clothes and gave things away . . . free! The music of Big Brother and the Holding Company, Quicksilver, the Grateful Dead, Sons of Champlin, Joy of Cooking, Elvin Bishop, and Van Morrison was everywhere and the stories about Janis Joplin's parties in Lagunitas were a scandal. Sheriff calls were off the charts. Time has a way of embellishing events, but probably most of what you've heard is true.

With hindsight, it is now clear that the Art Center was a focus where new residents seeking change could express and implement fresh, creative ideas for their families and their environment. But the Art Center also became a visible scapegoat where others could vent anger and fear of change. With that background, politics and setting, let's look at what was really happening at the Art Center.

### The Art Center—1970s

Early classes for kids included macramé, leather craft,



Gary Giacomini, 1970s



speed-reading, ballet, modern dance, filmmaking, archery, clay animation, and crochet. For adults we added yoga, carpentry, T'ai Chi, nuclear survival, bagpiping, drama, a car engine in the Resource room for an auto mechanics class, and life drawing (when kids discovered what "life drawing" was and learned there were no curtains on the windows, we had a mini-crisis). We signed leases for a Valley Family Preschool, Day Care, and clay program. Special events included, Flea Markets, Ali Akbar Khan concerts, An Evening of Erotic Poetry, Valley Player drama productions, a Roach Clip Art Show and much more that space doesn't allow.

The first 1969 Holiday Festival fundraiser had over 100 artists and hundreds attending! Tables bent under the weight of home cooked food. The aroma of bread baking filled the Valley (I'm not kidding). We talked Fred Berensmeier, Sr., into being Santa Claus and discovered an unforgettable gift—he WAS the real Santa Claus. Ask anybody. These were fun, heady, creative times. But the Festival proceeds covered only insurance and utility costs and the building was rapidly deteriorating. Fuses blew, the roof leaked, the temperamental heater was given an affectionate, but unprintable name, and we pushed membership with pink Survival Cards and . . . survived.

### The Community Center—1980s

1980 brought us a \$200,000 federal Community Development Block Grant, \$35,000 from the SF Foundation, donations for a reader board and a county grant to partly restore the historical 1933 WPA mural. Additional grants provided funds for a new heating system, parking lot paving and a small bathroom off the lobby. The Art Center closed down to make major repairs and upgrades, which included converting the huge boys bathroom into a boys and girls bathroom and then converting the girl's huge bathroom into a meeting room, now the West Office. We reopened in 1981 as the Community Center with a Grand Celebration and flourished. There was a new landscape mural in the Valley room. We sponsored a Weatherization and Recycling Program, had art shows, teen dances, a Haunted House and showed anti-nuclear films. New users included a Food Co-op, Valley Alliance, the Planning Group, Housing Task Force, and Friends of the Valley.

The January 1982 storm had an enormous impact on the Center. Overnight it became a focus where volunteers manned a hotline for weeks, matching helpers to callers with diverse emergency needs. This, along with a Flood Disaster Newsletter and Disaster Preparedness booklet, led to the hiring of Arnold Erickson, a law student interested in Human Services. He instituted an Emergency Pantry, Senior Brown Bags, Compassion in Action, USDA commodities, holiday programs, and directed counsel-

*continued on page 61*



Summer 2009

## Community Center's Literary Highlight Remembered

*by Marshall Krause*

It was, perhaps, the highlight of the Community Center's literary contribution to the community thus far. More than 300 people gathered in the courtyard on the evening of September 16, 1995, to hear famed poets Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gary Snyder and Michael McClure declaim poems and stories honoring their mentor, Kenneth Rexroth. Earlier the group had met at Devil's Gulch in Samuel P. Taylor State Park to remember Kenneth's poems written there at Kenneth's cabin during the 1950s.

Rexroth became widely known in the 1960s as an originator of jazz and poetry readings for the North Beach Bohemian community of San Francisco as well as a distinguished and deeply learned artist and critic. All three poets acknowledged their deep connection with and respect for Kenneth's work.

The reading was organized by the Center's President at the time, Marshall Krause, who had gotten to know the poets when, as the attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union in Northern California, he defended writers and artists accused of "obscenity" in exercising their artistic freedom. All three poets, still contributing their creativity in their elderly years, expressed themselves as strongly committed to the artistic freedom guaranteed by our Constitution.

A one-hour video of the reading made by poetry archivist Kush has been shown at the Community Center several times and an interpretive trail at Devil's Gulch is still under discussion.



*Marshall Krause, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Gary Snyder, Michael McClure, 1995*



ing, resource and referral services. He networked with the Marin Food Bank, Holiday Cooperative, the Valley Lions Club and churches. The Center sponsored a unique art show for those on death row in San Quentin as well as monthly art shows at the county library in Lagunitas. We received a grant to create an 18-panel stained glass project. The first *Resource Guide* was born, produced periodically and provided free to every box holder in the Valley. We added more classes, performing arts and literary events. In 1989 Arnold produced a quarterly journal for the Center he wisely named *Stone Soup*.

We entered the next decade with the board voting to change the name from Community Center to the Cultural Center with one dissenting vote . . . Guess whose?

### The Cultural Center—1990s

In 1991 Arnold left, accepting full-time employment in a law office. He had worked long and hard to implement the Board's heartfelt visions at a time when financial resources for programming and salary were limited. We owe him an unpayable debt. We hired Dave Cort at 13 hours a week to be the Human Services Coordinator. He immediately started networking with the school, parents, childcare organizations and individuals with superb results. He had a gift for hiring the right people for the right jobs. Classes, programs and events grew. When I unexpectedly saw tears in his eyes at a particularly moving event, I knew we had the right person for the job.

Although some of us were confused about the original Healthy Start program, Dave intuitively seemed to see it as an extension of the work the Center was doing, and he was right. County Supervisor Steve Kinsey, School Superintendent Larry Enos, and Trustee Brian Dodd were key in writing the grant that funded this program. The Board took a leap of faith and embraced the program. Dave now had a full-time job (half Cultural Center and half Healthy Start). The Center went from an annual budget of about \$5,000 in the '70s to \$50,000 in the late '80s to \$164,000 in 1998 — amazing! *Stone Soup* went from 4 to 8 then 16 pages. In 1998 the Center celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

It's hard to pick just a few highlights from this decade, having to leave out many events, anecdotes and names, but here are some I can't resist mentioning: The professional painter, Phillip Wadsworth, who loved the Center so much he painted the whole thing FREE; the first annual Spring Art show on Friday the 13th with 55 Valley artists; the Gardening Workshop by Les Bailey and Elvin Bishop; coordinating with Valley Toys and Joys; AIDS Awareness event; artist home tours and slide shows; Dr. Arvol Lookinghorse; poet Linda Gregg; Kenneth Rexroth Day with Gary Snyder, Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Michael McClure; the Haunted House; new outdoor stage; Summer Concert series; the Toilet Art Show; Valley Day; SF Mime Troupe;

the Grateful Dead Dance Party; and generous Thanksgiving donations.

### The Community Center—2000s

by Dave Cort and Jean Berensmeier

The Center's Valley After School Tutoring program (VAST) started in 2000. Major changes occurred in 2002 when the Community Center absorbed an after school child care program, a licensed child care program for 5-12 year olds, a teen program and after school classes for students K-8. Subsequently, these programs joined together as part of the Valley Resource Center whose goal is to provide comprehensive health and human services support and referrals for Valley families.

In 2003 the Center Board voted to change the name of the Cultural Center back to the Community Center. In 2004 the Center received a grant for the Ready, Set, Go School Readiness Program that serves families with children 0-5 years old. In 2005 the Community Center entered into a joint use agreement with the Lagunitas School District that has resulted in a Gym and Youth Center that opened for school and community use in 2010, the culmination of a decades long dream. The Youth Center evolved into the Loft Teen Center, which offers an array of programs for middle and high school youth. The Community Gym is the place for basketball, volleyball, dance classes, and gatherings for children, youth and adults, in addition to the Lagunitas School District's Physical Education classes and the home for Lagunitas Bobcat Sports Teams and St. Cecilia's CYO Basketball.

In February 2009, the Community Center absorbed the Senior Lunch program that in 2017 serves 75 lunches every week. In 2010 the Center's *Resource Guide* Committee started working on the 2011 edition; it's a Valley institution that began in 1983 and is updated every five to six years. Thanks largely to the generosity of Supervisor Kinsey and the Howard Burkhart Endowment Fund at the Marin Community Foundation, it was mailed free to every box holder in the San Geronimo Valley. In 2010 a planning grant was received from the Marin Community Foundation to create a San Geronimo Valley Wellness Center.

As of December 2010, the Community Center's staff numbered 15, positions funded by community donations, grants from public, private and community partners, and program fees. The Community Center's Board and staff remained committed to supporting local families affected by the 2009 recession by providing food, scholarships, and referrals. The budget had grown from a paltry \$2,000 in the late '60s to over \$700,000.

*I love the Community Center and I love the community spirit and the friendliness of everyone caring for each other.*

JOANNE BAGAN

50<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary



## The Community Center 2011–2017

by Dave Cort

With the opening of the San Geronimo Valley Community Gym and the Loft Youth Center in the fall of 2010, the Community Center has evolved into the organization that it has become today. Human Services, Children and Youth programs, Arts and Events, along with being a facility for the community to gather, are the cornerstones of the Community Center's work. To deliver these programs, the Community Center's annual budget has increased by almost 40% along with the size of its staff. The Community Center's mission now includes health and wellness as a critical goal and recognizes Nicasio as part of our service area.

To support this growth and to provide long-term financial stability, the Community Center Board of Directors began work on a new strategic plan in 2013. This process was led by long-time Valley resident Mike Howe who worked with the Board for over two years and interviewed dozens of Valley residents. A 2015 to 2020 Strategic Plan was the result of this work. The plan focused on establishing an endowment, which would provide a stable source of

annual income to the Community Center; capacity building in terms of organizational structures for both the Board of Directors and the staff; and a focus on the long-term needs of the Community Center facilities. In 2015 the Board established a Deepening Roots Campaign to drive all of this, steered by Center Board members and individuals from the community. Their work to date has made significant progress and is ongoing.

Over the past seven years the Human Services programs have grown and developed. Congregate Senior Lunch continued to grow at a steady pace as close to 4,000 senior lunches are served throughout the year on Monday and Thursday afternoons. The Community Center established a program called Revivir La Cultura through a grant from the Marin Community Foundation. Community Center staff members Hannah Doress and Nicole Ramirez took a lead role in working with local residents to share their native Mexican culture through music, dance, cooking, and visual arts. A fantastic event evolved from this work called the Mexican Arts Festival which brought over 200 Valley residents together to celebrate our cultural diversity. An important outgrowth of Revivir La Cultura was greater participation and outreach into the Nicasio community. In



*A tradition of the Spring Art Show is the group photo of participating artists for the posters distributed throughout the county. (Photo by Donn DeAngelo)*



2015, the Center Board voted to formally add Nicasio to the Center's mission.

In the area of community wellness a new partnership with Dominican University's Nursing and Occupational Therapy programs was established in community-based health. The Community Center's Valley Health Days continued to grow each October. Hundreds of residents received flu shots and great information for their health and wellness.

In 2014 two significant new projects were started at the Community Center. Funding was received for a Job Training program for youth, teens and young adults. This project was led by Community Center staff member Heather Richardson who connected with local businesses and community-based organizations to place interns who gain workplace experience and mentoring through our partners. This program continues to grow and thrive.

The second project was the establishment of the West Marin Coalition for Healthy Kids, which addressed teen binge drinking, prescription drug abuse, and smoking. The Community Center, with Suzanne Sadowsky as coordinator, became the lead agency for the Coalition which included all of West Marin, including the Lagunitas, Nicasio, Shoreline, Bolinas-Stinson and Tamalpais school districts. The Coalition is funded by the County of Marin and includes other Coalitions throughout Marin under the umbrella of the Marin Prevention Network.

In the program area of Child, Youth, and Teens, the Community Gym and the Loft Youth Center solidified its programming during non-school hours—evenings, weekends, holidays and summer. Community Center staff and volunteers worked to host Open Gyms that included basketball, ping pong, volleyball, and dance. In the Loft, there was a monthly Dads and Kids Pancake Breakfast along with cooking classes, and other projects in the arts such as metal arts, which was led by Woodacre artist Griffie Griffiths. The Community Center's Valley After School Tutoring (VAST) program received a prestigious Golden Bell Award from the Marin County Office of Education. Middle-school-aged youth participated in the County's REST program making meals and bringing them to the local women's homeless shelter, which is open in the winter months.

In December of 2015, Zoila Berardi retired after founding and directing the Co-op Preschool and Zoila's After School Childcare program for over 40 years. Zoila provided loving care to generations of students in the east wing of the Community Center. Julie Young and Nicole Ramirez worked tirelessly to provide a smooth transition for the children as the Community Center assumed the leadership for the childcare program. In August of 2016, the childcare program moved from the East Room of the Community Center to the San Geronimo Campus. At the

same time the West Marin Montessori Preschool under the direction of Alyssa Gleason and Lhasa Yudice moved from Woodacre to the San Geronimo Campus. These programs further solidified the outstanding model partnership between the Lagunitas School District and the Community Center that is now approaching its fiftieth anniversary. Suzanne Sadowsky, the Center's Associate Director, worked with middle-school teacher Sally Hutchinson to establish the *Telling Our Stories* project where eighth-grade students interviewed long time community members who were volunteers. Two fantastic books of stories came together from those interviews. Through the Community Center's school-linked program middle-school students participated in the Marin Youth Court.

In the area of Arts and Events, the Community Center hosted many eclectic events and developed a program called Valley Arts and Lectures. Examples of this programming include Mwanza Furaha's Black History event. Every year the Community Center had amazing evenings with the McQuilkin Music Family Hour that featured some of the Valley's finest performers. In partnership with the Lagunitas School, the Center hosted an event with Holocaust survivor Eva Schloss. Now in her 80s, Eva is the stepsister of Anne Frank. She shared her powerful story with the students and families in our community. In 2015, the Community Center honored Chuck and Grace Tolson at the annual Heart of the Valley Gala, which was hosted by the Center Board at the San Geronimo Golf Course. Grace's family has been connected to the Valley since the 1860s owning and operating the Dickson Ranch. For many years, the Center has collaborated with the Dickson Ranch's Valley Toys and Joys program, which distributes holiday gifts to community children. Annual events like the Holiday Arts Faire, the St. Patrick's Day Talent Show, and summer music concerts attracted huge crowds of community members.

The Community Center Board and staff, through the Center's Facilities Committee, work to maintain the historic Community Center building, which is approaching its centennial. In 2015 the Center received donated funding to purchase a parcel of land at the intersection of Central and Carson in Woodacre to preserve as a pocket park. The parcel has been named Central Park and the Community Center has been planting trees and shrubs, and developing plans for the Park in 2017.

*We love that the Community Center does amazing outreach to the community, meeting the needs of our children and seniors. The staff and the community are very welcoming.*

Gael and Doug Hunt



# Interview with SGVCC Founder Jean Berensmeier

by Dave Cort and Paul Berensmeier

Jean Berensmeier has lived in Lagunitas for over 50 years with her husband Lee and son Paul after first coming to the Valley in the 1950s as a counselor at Forest Farm Summer Camp on Tamal Road in Forest Knolls. Jean worked as a Physical Education instructor at the College of San Mateo for many years and has been extremely active in Valley community life. Jean is a founder of the Art Center (which became the San Geronimo Valley Community Center), San Geronimo Valley Planning Group, and Wilderness Way.

DAVE: Jean, I was looking at your personal achievements over the years and you have quite a legacy. First, here's a listing of what I know to be your accomplishments: In 1968, you stopped the school board from destroying the old school. Then you leased it for an Art Center for one year and the second year organized a board to become a non-profit organization.

JEAN: Our art program for the kids was wildly successful that year. I added classes for adults. It was clear to me this building belonged to the community, and so we incorporated.

DAVE: In 1972, you learned about the '61 Master Plan that envisioned an urbanized Valley of 5,000 homes and 20,000 residents with major freeways cutting through the Valley, shopping malls and everything that goes with development.

PAUL: Jean came home very upset and told me there was a plan to build homes all along the Valley ridges we loved to hike. I got upset, too.

JEAN: I put up a notice at each Valley post office about the plan and announced a community meeting with County Planning Director, Werner von Gundel and Diet Stroeh, General Manager from MMWD. Valley residents were outraged when they saw the '61 Master Plan Map. That's where I met Gary Giacomini who was running for election and learned what an "incorporated area" and a "Supervisor" were. I got a quick education about the Board of Supervisor politics at the Civic Center and the controversy about a staff-driven visionary Countywide Plan called *Can the Last Place Last?* Gundel gave me a copy that I still treasure.

DAVE: So you helped get Gary Giacomini elected to the Board of Supervisors because his vote was crucial to approve the visionary Countywide Plan that limited development to the eastern urbanized corridor and protected

90% of Marin as rural open space and ranches?

JEAN: Right. Interestingly, adopting the new county-wide plan also required rural communities to develop Community Plans. I organized and chaired a group of people that formed the ad hoc SGV Planning Group. We, along with other residents, hammered out the Valley's first Community Plan.

It was adopted in 1978 and preserved and protected the Valley's rural character and natural resources. That plan has been amended and strengthened, and has guided Valley development ever since.

PAUL: It was shortly after the Community Plan was adopted that Gary appointed Jean to the Parks & Open Space Commission. Within three months she got the commission to support the purchase of Roy's Redwoods—the first preserve acquired in the San Geronimo Valley. And during the next 20 years that she served with the commissioners, the County acquired three other Valley preserves—Maurice Thorner, Gary Giacomini, and the French Ranch—four preserves totaling almost 2,300 acres.

JEAN: Exactly. My 20 years on that commission were memorable. Then Paul had a career change and the Berensmeier family founded Wilderness Way and began teaching environmental education in the four K-8 programs in the Lagunitas School District.

DAVE: So acquiring those nearly 2300 acres protected them from development. Extraordinary! But, Jean, what in your life motivated you to do what you've done?

PAUL: Great question, Dave. Jean frequently told me the stories of her childhood, and I am convinced, as she is, that there are basically three experiences that were key to who she is and what she does.

DAVE: Okay, Jean—you're on.

JEAN: First, and importantly, I don't think I'm unique. I think everyone has special stories to tell that changed them and what they do. Here are mine. I was born in 1932 during the Great Depression. Life was hard for everyone, and when I was four, my Dad, a Serbian, and my mother, a Croatian,





sent me to live with my grandparents who lived in the desert, in a small mining town in Nevada. Neither spoke English so I learned to speak Yugoslavian. *Baba* means grandmother in Slav and *Dide* is grandfather. There were no children where we lived, but I loved living there. My *Baba* was very smart. I watched her and learned to crochet, garden and chop wood. There was a schedule to everything she did. Monday was washday. Tuesday was bread-making day. Sometimes I helped her, but many times I just went outside. Nobody said go out and play, I just went out. It was there in the desert that two key things happened to me, when I was four and five years old, that deeply impacted my life. The first one was deceptively simple—I watched ants. It was my favorite thing. Some of the anthills were waist high and the ants were big ants. I loved it. I'd go out almost every day and hunker down and watch them. They were so patient, so persistent. They had a job to do and nothing was going to stop them from doing it, and, regardless of the difficulty in solving the problem, they always figured out a way. The most important thing was that they never, ever, gave up. I was mesmerized. Without realizing it, that teaching became an integral part of my life.

One day, on my way to my favorite anthill I saw, about 40 feet beyond the anthill, a large orangish colored rock. I didn't remember seeing that before. Puzzled, I walked around the anthill and towards the rock. I got about halfway there, when something happened to me that I couldn't, and can't, explain. My feeling was that I had merged with the rock. Now that sounds silly, but that is what my five-year-old mind thought and felt. I merged with that rock. I have, unsuccessfully, searched for words to explain the feeling . . . the experience. All I know, and I will never forget, is that I merged with that rock and it changed me. I believe that as my life evolved, that my love

and caring of the environment goes back to the ants and that rock.

DAVE: You said there was a third thing. What was that?

PAUL: I know . . . the 3 T's!

JEAN: Right. But the 3 T's need some explaining. I was a competitive fencer and captain of the team at SF State College. Before I graduated, George Pilar, a Hungarian world saber-fencing champion, came to San Francisco. He taught at the Pannonia Athletic Club in an old five-story building with a funny loft at the top. That's where the best Bay Area fencers took lessons. When Pilar came, everyone wanted to take lessons from him. He was tall, thin, very gentlemanly, highly respected and smart. He didn't speak a word of English. I arranged to take lessons from him. I fenced in the French style. In that style your on-guard position is in the center of your body. You're ready to protect either side with a quick parry left or right. I was proud of my technique and it served me well in my bouts. But Pilar would have none of it. Immediately he said, in Hungarian, "No! Not French—Hungarian!" He began pushing my arm until my on guard position guarded my back and left the front open. What? I was incredulous! And then, I thought . . . wait a minute . . . with the back line closed my opponent can only come in one way—not two. It was so simple—and profound. Pilar's lessons were tough and demanding, but I loved them. When I did poorly, he would say, "Zero! Zero!" And I knew I had failed miserably. If I did well he smiled, and invariably, at the end of the session, he'd kiss my hand. He treated all the fencers the same. I just loved the guy. When he was satisfied with my technique he moved on to teaching strategy and timing by "fencing" with me and

*continued on page 66*



*Only the golf course would remain undeveloped: Eastern portion of the Valley in the 1961 Master Plan with a shopping center north of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard (dotted line), freeway (thick black line) running through Roys Redwoods, and even a heliport (the circled H).*



*continued from page 65*

making coaching comments. But I had a tough time. I just didn't get it. None of the fencers did. For weeks I stayed late and watched him give other fencers lessons trying to figure it out. I noticed the Hungarian he spoke was limited to simple words and very short, repetitive, phrases. One night I asked a Hungarian friend to interpret what Pilar was saying while I listened and watched. He did. Pilar just said to the fencer, "Your technique is good, but unless you move at the right time and choose the right strategy, you will not win a point—let alone the bout."

The penny dropped! Suddenly, I got it. I substituted the word "tactics" for "strategy" and ended up with—the 3 T's. Technique, Timing and Tactics. I began to improve—rapidly. My technique was always good but my timing needed lots of work. Was I too soon, too late, patient enough? And Tactics—what do I choose to do in this particular situation with this opponent? The alternatives? I got it! I really got it! And the 3 T's changed my life. Without a

clear understanding of the 3 T's I would never have saved the old school building from being destroyed, or leased the building that became the Community Center, or formed the Planning Group, or been successful in participating in the acquisition of the Valley's open space preserves, or acquired the Wilderness Way building.

PAUL: Here's an interesting aside . . . I could always tell when things didn't go quite right. Jean would come home and take out her journal and check the lost column and make a note. The note might say, "poor timing" or "use different tactic." She never thought of a "loss" as a defeat. It just needed the 3 T's treatment. And Jean is very, very patient.

JEAN: Now you know my three secrets, Dave. But I'm not going to tell you about the four others—The lecture by Fritz Perls; the star that follows me around; "Dide Mind," or my lie about being nearsighted. Paul will have to tell those stories sometime in the future.

## Santa's House

*by Paul Berensmeier*

I fondly remember Grandpa Berensmeier being Santa for almost two decades at the Community Center's Holiday Art Festival.

An especially fond memory . . . Thirty years ago several young children in classes at the Community Center discovered that Santa lived in a cabin on the slopes of Mt. Barnabe. They wanted to visit, so the teacher and parents planned an outing. One bright, windless, starlit night we gathered at the bottom of the fire road that led to Santa's cabin. Each child received a lighted candle. In single file we silently hiked up the old road. Everyone walked slowly and carefully to keep their candles burning. I'll never forget looking back and seeing the beautiful sight of a long line of faces illuminated by flickering candlelight meandering up toward me.

As we neared the cabin, we all quietly blew out our candles in order to sneak up on Santa. We tiptoed onto the cabin deck and peeped into a large paneled window. Mrs. Santa was giving Santa a steaming mug of Christmas cheer and gingerbread cookies—his favorite. Santa was smiling while wrapping presents and talking to Mrs. Claus. I glanced at the children. I'd never before seen little faces glowing with such wonder and excitement. I glanced at a parent . . . then the other adults. Their faces too, glowed with equal wonder and excitement.

Only then did I realize the magnitude of this candlelit journey in the dark to Santa's House. I looked back in the window with equal wonder and was struck with the realization that Santa Claus, the "real" Santa Claus, was right before my eyes. Santa never knew we were there. At the right time we silently slipped away.

*Valley kids came to learn the truth. Santa was, in fact, Fred Berensmeier and he lived in Lagunitas. He wore a short-sleeved shirt and shorts in the summer and drove a VW bug. (Of course, true to Marin form, it was a Mercedes after he and his lady friend Fran became an item.) Then at Christmas he went up to the North Pole, got his toys together and made his rounds. Our kids knew the truth.*

— Chuck Ford



*Terry Garthwaite and Fred Berensmeier, Sr., 11th Annual Holiday Arts Festival poster (Photo by Chuck Ford)*



# About the Resource Guides

by Jean Berensmeier

The 2017 *Community Guide* anticipates and celebrates the Community Center's 50th Anniversary in 2019. Originally begun as the seventh edition of the *Resource Guide*, it quickly evolved into a much larger project, thus the new name.

The *Resource Guide* traces its origins to the devastating 1982 storm when, overnight, the Community Center was the "go to" place for stranded families, shelter and advice. This experience was a wake up call—a call to "service" beyond the Center's existing program.

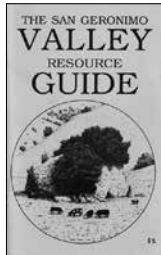
## 1983

A year later the first *Valley Resource Guide* was delivered free to every box holder in the Valley. It covered community, family and county resources as well as how to live in a rural, ridge-enclosed Valley. Subsequent issues have added new topics and insights that reflect diverse aspects of our vibrant community.



## 1991

Eight years later the Community Center produced its second *Resource Guide*. We updated the basic 1983 information and added a large Business Directory as well as an Arts and Crafts Directory.



## 1995

Along with the usual updates, we added a Valley map, information and map about the Valley's Open Space Preserves, sustainability articles, and sprinkled thoughtful quotes throughout.



## 2000

For the Millennium issue we went all out and dedicated the entire *Guide* to our oldest residents . . . the Valley's coho salmon. We had salmon articles, a salmon song, a salmon dance and "salmon footers" racing across the bottom of each page. It was a gem!



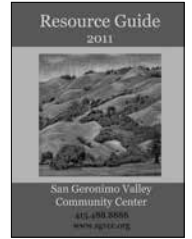
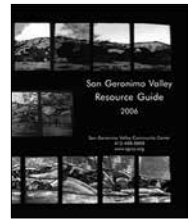
## 2006

Here we added public transportation, Valley schools, day care, waste disposal, pets and wildlife, annual events, land

use plans, and more. For the first time, we added info about Nicasio, our northern Valley neighbor.

## 2011

The usual updated basic information, plus headings and key information in English and Spanish. The *Guide* stressed health issues and planning for emergencies, along with other practical items. But alas! A Valley phone-directory was no longer possible as we lost our exclusive 488-prefix!



*The Community Center and the Wilderness Way Environmental Library have a collection of all the Resource Guides.*

## The Story of the Community Center Logo

by Fred (Lee) Berensmeier

In the early days of the Art Center, we had many classes for kids. I was down there often. Despite its rather shabby and run-down appearance in those days, it had a sparkle and energy you could feel. When I was asked to come up with a logo, I simply put together the images that came to my mind from many visits there.



Let's see, there were the prominent, inviting portico arches with new planter boxes bursting with flowers . . . the valley oak struggling, but with consistent watering began to thrive . . . the family of ravens, loudly squawking in the upper branches . . . the Spanish tile roof under a full moon.

All these elements came together within a sun circle. The final touch for the frame of the design was an arch echoing the portico arches. It came together easily, no struggle. What I created was a story of what all of us old timers experienced at one time or another during those early days.

The design still seems to wear well, even after decades of evolving from Art Center to Community Center to Cultural Center and back to Community Center.

And, to my great delight, the generations of offspring of that raven family still prevail.

50<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary



# Stone Soup



Summer 1987

## Kate Wolf Looking Back at You

by Terry Fowler

*Kate Wolf moved to the San Geronimo Valley in 1982. She was a vital part of community life, and her music was an inspiration to many. Kate served on the Community Center's Board. In 1986, she died following a bone marrow transplant for acute leukemia.*

*Terry Fowler was married to Kate, and his work was invaluable in completing the landscaping dedicated to her memory. (See photo on page 27.)*

Kate began her musical training at the age of four, taking piano lessons from her grandmother. Later in her life, she was influenced by “singers that you could hear the words . . . a progression through honest songs and honest singers.” Her early influences included the Weavers, Rosemary Clooney, Bob Dylan, the Beatles, the Carter Family, and Hank Williams.

Eventually, this love for music took her in a new direction. At the age of 27, while in Big Sur, Kate met people playing music in their living rooms. As she heard their songs and played with them, Kate realized that expressing her thoughts in music was the next, natural step. She left her first husband and family and moved to Sonoma County.

She secured a job at the *Sebastopol Times* and gradually began to have her children with her more often. Performing once a week, she went on to form her first band, the Wildwood Flower, with Don Coffin.



*Kate Wolf at a friend's house in Massachusetts during her concert tour back east in 1985*

During this time, Kate became interested in radio. She began a show called “Uncommon Country” and later hosted the “Sonoma County Singers Circle.” Her shows and performances brought new recognition. She was offered funding for an album.

Kate formed her own record company, Owl Records, and recorded *Back Roads*. The next year, after she released her second album, *Lines on a Paper*, she went on her first tour of California. In 1977 she performed in the Midwest and Northeast.

She separated from the Wildwood Flower the next year, but began to play with Nina Gerber, a talented guitar and mandolin player who would accompany Kate through most of her career. Too busy to continue with her own label, she released her third album, *Safe at Anchor*, on Kaleidoscope Records.

Utah Phillips introduced Kate to the East Coast during this time. They met after she had invited him to the Santa Rosa Folk Festival. After hearing her sing, he wanted people in the East to hear her music. He made the booking arrangements, and they went off on tour. On her way to a rally for Karen Silkwood in Washington D.C., she wrote her song “Links in the Chain.” She sang it there for the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union.

Kate continued to tour the country. Her popularity grew, but her concerts never lost their intimacy. Regardless of the size of the audience, each could feel as if she touched them individually. She was always available to talk to people about her music after the shows and continued to perform at benefits.

In the spring of 1982, Kate went on a vision quest to the Joshua Tree National Monument with a small group of people. She fasted alone for three days, drinking only water. It was in this way that she was following a ritual path to gain insight. Each day, Kate and another participant would add to a stone pile. The stones let the others know that everything was well, without having to see each other.

On the last night of the quest, Kate built a circle of stones in which to sleep. Through the long night, the circle is a symbol of being inside the womb of Mother Earth and reborn to your vision of how you will live the next phase of your life.

During this time, she wrote her songs “Desert Wind” and “Medicine Wheel.” Aspects of this experience would come out later in *Brother Warrior*. The vision quest is an example of how Kate was constantly searching through direct experience or reading, and then coming back to audiences to share her new songs of life.

When Kate returned to the Bay Area from the vision quest, she moved to the San Geronimo Valley. While taking massage classes to become a certified practitioner, she became involved with the community. She wanted to get a sense of the history here. She eventually became one of the Center's directors. Kate wrote a song about the Valley for a Center benefit in 1982.



## San Geronimo Valley

Driving west into the sun  
 where the road runs out to the sea  
 and the night sky paints a picture with the stars  
 Where Spirit Rock stands watching  
 over all the weary souls  
 and the cows and horses  
 watch the passing cars.

San Geronimo Valley  
 where the towns are small and sleepy  
 The redwood trees stand silently  
 and the sun and wind play freely  
 I've been waiting such a long time  
 for the touch of your hand  
 Take me down by the waters  
 that run on this land.

There's a hummingbird trapped in the house  
 how long I do not know  
 She beats her wings  
 but her heart is beating faster  
 She looks at me as I wrap her  
 in a soft kitchen towel  
 As I set her free  
 there's a lot I'd like to ask her.

And if I look I might just see  
 that the shadows of my life  
 have faded in the Valley's morning sun.  
 The hills that rise around me  
 and the peace that fills my heart  
 lead me home to rest when the day is done.

San Geronimo Valley  
 where the towns are small and sleepy  
 The redwood trees stand silently  
 and the sun and wind play freely  
 I've been waiting such a long time  
 for the touch of your hand  
 Take me down by the waters  
 that run on this land.

In the summer of 1982, Kate travelled to Canada for performances at major folk festivals in Calgary and Winnipeg. That fall, she remarried at the Medicine Wheel Gathering in Sonoma. The ceremony was performed by Keetoowah (Cherokee medicine man) with Evelyn Eaton assisting.

Kate prepared for a tour of Northern California with Utah Phillips in the spring of 1983. On one of her regular walks in the Valley, she came across a sign maker and had him make a magnetic sign for each door of her van and a

painted sign for the wheel cover. For the next two weeks, these signs proclaimed, "Kate and Utah on Tour." It was important to Kate to share her home area with Utah, and she wanted to do it in style, though it meant beginning a tour with substantial costs.

After returning from the tour, she travelled through the Southwest, performing with the Academy Award winning documentary, *The Four Corners: A National Sacrifice Area?* The film documents the ecological and cultural costs of energy development on the Colorado Plateau of the Southwest.

For years there has been a dispute over the development of the resources of the Southwest. In 1974, Congress passed a law to forcibly relocate thousands of Navajo from land sacred to them at Big Mountain. Native leaders charged that the relocation was designed to facilitate access to minerals, primarily coal, underlying the disputed lands.

Kate returned to this area in August of 1985, drawn to the Sundance at Big Mountain. The Navajo elders had invited the Lakota people to come to Big Mountain for a Sundance in spiritual support of their resistance to forced relocation. For four days, the Sundancers constantly focus their minds, hearts and spirits for the welfare of all life. They dance for all of us.

Following the Dance, she joined others to go to a campsite on the rim of the Grand Canyon. A huge owl swooped across the road in front of one of the vehicles. Kate returned home the next morning to find that Phillip Cassadore, a spiritual leader of the San Carlos Apache, had just died. She wrote this song for him.

## The Shadow of a Life

There is an owl  
 flying from the south  
 heading north  
 from the Superstition Mountains  
 Like the shadow of a life  
 fading in the dark surroundings.

While we who travel on the rim  
 seeking love and finding understanding  
 go safely on our way  
 like the river running in the canyon

Into this world  
 everything is born  
 All colors  
 come together  
 On the sacred hoop we take our place  
 and when we go, we leave forever.

Like the shadow  
 of a life



*Kate Wolf, continued*

we are formed by the rising sun  
and with the owl our spirit flies  
to say goodbye when our day is done.

While we who travel on the rim  
seeking love and finding understanding  
go safely on our way  
like the river running in the canyon.

Following the 1983 release of her live album, *Give Yourself to Love*, Kate decided to take a year off from performing. It was a time to rest, evaluate her life, and spend more time with her family. In 1985, she was again on tour. A new album, *Poet's Heart*, was released. She was featured on the shows *Prairie Home Companion* and *Austin City Limits*, gaining national exposure.

Kate entered the hospital for a hysterectomy in 1986. During post surgery examination and testing, she was diagnosed with acute leukemia. She underwent chemo-

therapy and returned home to wonderful fresh fruit and soup prepared by friends in the Valley. After much rest and recuperation, Kate began compiling a retrospective of her recordings. Her last recorded song, "The Wind Blows Wild," was done in a hospital room.

She spent much time in the Sierra and prepared for a bone marrow transplant in September. Friends and musicians supported her through benefit concerts, blood donations, and other efforts. Complications from the transplant destroyed her immune system, and she never recovered. Kate died on December 10 and was buried at Goodyear's Bar in the Sierra foothills, a place she called her spiritual home.

"I live for a sense of feeling and purposefulness in this world, so that I could stop my life at any point and feel it has been worthwhile, that the people I loved and my children have reached a point where their lives are going to come to fruit. As far as something I live by it's to try to be as alive as possible and feel free to make my mistakes, to be as honest as I can with myself."



*Valley View (Photo by Peter Oppenheimer)*



## DO YOU REMEMBER?

by Don Holmlund

Santa Claus (Papa Berensmeier) at the Holiday Fair in the '70s and '80s?

Outdoor film nights in Summer 2003 at the Cultural Center? *Field of Dreams*, *Yellow Submarine*, and *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* were shown on the lawn (*Stone Soup*, Oct. 2003).

The Recycling Center on School Road (next to the school where Wilderness Way is now)? County officials permanently closed the site on Monday, September 13, 2004, due to extensive and ongoing dumping of trash, including toxic materials (*Stone Soup*, Oct. 2004).

*Stone Soup* only four pages long? It started in 1989, but already had features of Valley artists, poetry, a calendar of performances, meetings, ads, and services at the Center.

Valley Day? A day-long festival at the school with entertainment, games, workshops. It started in 1996 and continued for several years.

Geronimo Radio? The Valley had its own radio station: 88.7 FM on the dial, with a full schedule every evening.

The Jerry Garcia Memorial Concert and Dance? Held at the Cultural Center on August 5, 2000 (*Stone Soup*, June 2000).

When the Community Center was the Art Center? Jack Dorward was its first president in 1969 when the Center sold pink "Survival Cards" to keep alive (*Stone Soup*, Feb. 2001).

The House of Richards? "Large selection of organic produce, 150 herbs and spices, 14 different coffee beans..." (ad in 1983 *Valley Resource Guide*).

Speck's Irish Coffee? "A Landmark in Lagunitas since 1916" (ad in 1983 *Valley Resource Guide*).

*A town is saved, not more by the righteous men in it than by the woods and swamps that surround it.*

HENRY DAVID THOREAU



February 2001

## WITH RESPECT: Jack Dorward

Jack Dorward moved to the San Geronimo Valley with his wife, Sandy, in 1964. His parents were Scottish émigrés to Killarney, Manitoba, Canada, where he was born. He attended George Williams College, now part of the University of Chicago, where he earned a degree in Science Education and met Sandy Hall, his future wife. Jack was a natural teacher, delighting in introducing others to new ideas and experiences. Although he spent most of his career teaching physical education and computer science at Mill Valley Middle School until he retired in 1995, he was interested and involved in many other endeavors.

Jack was instrumental in developing the Open Classroom program in the Lagunitas School District. His wife, Sandy, became the first teacher and taught in the program for the next 30 years.

Jack was the first president of the San Geronimo Valley Art Center (aka Community Center now Cultural Center) in 1969. Those were the Center's lean days when they sold pink "Survival Cards" to try to keep it alive. He even taught a class in bagpiping at the Center. But bagpiping was not passed down, as one might think, as part of a family tradition. Jack was introduced to it in 1964, after moving to the San Geronimo Valley, by Jason Marden, a local friend.

For years, Jack could be heard in the hills above Woodacre on a Sunday playing his pipes, including a favorite, "Amazing Grace." He also played at gatherings for his favorite environmental or political causes. Longtime friend Frank Prouten said, "Jack was a person who was constantly on the search for meaning. I recall him telling me once that even the smallest positive thought made for a better world."

Jack served on the County Human Rights Commission in the 1980s, working hard to abolish a rental policy that did not allow children.

He loved the computer. After retirement he spent a lot of time developing his internet research skills and shared what he learned with anyone interested. Jack was a philosophical, sensitive man with a thirst for knowledge. He was also a devoted family man and deeply loved his three daughters, Margaret, Heather and Jenni. His daughter Heather said, "My Dad had a way of showing you how to appreciate so deeply."

*Editor's note: Jack Dorward passed away in 2001; his wife Sandy, a founder of the Open Classroom, passed away in 2017.*

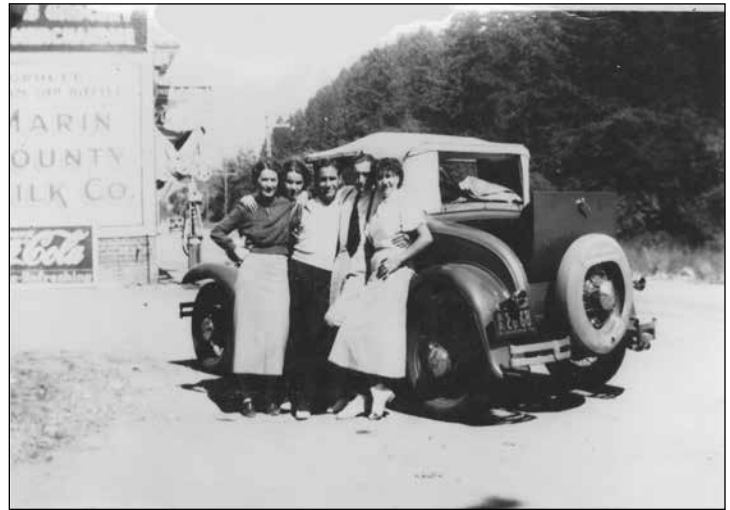
50<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary



## Chapter 4: Our History from the Beginning



*Boys with the Forest Knolls train station sign (From the Collection of David Wilson)*



*A happy group by their car next to the Lagunitas Store. Note the gas pump out front. (From the Collection of David Wilson)*



*Campers at Camp Taylor in 1889 (From the Anne T. Kent California Room Collection)*





# Valley Coast Miwok History

by Tina Noble

Our Valley's story began with the vast, slow collision of the Pacific and North American tectonic plates over millions of years, crumpling up the hills and valleys of the California Coast Ranges.

Twelve thousand years ago, as the last Ice Age melted away, the Valley was home to giant sloths, mastodons, bison, cam-elids and equids, short-faced bears and dire wolves. Shortly after, with the arrival of the first humans, most of this variety vanished. Humans, who arrived at least 10,000 years ago, almost certainly played a key role in this great extinction.

We have no direct record of the Valley's First People, those who came long after the first wave of big-game hunters—first the occasional hunter, and later whole families arriving for the acorn harvest. The Garden of Eden they lived in here and maintained for thousands of years persisted until the arrival of Europeans in the late 1700s. There were elk by the hundreds, grizzlies wading through the glut of salmon in the creek, condors wheeling above a cougar's kill by Spirit Rock. The meadows were clothed in perennial bunchgrasses that supported coveys of many hundreds of quail.

The First People here had no tribes, no chiefs, no armies. They lived in extended families or bands no larger than thirty or forty, and had the most democratic of all governance: long discussion concluding in consensus.

The muscular men wore no clothes and walked unshod. They carried wooden bows and otter-skin quivers. Each had his glossy, oiled hair arranged in a net of iris fiber, and each was adorned in his own style with feathers and abalone-shell pendants.

The women wore two-piece skirts of deerskin and intricate basketry caps of black and russet-red, patterned to evoke quail or rattlesnake. They carried long, cone-shaped baskets supported by leather bands across the forehead.

*Home* carried a meaning it's hard for us to imagine. Every individual oak tree had its name and story. A girl barely old enough to talk knew dozens of food and medicinal plants. Young boys studied the animals and mimicked their movements in dance. An early French explorer tells of hunters clothed in deerskin drifting into herds of deer and elk to nudge their prey into position for a killing shot.

The only essential the Valley could not provide was obsidian for tools, so they bartered with travelers from the peoples to the north. Life was spent in storytelling and ritual, playing with children, sweating, rhyming and word-play, and intricate gambling games. The essentials of life could be provided with two or three hours of work a day.

These First People did not own the land; in their conception, they were owned by it. A family might possess the rights to a particular tree's acorns, but another might have the right to hunt or gather greens beneath it, and yet another to harvest

dead wood for fires. A band had a permanent home village, but moved with the seasons to other camps for harvest or hunting. When a place began to feel tired, the home camp would be burned and another built some distance away. In this way pests and disease were left behind and the harvest regenerated, and when they returned in a few years, the place would be renewed. They harvested bulbs for food in a way that encouraged the multiplication of the bulbs. They pruned the willows to provide the best shoots for basket making.

The First People's lives were well-ordered, with complex rules governing sex and hunting and relations with neighbors. This intricacy kept populations low and stable in relation to resources for millennia. Their stories told of coyote, who broke the rules and suffered dire—but often hilarious—consequences.

When the first Europeans came and asked their name, they shook their heads at the rudeness and ignorance of the question. *Sata-ko*, they said. *We are the human beings who belong to this place, Sata.* Today we remember them, and honor those who still live among us, as the Coast Miwok.



*Seed Day Dance with Pelican Skin Cloak.*  
Drawing courtesy of Edward Willie, from  
The Coast Miwok Indians of the Point  
Reyes Area by Sylvia Barker Thalman



# History of the San Geronimo Valley 1844–2017

by Jean Berensmeier

*Note: This history is compiled from early records and memories by Betty Gardner, Robin Barnett, Jean Berensmeier, Wendi Kallins, and Brian Dodd, and from the printed works of Jack Mason, Helen Van Cleve Park, Joseph Revere, Louise Hall Tharp, A. Gray Dickinson, and Louise Teather.*

With a nod and thank you to the Miwok Indians who took care of this lovely Valley for 10,000 years before we discovered it, here is a summary of white settlers' impact from 1844 – 2017. It describes who they were, what they did, when and why, and ends up with you and me. Enjoy and love the San Geronimo Valley.

## Settlement and Development

Rafael Cacho, a military officer and friend of General Mariano Vallejo, was the first person to hold title to the San Geronimo Valley. On February 12, 1844, he was granted the 8,800-acre Rancho Cañada de San Geronimo (The Valley of Saint Jerome) by the Mexican government, in acknowledgment of his loyal service as a Mexican citizen. Cacho lived in the Valley with his wife and children, grazing cattle and horses, until his finances forced a sale in 1846 to Lieutenant Joseph Revere, who purchased the rancho for \$1,000 and an interest in a very small ranch in Napa. Revere, a naval officer and grandson of Paul Revere, had served under General Vallejo, and had released the beleaguered general from imprisonment at Sutter's Fort. Revere had discovered the Valley while hunting elk, and immediately determined to make it his own. He wrote:

*"The Canada of San Geronimo is one of the loveliest valleys in California, shut in by lofty hills, the sides of which are covered with redwood forests, and pines of several kinds, and interspersed with many flowering trees and shrubs peculiar to the Country. Through it flows a copious stream, fed by the mountain brooks; and the soil in the bottomlands is so prolific, that a hundred bushels of wheat to the acre can be raised with the rudest cultivation and other crops in corresponding abundance."*

Joseph Revere retained ownership of Rancho San Geronimo for only four years, and then sold it to Rodman Price for \$7,500. Price returned to New Jersey, where he was elected Governor, and hired Lorenzo White, a 49er gold miner, to manage Price's cattle operation on the rancho. For many years the rancho was known as White's Valley, and White's Hill still bears his name.

Title to Rancho San Geronimo was then sold several times, finally, in 1857, to Adolph Mailliard, whose father was Louis Mailliard, "natural son" of

Joseph Bonaparte, King of Spain and Naples, and elder brother of the infamous Napoleon Bonaparte. After the family's exile from Spain, Louis Mailliard retrieved from Switzerland a strongbox filled with the family's jewels, and brought the treasure to their new home in New Jersey. Adolph Mailliard purchased the rancho, to celebrate the birth of his son Joseph, for \$50,000, a mighty sum considering it was purchased a mere eight years earlier for \$1,000!

In 1868 Adolph Mailliard and his family moved from New Jersey to San Rafael, where Adolph engaged in horse breeding and railroad construction. In 1873 Adolph and his wife, Annie, set out to establish a grand estate on Rancho San Geronimo, building their home of 18 rooms and 11 fireplaces near Castle Rock in Woodacre. Annie's aunt described it as "an unremarkable house with a deep veranda all around and small rooms with high ceilings." Her sisters pitied her isolation, and visitors from the East wondered how Annie could put up with straw matting on her floors, awkward servants, and austere furniture. In fact, Annie loved her house and her Valley, and refused to ever leave. Annie's sister, Julia Ward Howe, author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" and an active abolitionist and suffragette, would often enjoy relaxing at the Mailliards' home in the Valley during her travels. Early in the second half of the nineteenth century Adolph Mailliard transferred title to tracts of 400-600 acres each to James and Thomas Roy in San Geronimo and to James Dickson and Calvin Dickson in Woodacre in payment of debts he owed them. Little other division of the rancho occurred through the end of the century.

In 1895 Annie Mailliard died of breast cancer in the home she loved so dearly. Her husband died a year later. In 1924, their home became the clubhouse of the Woodacre Improvement Club. A swimming pool was built for the membership. The building burned in 1958 and was replaced. Later, a room was added and used by the Valley Pioneers, an elders group. In 2010, they discontinued their use and it is now a small fitness



Woodacre Lodge, formerly Adolph Mailliard residence, circa 1914 (Photo courtesy of Jim Staley collection)



center. During the last decade a children's playground was built.

In 1905 and 1906 the Mailliard heirs subdivided much of Lagunitas, and in 1912 they sold their remaining interest in San Geronimo Valley real estate to the Lagunitas Development Company, which subsequently subdivided Forest Knolls, San Geronimo, and Woodacre. Most of the homes built prior to World War II were used as summer cabins. In 1925 San Geronimo had 20 families that "swelled to 30" in the summer. After the opening of the Golden Gate Bridge, offering easier access to Marin County, and with the coming of World War II, when Sausalito shipyard workers needed housing, many summer cabins became permanent residences.

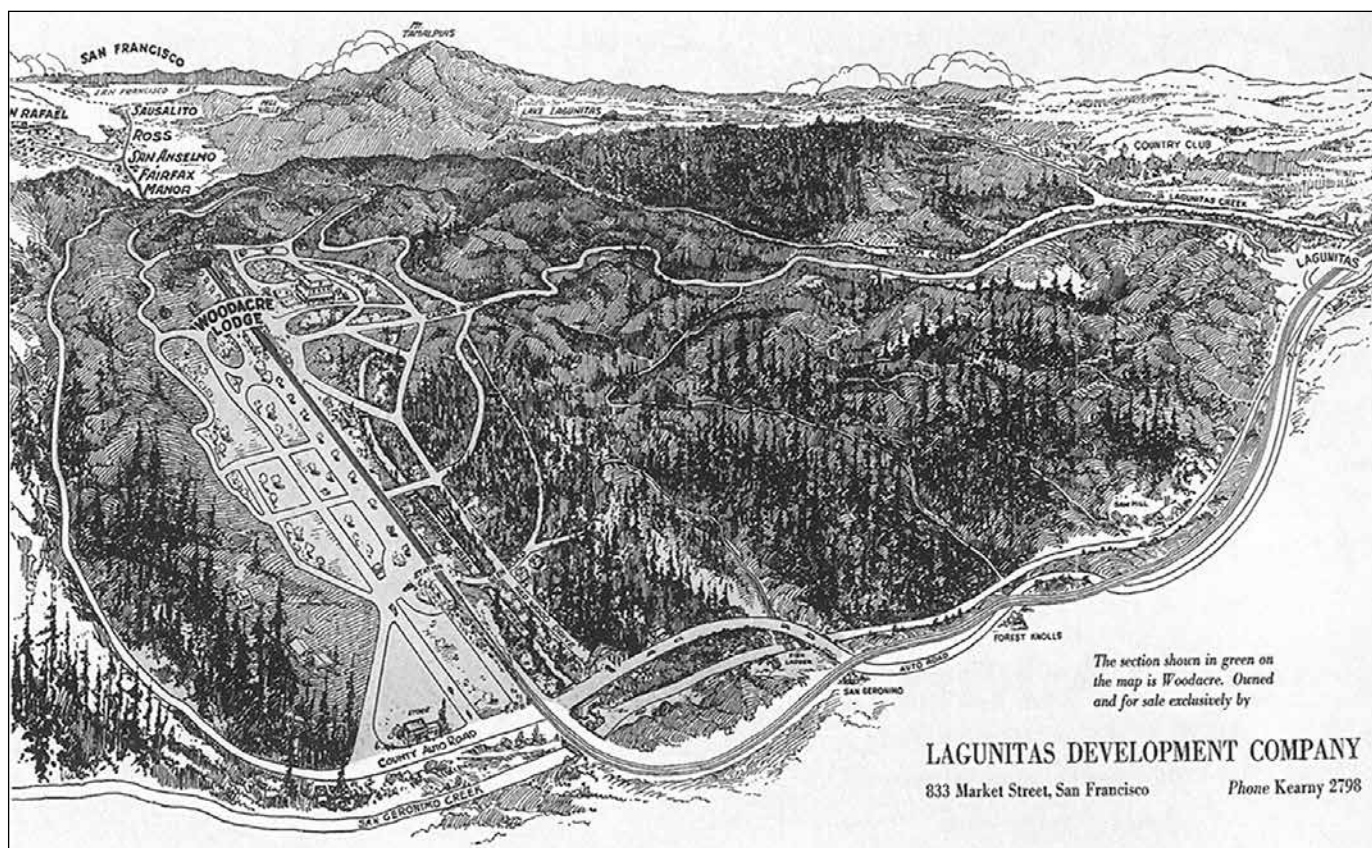
Following World War II, little changed in the Valley, but in April 1961 the Marin County Board of Supervisors adopted a Master Plan proposal for the Valley that envisioned 20,000 new residents, and 5,000 new homes that would cover the entire Valley Planning Area which, at that time, included the area over the southern ridge encircling Kent Lake. The land around Spirit Rock was proposed to be the site for a Civic Center, fire station, shopping center, heliport, and multifamily residences. A freeway was proposed to come from San Anselmo over White's Hill and through the center of the Valley, with an interchange that would cross on a diagonal across Roy's Redwoods, over the northern ridge and into Nicasio Valley. During the next ten years only the golf course and a subdivision of 18 homes adjacent to the golf course, on San

Geronimo Valley Drive, were developed as elements of that 1961 Master Plan.

After the Summer of Love in 1967, the Valley became a magnet for "Flower Children" from San Francisco, who set up camps and other unconventional abodes in the hills of San Geronimo Valley, much to the horror of some old timers.

In the early '70s, a Countywide Plan based on the extraordinary document "Can the Last Place Last?" was proposed for adoption by the Marin County Board of Supervisors. Prior to its adoption, Lagunitas resident Jean Berensmeier learned of the 1961 Valley Master Plan. She organized a community meeting to review the plan and the ad hoc Planning Group was born. Gary Giacomini was elected to the Board of Supervisors in 1972 and was the third vote needed to adopt the far-reaching Countywide Plan in 1973. This rescinded the '61 Master Plan. The Planning Group worked from 1972 to 1977 to create the first Community Plan that defined the four villages and preserved the Valley's rural character, ridges and streams. Twenty-acre zoning was adopted for the area outside the villages that cut the potential development considerably and preserved open space and land for agricultural use. It was adopted in 1978.

Soon afterward, a major subdivision was proposed by Hendricks & Horne that included 165 houses on 1,600 acres of land, along the entire south side of the Valley, behind the villages, up to the ridge. After five years of controversy and



From a brochure of the Lagunitas Development Company, 1914 (Image courtesy of Jim Staley collection)



community input by Friends of the Valley and the Planning Group, a maximum of 134 homes was approved to be built in four phases. In 1995, lack of sales provided an opportunity for purchase of the remaining three phases of unbuilt land. The County of Marin Open Space District purchased almost 1,500 acres, leaving a maximum potential development of 37 homes and some remainder parcels.

In the 1980s, a 411-acre agricultural parcel was sold to Insight Meditation West (IMW). The Planning Group worked out an agreement with their board whereby the Planning Group would support a small Buddhist center in lieu of the 20 homes the 20-acre zoning allowed in keeping with the Community Plan. This was approved by the Board of Supervisors. IMW dedicated land to the Open Space District, which was added to Roy's Redwoods, and arranged an agricultural easement with MALT (Marin Agricultural Land Trust). The remainder was used by IMW and renamed Spirit Rock Meditation Center. Spirit Rock later got an expanded Master Plan approved and is currently constructing major facilities.

In 1995, after considerable controversy within the community, a final amended Master Plan was approved for 33 houses on the 450-acre French Ranch property, located in the heart of the Valley. Negotiations resulted in smaller, clustered houses on smaller building envelopes. Three hundred and eighty acres were dedicated to the County Open Space District along with community trails, private agricultural space, three affordable housing units, and a waste treatment facility shared with the Lagunitas School District.

Over the years Barnabe Fire Lookout tower has "grown" with additional facilities to serve Marin community residents. In 2007 Verizon installed a 60-foot tower on the ridge for better cell phone reception and emergency use. It is disguised as a giant evergreen tree.

The millennium found the Valley with three parcels outside the village boundaries that have potential development. This includes a 200-acre parcel on the northern ridge above Forest Knolls, the 590-acre Flanders Ranch, located at the east end of the Valley on both sides of SF Drake Boulevard (currently an operating cattle ranch by heirs of the family); and the 47 acre parcel owned by the Tamalpais School District, formerly a part of the Flanders Ranch and condemned for use as a high school under the proposed '61 Master Plan.

## Roads

Nineteenth century West Marin was the political and economic equal of East Marin, reflected in the fact that Nicasio was originally proposed to be Marin's County Seat, although San Rafael was ultimately chosen. White's Hill was the barrier to be breached to connect the two halves of the county. The earliest trail on record was the 1840s cart trail of Indian and Spanish origin over White's Hill. The County replaced the trail with the Olema-to-San Rafael stage road in 1865. The new grade over White's Hill was described as being "very easy and of sufficient width to

allow teams to pass without any trouble whatever," but many years later motorists would find the road so steep they had to back their Model T Fords uphill in reverse gear!

In 1929 the county road, later renamed Sir Francis Drake Blvd., was completed through the Valley following the Olema-to-San Rafael stage road route. After World War II, a building boom occurred in Marin County. In the '50s part of this road was rebuilt with generous shoulders and rerouted from the bottom of White's Hill through the Flanders property bypassing downtown Woodacre and San Geronimo. The original Sir Francis Drake Blvd. route that went through Woodacre and San Geronimo was renamed San Geronimo Valley Drive.

In the early 1970s another freeway was proposed to be developed, this time along the northern ridge of the Valley, as an extension of what is now Interstate 580, to provide improved tourist access to the newly-created Point Reyes National Seashore, but that proposal also died.

The storm of January 1982 played havoc with logging roads and fire roads located on steep hillsides that had been created without benefit of construction standards. Liquefaction caused countless slides and enormous amounts of sediment poured down the tributaries into San Geronimo Creek. Flooding was a serious problem everywhere. The Fire Department did a post-flood fire road assessment and decided to cutback on the number of fire roads they cleared seasonally through large private properties on the uplands.

In the late 1980s the County expanded the road shoulder from Lagunitas School in San Geronimo to the Inkwells west of Lagunitas to improve safety. This led to a partnership between MMWD and the County that resulted in the creation of a pedestrian bridge over a large water pipe that connected Sir Francis Drake Blvd. with the trail over the railroad right of way that goes through Taylor Park on the north side of Lagunitas Creek. The Dhority family provided an easement over a portion of their property and the bridge was named after them. The bridge/trail is a popular pedestrian, equestrian and biker route.

In 2008, the County funded the Sir Francis Drake Blvd. rehabilitation project. In 2014 they repaved Sir Francis Drake Blvd. from the Inkwells near Lagunitas to Tocaloma five miles west. The design improved what had been a dangerous route for autos and bicyclists for decades, and lessened the impact of erosion and sediment on streams that are home to endangered and threatened salmonids.

## Railroads

The North Pacific Coast Railroad laid narrow-gauge tracks over White's Hill and through the Valley in 1873 and 1874, the right-of-way through the Valley having been donated by Adolph Mailliard. Chinese laborers armed with only pick-axes, shovels, and wheelbarrows did the work. Two tunnels were bored through White's Hill, each called "Roy's Tunnel." The first was 370 feet long, but was eventually abandoned



because the grade was too steep and spring seepage in the tunnel caused problems of lost traction on the rails. The second, lower tunnel was 1,250 feet long and opened up to the sweeping vistas of San Geronimo Valley. At that time, the principal railroad station in the Valley was at San Geronimo, where travelers to Nicasio would detrain and board a stagecoach to reach that community.

The narrow-gauge railway was replaced in 1904 with the more modern broad-gauge, and was renamed the Northwestern Pacific. A 3,200-foot tunnel was bored through from Bothin, near Fairfax, to the Mailliard ranch in Woodacre, and the old tracks over White's Hill were abandoned. The railroad continued to operate until 1933, when Northwestern Pacific shut down the service and removed the tracks. Travel time by train and ferry from San Francisco was then 1 hour 30 minutes. There were two morning and evening commute trains, and a mid-day freight with a coach on the rear. The original San Geronimo train station was relocated, restored and is used today by the Presbyterian Church. Traces of the original railroad bed can still be seen at the east end of the Valley, on the northern edge of the Valley floor on the Flanders Ranch.

## Commerce

Much of the old-growth redwood forest was felled for lumber and milled at James Shafter's lumber mill (at what is now the bottom of Kent Lake) and other Valley mills, and then shipped to San Francisco. In 1874, Adolph Mailliard tried to develop a gold mine, located west of the San Geronimo railroad station, but it proved unsuccessful. Other early commercial ventures in the Valley included a shingle mill at the foot of Nicasio Hill in 1877, a fur tannery that opened in 1886, and a creamery, located in San Geronimo on Creamery Road.

To the west of the Valley many paper mills dotted the creek downstream, producing newsprint from cloth rags and sacks. Samuel P. Taylor's mill is probably the best known of these. Taylor built a hotel as housing for mill workers. He also built a dam on Paper Mill Creek to retain water to power his mill. For many years salmon could not get upstream to spawn. In 1886 the California Fish Commission forced Taylor to build the first fish ladder on the West Coast, perhaps one of the earliest environmental efforts in California to protect Coho salmon and steelhead trout! Today, creek-side



*This popular photo of Lagunitas was given to us by Jim Staley, Newhall Snyder and David Wilson. Jim Staley's caption reads, "The horse and wagon are on the county road from Point Reyes and are just about to cross the main rail line. Engine #84, after pulling the train from Manor, has switched around and will travel backwards on the return trip. . . . The man is walking toward the bridge over Papermill Creek to what today is Lagunitas Road."*

plaques in Taylor Park commemorate the sites of the mill and the dam, west of the main picnic area.

The Pacific Powder Works opened in 1865, just downstream from Taylor's operations. It was destroyed by a violent explosion in 1877, was rebuilt, and finally closed in 1880. In the early 1900s, as Lagunitas was being subdivided, the first "shopping center" in the county was built. It consisted of the Lagunitas Grocery, a lumber yard and post office. An ice cream parlor and candy store was added later.

There was little change in commerce until after WW II. A golf course was built in anticipation of the implementation of the '61 Master Plan. Woodacre had a country store. San Geronimo had a restaurant. Forest Knolls had a country store, beauty shop, ice cream parlor, real estate office, trailer court, gas station, saloon and summer camp. Lagunitas had a country store, summer camp and Speck McAuliffe's bar, known as Lagunitas Lodge.

The World Wide Web changed many aspects of life for the average resident. One change in particular is the number of residents who use the internet to operate their business out of their homes, avoiding storefront costs, the expense of signs, publicity and insurance, not to mention commuting costs.

## Utilities

Around 1876, Alexander Graham Bell, a friend of the Mailliard family, installed the first California telephone system at Rancho San Geronimo. Using the top strand of barbed wire on the fences to stretch the telephone line, it connected the Mailliards' home in Woodacre to the cow barn and on to the



# Valley Gold Mine

by Frank Binney

From *History of Marin County, California: Including Its Geography, Geology, Topography & Climatology*, By J. P. Munro-Fraser, 1880

“The San Geronimo gold mine is located about one half mile west of the station (FB: the San Geronimo railroad station near the present-day Presbyterian Church), and operations were begun in it in October, 1878. Since that time a shaft two hundred feet deep has been sunk, and a drift has been run to the northward a distance of two hundred and sixty feet, and a side drift from that a distance of sixty feet, also a drift to the westward has been run two hundred and seventy feet. It is proposed to run

this drift some distance farther, when a shaft will be sunk connecting with it. The force engaged at present consists of fourteen men, who work in three shifts of eight hours each, with the exception of two engineers, who work twelve hours each. Assays of ore average from thirty to forty dollars per ton, although it has yielded as much as ninety dollars gold. The ore contains gold, silver, iron, manganese, antimony and tracings of nickel. The outcroppings of the lode extend for a long distance through that section of the country, and should gold in paying quantities be found it will prove a very extensive mine, and would add very much to the material interests of Marin county.”

Want to start selling shares in a resurgent San Geronimo Valley Mining Company?

Middle Ranch, near San Geronimo, and then to the Lower Ranch, at the upper end of Arroyo Road in Lagunitas. Regular telephone service was started in 1920, using hand-cranked magneto wall phones. The telephone company serviced the telephone lines only as far west as Oak Manor, near Fairfax, so Valley subscribers had to climb poles and service the local lines themselves. The magneto telephones continued to be used until dial phones were installed in 1948. The prefix used only by Valley residents at that time was 488. As demand for phones increased in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Valley lost their exclusive claim on the treasured prefix. In 2016, residents were required to add the 415 area code to all calls.

In 1868, the Tamalpais Water Company was incorporated by Charles Howard and James Shafter to supply water to San Geronimo Valley from eight springs and from Lagunitas Creek. This water system was later operated by the Mailliard family and was called the Lagunitas Water Company. It pro-

duced 120,000 gallons of water per day. After the remaining Mailliard family’s land was sold to the Lagunitas Development Company, the Lagunitas Water Company was renamed the San Geronimo Valley Water Company, and continued as such until 1951, when MMWD absorbed it into its system. The local springs and intakes continued to supply the Valley until 1963, when they were abandoned by MMWD. The Valley’s water supply now comes from the District’s system of lakes.

Since 2010, Marin Clean Energy has been a competitor to PG&E in providing alternative energy options to meet household needs.

## Recreation and Entertainment

While the Mailliards were developing their ranch and other ventures, Samuel P. Taylor used money he earned from prospecting for gold to buy land on Papermill Creek (Lagunitas Creek) and built a paper mill on its banks. He also opened up his land to campers, anglers, and hunters. In 1884 his son, James I. Taylor, enlarged the Taylor Hotel and renamed it the “Hotel Azalea.” The tourist business was soon booming. By 1889, the rush was so great that over 300 reservations were on file, and by the Fourth of July, the colony’s population had reached over 800. Including visitors, it was estimated that over 1,000 people were in and about Camp Taylor during the summer.

The camps were wooden frames with shake roofs and wooden floors set 10 to 12 inches above ground level. Heavy canvas sides made them into comfortable summer homes. Guests took their meals at the hotel, although many chose to “rough it” with their own grub, pitching tents on the ground. Forty years later, with the railroad bringing campers in by the hundreds, Valley residents would complain of “half-naked revelers running through the woods.”

As the Valley grew in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, so did nightspots and dance halls. “Chief” Kelly had a



“The Woodacre Arch was erected by the Lagunitas Development Company as a part of their efforts to sell home site lots in Woodacre. This view is from what was then County Auto Road which later was named Sir Francis Drake Blvd. When the new road through the Valley was built, this old road became what it is today, San Geronimo Valley Drive.” (Photo and caption courtesy of Jim Staley collection)



dance hall in the hills of Forest Knolls, and then built another one on the highway. It is reported, “His place used to be a knockdown, drag-out. They used to put chicken wire around the band so they wouldn’t get hit by flying bottles.” The Pavilion succeeded Kelly’s place after it burned down, but was much more tame. Another dance hall opened in Forest Knolls on the corner of Sir Francis Drake Blvd. and Tamal Road. The large building still exists and currently houses the Marin Tack and Feed store. In recent memory it also served as the House of Richard and the original Lagunitas Brewery. Down the road, at the site of the current Lagunitas Post Office, the Mariposa Pavilion brought weekend entertainment for Valley adults and teens until it was torn down in 1953. Adjoining it was the Lagunitas Lodge, which for many years featured Speck McAuliffe’s Irish Coffee, until it burned in 1983.

### Post Offices

The first post office in the Valley was established at San Geronimo in 1895, followed by Lagunitas in 1906, Forest Knolls in 1916, and Woodacre in 1925. Larger post offices were built in new locations in Woodacre, San Geronimo and Forest Knolls during the 1980s.

### Library

In 1929, the first Valley library opened in a small building built for that purpose at Lagunitas School. In 1946 it moved to the Kenny Burt building in Forest Knolls and in the ensuing 60 years moved to Woodacre, back to Forest Knolls, then to Lagunitas and then finally to Lagunitas School. It was closed in 2009 due to budget cuts and non-use. Wilderness Way is developing a small environmental book and film library with teacher resources for environmental education.

### County Parks, Open Space, and Trails

Concurrent with the adoption of the Countywide Plan in 1972, a bond measure was passed by Marin voters creating the Marin County Open Space District that taxed residents for the purchase and preservation of county open space. Today, the District manages 16,000 acres on 34 preserves. Four of these preserves are in the San Geronimo Valley and total approximately 2,500 acres. The four preserves are: Roy’s Redwoods, Maurice Thorner, Gary Giacomini and French Ranch.

In the last decade the Parks and Open Space Department adopted the following plans and projects that have had significant impact on the Valley’s four preserves.

- **Trails Element of the Countywide Plan**—Adopted in 1985, it identified and designated Valley fire roads and trails to be acquired for public use through the development, donation, or acquisition process. It has been amended several times.
- **Road and Trails Plan**—Adopted in 2014, this lists policies to protect the environment—including surveys of user impacts—while providing diverse recreational opportunities. It resulted in restoration projects in Woodacre, San Geronimo and Forest Knolls.
- **Vegetation Management and Biodiversity Plan**—Adopted in 2016, the plan scientifically identifies plants and wildlife on County preserves and creates Legacy Land zones. The Giacomini Preserve has extensive Legacy Land designations that are leading to trail closures resulting in improved protection of plant and wildlife habitats that are rare and/or unique to Marin
- **Restoration projects to reduce sediment and restore native plants**—The Open Space District and Department of Public Works have approved about eight projects to meet this goal including reworking an old logging road in Woodacre and in San Geronimo.
- **Christmas Holiday Tree Harvest**—Staff made available 100 Douglas Firs and Monterey Pines for residents as part of a restoration program. A popular but time consuming effort that may come again.
- **Measure A**—In 2012, voters approved a ¼ cent Open Space Tax measure: 65% for restoration; 20% to save family farms; and 15% to local cities and towns to enhance parks and nature preserves.



*Lagunitas station in the 1890s. In the fashion of the day women wore long dresses, hats and carried parasols. Men wore vests and hats. They are waiting for the train along with two horse-and-buggies nearby. The original St. Cecilia’s can be seen in the background. (From the Collection of Newall Snyder with caption information from David Wilson)*



**Inter-organizational Partnerships** are common today. They result in funds being used efficiently and effectively, often providing diverse expertise and improving relationships. The County, MMWD (Marin Municipal Water District), State and Federal as well as regional agencies have “partnered” on at least 14 projects that have restored and improved Valley creeks, native plants and wildlife, roads and bridges. Currently, Roy’s Redwoods is a project being reviewed by over 20 experts for restoration possibilities with future meetings planned. In addition, Department of Public Works worked closely with the Planning Group to design and upgrade the Forest Knolls Park with a playground for toddlers, picnic benches, a basketball court, water fountain, bathroom and planting.

### Reflecting on the Past

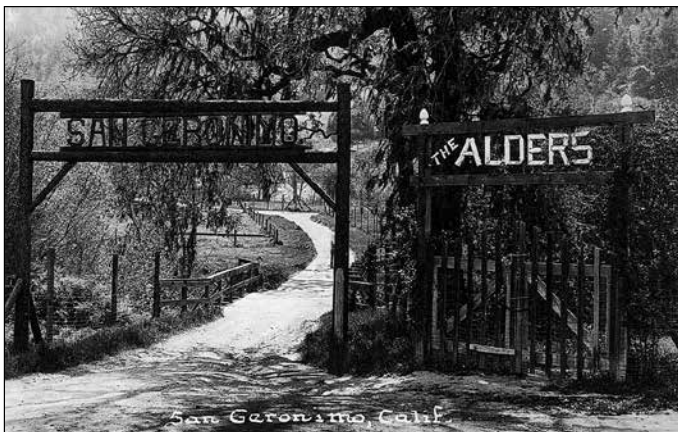
In 1950, the San Geronimo Valley was still a rural community with four villages. The population was under 3,000, and thousands of fish migrated into the Mt. Tamalpais watershed, village homes were about 1,200 square feet in size, and dogs could spend half a day sleeping on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. and never have to move for a car. Peters Dam was built to create Kent Lake to provide water needed for expected growth. Regretfully, it cut off many square miles of salmon spawning habitat. The '61 SGV Master Plan was adopted, envisioning 20,000 people and 5,000 homes from ridge to ridge in the Valley. Six years later, 1967-68 the Summer of Love changed people’s lives and many emigrated from San Francisco to the Valley with different views, ideas, politics, eating and smoking habits. Parental pressure for a different kind of education for their children resulted in the Open Classroom, Montessori and Waldorf-Inspired programs replacing the traditional program. In 1972, the Countywide Plan was adopted that

stopped major development in its tracks and preserved West Marin ranches. At the same time, a bond measure passed to acquire and preserve open space in Marin. The ad hoc SGV Planning Group formed and spent five years with other residents in creating the first Community Plan to protect the Valley’s rural character and natural resources. It was adopted in 1978. It is noteworthy that the Community Plan, which guides development in the Valley, and the bond measure that provided funds for the acquisition of 2,600 acres of Valley open space preserves, along with the vigilance of the Planning Group, are the key elements, more than anything else, that has helped to keep the Valley rural with its natural resources protected.

*This article was condensed from a longer version. See page 174.*



*Entrance to Camp Lagunitas (Photo courtesy of Jim Staley collection)*



*“It is not well known that San Geronimo had an entry arch but this should be proof that one existed. The distinctive structure was over Creamery Road with Papermill Creek just beyond the arch. The lone pedestrian (partially hidden by the right column) is between the arch and the Meadow Way of today.” (Photo and caption courtesy of Jim Staley)*







*Forest Knolls Grocery (From the Collection of Newall Snyder) According to Jim Staley, who contributed another picture of this location, the post office was also housed here. This building, which was destroyed by fire 60 years ago, stood just to the left of the bridge into Forest Knolls over Papermill Creek where there is today a fenced empty lot.*



*Residents waiting for the North Western Pacific train at the Lagunitas Station depot. Note the train car at the siding and old St. Cecilia's Church in back of the depot. To the right is the new General Store with a resident in front of the Post Office. The original wood-framed store is shown still standing. Circa 1898 (Photo courtesy of David Wilson)*



# Nicasio History

by Elaine Patterson Doss

*Inland a short distance [from the ocean] the country is so sheltered by the surrounding hills that none but the most pleasant and gentle winds are felt in the valleys, which are small and numerous, while the scenery in every direction is grand and romantic. In the center of such a country Nicasio is located—a small but very handsome village, with a first-class hotel, two churches and a school that is well attended. Fine roads run in every direction . . .*

*San Rafael Herald, July 20, 1874*

The writer, at work in 1874, could be describing Nicasio and its valley in 2016. For almost a century and a half, Nicasio has been admired and loved as a village out of the romantic past, with its diminutive white church, its plain but distinctive wood-frame homes, its little league ball field on the country square, all placed in an especially beautiful setting surrounded by rolling green hills dotted with cows, wildflowers, oaks and redwoods. . . .

But there's much more to Nicasio than its scenery and quaintness—there is a history that is rich, complex and surprising in the breadth of its span in time, from Indians to dairy farmers to the highest of high tech.

(Excerpted from *NICASIO: The Historic Valley at the Center of Marin*, by Dewey Livingston, Nicasio Historical Society © 2008 and 2012)

Nicasio's first people were the Coastal Miwok who inhabited western Marin and southwestern Sonoma counties for countless centuries prior to the arrival of the European



*Early Nicasio Miwok Residents Juana Evangelista (mother of Maria Copa, who was born in Nicasio in 1869) and her three grandchildren, including Julia Freas (daughter of Maria Copa). The Miwok people lived at the Nicasio Rancheria until the early 1880s. (Photo courtesy of Juanita Carrio)*

explorers, missionaries, adventurers and settlers. There were 13 villages scattered throughout this area, each established near a creek. The village in Nicasio was called Etcha-tamal, inhabited since the 1400s, if not earlier, by the Tamals, a Coast Miwok tribelet.

The cycle of the seasons and nature's corresponding bounties were the organizing principle of their lives, and nature supplied them well. The Tamals, like other Coast Miwok, were semi-nomadic; they had their permanent village, but they also followed the bounties of nature according to their seasons, moving to temporary settlements near each food source.

The Coast Miwok were a peaceful people who traded with neighboring tribes. They traded clamshell beads and other coastal products with the Lake Miwok (Lake County) for obsidian, which they prized for crafting knives, spearheads and arrowheads, much preferred to the local chert, which they also flaked into tools and weapons. The various Coast Miwok groups also traded, visited and intermarried among each other.

The incursions into Coast Miwok culture, which eventually led to its complete demise, were the mission-building Spanish padres, from 1776 when Mission Dolores was established, to 1834 when San Rafael Mission closed,



*In the nearly eighty years that it served Nicasio as schoolhouse, the 1871 structure was train station yellow—often faded to tan or beige—with a brown trim. The two entrances to the schoolhouse were gender specific, girls entered to the right and boys to the left. It was in operation until the spring of 1950.*



accompanied by Spanish soldiers and the large number of disenchanted gold seekers who flooded northern California in the 1850s.

Although a small number of Tamals continued to live at Etcha-tamal into the 1880s, settlers' homes had already begun to appear in the vicinity of their village, and the town square already had a church, three-story hotel, general store, livery stable, Wells Fargo office and blacksmith shop.

Nicasio and Lucas Valleys began to fill up rapidly with settlers, largely beef and dairy ranchers. The era of large land holding cattlemen began with James Black, who built the first settler's house in 1850. In order to cut out the middleman and maximize profit, he created a cooperative of beef ranchers who together drove their huge herds of longhorn cattle along a trail (near the current Lucas Valley Road) and northeast to the Mother Lode. Black brought home a fortune in gold.

Taking advantage of the timber in Nicasio, several early settlers erected sawmills, producing lumber for building and large redwood shakes for roofing. The Nicasio Township was founded on May 12, 1862 and the Nicasio School District, on May 13 of that same year. In fact, by 1862, school districts had been formed in all of Marin's eight townships of that day, Saucelito (historic spelling), Tomales, San Antonio, Point Reyes, San Rafael, Nicasio, Novato and Bolinas.

School sessions for the first four years of the school district's existence may have been held in a pioneer's home because the first schoolhouse wasn't erected until 1866 in one month at a cost of \$300. It was located where Rancho Nicasio Restaurant stands today. Due to growing enrollment, it was replaced in 1871-72 by the one-room schoolhouse, which still stands today—the cost of construction and furniture, \$3,000.

A wave of Italian Swiss immigrants from the Ticino Valley area began arriving in the 1870s. By 1900 these industrious, hard-working families ran many of the two dozen or so dairies.

Life in Nicasio remained relatively unchanged between the 1880s and 1950s, although facilitated with new ranching, transportation and communication technologies and a new two-room schoolhouse.

However, the one technological advance that did bring great change to Nicasio was the construction of the earthen dam and the resulting reservoir, completed in 1960. It single-handedly wiped out several dairy operations, not to mention the total loss of abundant runs of coho salmon and steelhead. Dairies closed, families were displaced and large tracts of land were parceled for development. Several of Nicasio's ranch families were forced to move elsewhere.

Due to the availability of affordable, developable land parcels, an influx of new demographics arrived: adventurous working-class suburbanites in the 1960s, back-to-the-land hippies in the '70s, and eclectic yuppies in the '80s and

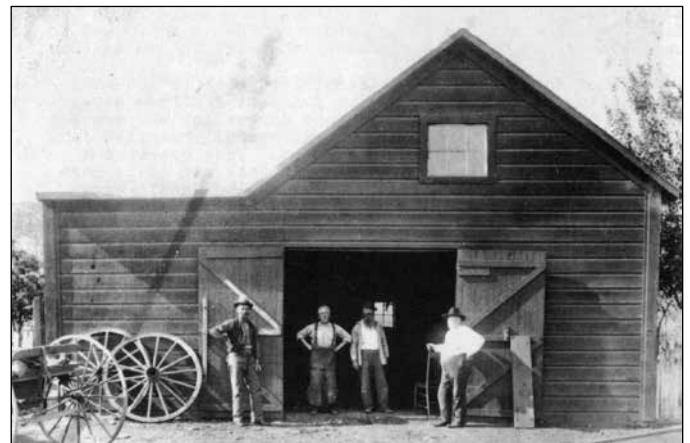


*Milking cows on the Ottolini Ranch around 1910. Henry Albertoni, who later would have his own dairy near the Nicasio town square for decades, is one of the milkers here. In those days, all cows were milked outdoors by hand in good weather. (Photo courtesy of Mary Barboni)*

90s. New industries also arose, like horse ranches, high-tech cinematography, viticulture and wine production, exotic longhorn cattle breeding, and even a llama farm.

As Nicasio entered the new millennium, the 1950s school facility was renovated and several new buildings were added: a library, an admin building with staff lounge, and a large free-standing Multi Purpose Room, at a cost of \$2.4 million, completed in 2001.

The dam and its aftermath may have radically changed the people and natural landscape of Nicasio's northern valley, however, there are certain values that seem to be inherent in the place, that remain constant across the waves of new inhabitants. Whether born here or denizens who immigrated by choice, all Nicasio people, past and present, have welcomed newcomers, treasured Nicasio's natural beauty, worked and strived together cooperatively for the common good and highly prized quality education.



*E. K. Cornwell's Blacksmith Shop on Nicasio Square built in the 1880s by Edward Cornwell. In 1885 the price for shoeing a horse was \$2.00. This building still stands on Nicasio Square. (© Nicasio Historical Society)*



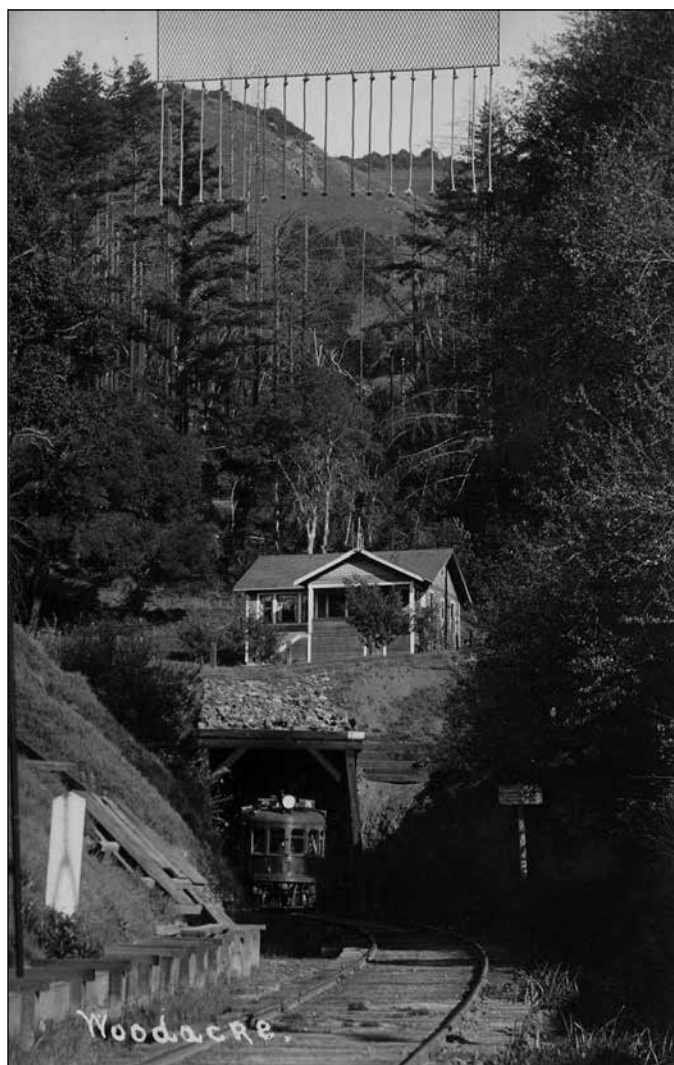
# Trains—the Lifeline of the Valley 1874–1933

by Anne McClain

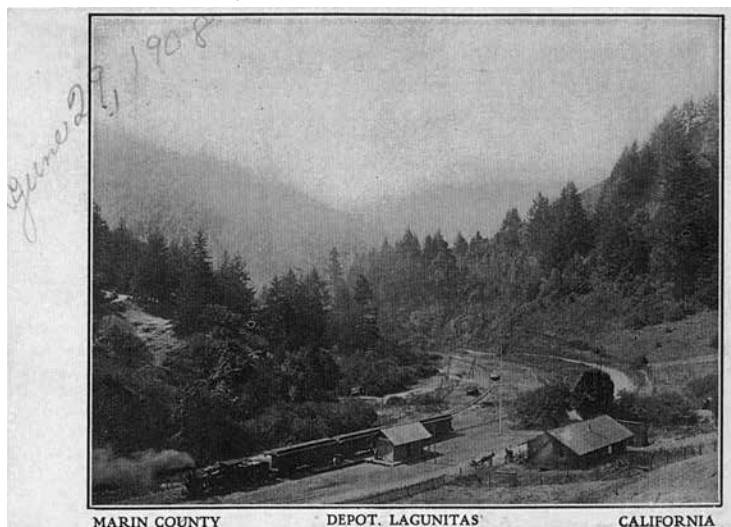
The era of trains rolling through the Valley was an exciting one. With regularly scheduled trips to the Valley (and beyond) from San Francisco, people were able to easily come and go. Camp Taylor had made the area a popular destination for summer picnics and recreation, and in the 1920s people came and built summer cabins within walking distance from the train stops. My family’s home in Forest Knolls started out as a summer cabin for a San Francisco butcher and his wife. A nephew of theirs stopped by once some years ago to revisit the place he had spent some happy summers. He told of going through the alleyway to town and the dance halls. The trains made the dance halls, the bars and lodges (and the alleged brothels!) of the Valley accessible and popular.

We can still see traces of the trains in the Valley. The Presbyterian Church has restored the San Geronimo station for use as an office and meeting place, and if you know where to look, you can see the leveled pathway of the old tracks through Flanders Ranch. The old tunnel connecting Fairfax and Woodacre cut through the hill at Elm Road. After the railroad days came to an end it continued useful life as a shortcut for fire engines from Woodacre to get to emergency calls “over the hill” until the tunnel partially collapsed and was then blocked off.

Lots of old postcards of the Valley featured the trains and stations. We are especially grateful to Jim Staley who allowed us to use photos from his book *Railroads in the San Geronimo Valley 1874–1933* I marvel at the photo of people getting on and off a train stopped in Forest Knolls on page 87. What bustle and activity in our now sleepy town! We hope you enjoy these pictures of a bygone way of life here in our Valley home.



*The North Pacific Coast train shown exiting the tunnel in Woodacre. This tunnel went 3,200 feet through White’s Hill from the current intersection of Railroad Ave. and Elm Ave. to Bothin on the Fairfax side. (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)*



*1908 postcard of the Lagunitas Depot. Jim Staley’s caption reads as follows, “Notice the siding just to the left of the flagpole and to the rear of the train. In later years many trains went no farther west than Lagunitas, and the siding was used to turn the engine around. The road crossing the siding leads to the bridge over Papermill Creek and what is today Lagunitas Road.” (Photo and caption courtesy of Jim Staley)*



SAN FRANCISCO AND CAZADERO LINE.														
April 18, 1906.														
14	8	6	4	2	Ms	[LEAVE]		[ARRIVE]		1	5	3	7	11
P M	A M	P M	P M	A M	...	... San Francisco. ♂	6 57	8 50	10 45	8 15	6 40	Lve. Occidental *8 00 a.m., *4 00 p.m., arr. Cazadero 9 00 a.m., 5 00 p.m.		
†5 15	†9 15	‡8 15	†3 15	*7 45	0	... Sausalito ... ♂	6 10	8 03	10 05	7 33	4 55	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
6 12	10 11	9 12	4 10	8 50	16	ar. San Anselmo ♂ lv.	5 45	7 43	9 43	7 13	4 30	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
P M	9 15	.....	P M	A M	...	... San Quentin.. ♂	P M	A M	10 40	.....	.....	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
†5 43	9 40	.....	†3 15	*8 30	...	lve.. San Rafael ♂ arr.	6 17	8 12	10 17	.....	.....	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
5 52	9 49	.....	3 24	8 39	...	ar. San Anselmo ♂ lv.	6 08	8 03	10 07	.....	.....	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
6 15	10 15	9 15	4 13	8 53	16	lve. San Anselmo. arr.	5 43	7 40	9 41	7 10	4 28	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
6 20	10 20	9 20	4 18	8 58	17	..... Fairfax .....	5 37	7 35	9 35	7 04	4 22	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
6 22	10 22	9 22	4 20	9 00	18	..... Pacheco .....	5 34	7 33	9 33	7 02	4 20	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
6 35	10 35	9 35	4 33	9 21	24	... San Geronimo.. ♂	5 16	7 17	9 10	6 52	4 07	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
6 40	10 40	9 40	4 38	9 26	26	..... Lagunitas .....	5 10	7 09	9 05	6 47	4 02	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
6 50	10 50	9 50	4 50	9 36	29	..... Camp Taylor.....	4 58	6 57	8 53	6 36	3 51	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
6 54	10 54	9 54	4 55	9 40	30	..... Taylorville .....	4 56	6 52	8 48	6 32	3 47	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
7 00	11 00	10 00	5 06	9 47	32	..... Tocaloma.....	4 47	6 44	8 40	6 25	3 40	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
7 05	11 05	10 05	5 09	9 51	34	..... Garcia .....	4 42	6 39	8 35	6 20	3 35	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
7 15	11 15	10 15	5 20	10 00	37	... Point Reyes.. ♂	4 28	6 29	8 25	*6 10	*3 25	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
P M	A M	10 30	5 32	10 12	41	..... Millerton .....	4 16	6 16	8 12	A M	P M	Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		10 42	5 46	10 25	47	..... Marshalls ... ♂	4 04	6 02	7 58			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		10 54	5 58	10 38	51	..... Hamlet .....	3 51	5 49	7 45			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		11 00	6 04	10 44	53	... Camp Pistolesi... ♂	3 45	5 44	7 40			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		11 07	6 12	10 52	54	..... Tomales..... ♂	3 39	5 38	7 34			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		11 20	6 26	11 06	58	... Clark's Summit... ♂	3 20	5 25	7 20			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		11 27	6 32	11 12	61	..... Valley Ford ... ♂	3 12	5 15	7 10			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		11 34	6 38	11 18	64	..... Bodega Roads....	3 02	5 06	7 00			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		11 39	6 43	11 23	65	..... Freestone..... ♂	2 57	5 02	6 55			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		11 57	6 58	11 38	69	... Occidental... ♂	2 43	4 50	6 43			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		12 04	7 03	11 43	71	... Camp Meeker.. ♂	2 37	4 40	6 33			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		12 14	7 13	11 53	74	..... Tyrone .....	2 25	4 25	6 15			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		12 19	7 17	11 57	75	..... Monte Rio... ♂	2 20	4 20	6 10			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		12 27	7 26	12 05	78	..... Moscow .....	2 12	4 12	6 03			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		12 40	7 40	12 20	79	... Duncan's Mills.. ♂	2 10	4 10	6 00			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		12 55	7 55	12 35	83	..... Watsons..... ♂	1 54	3 54	5 44			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		1 05	8 05	12 45	86	... Cazadero... ♂	*1 45	3 45	5 35			Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		
		A M	P M	Noon	...	[ARRIVE]	[LEAVE]	P M	A M	A M		Lve. Occidental *10 30 a.m., *6 20 p.m., arr. Duncan's Mills 11 05 a.m., 6 55		

This is the schedule for the North Shore RR dated April 18, 1906. As you can see, the travel time from San Geronimo to the Ferry Building in San Francisco, including a ferry boat ride, was 1 hour and 18 minutes. It is difficult to do this now in non-commute hours, and almost impossible during the rush hour. (Courtesy of Jim Staley collection)





*The county road, later Sir Francis Drake Blvd., passes between two trees in front of the Lagunitas Lodge as a train travels eastward about to make a crossing of the road at what is now the west end of Castro St. A few portions of the stone pillars remain. (Photo from the Collections of Newall Snyder and Jim Staley with caption info from Jim Staley)*



*“Engine 9 was a broad gauge engine named ‘Marin.’ It is shown here with a trainman and his two young helpers in front of the Lagunitas Store.” (Photo and caption courtesy of Jim Staley)*





*Train time in a bustling Forest Knolls. The road parallel to the train tracks is Castro St. and is crossed by Montezuma Ave. just beyond the station (about where the current Post Office is) and beside the grocery store in the distance.*



*Lagunitas Train Station. "The welcoming committee and band awaiting the arrival of the NWP (North Western Pacific) train 8. Circa 1914." (From the Collections of Newall Snyder and Jim Staley with caption courtesy of Jim Staley)*



# LAGUNITAS SCHOOL DISTRICT: A BRIEF HISTORY

by *Don Holmlund*

Beside the family, schools—and what happens in them—are the most important places in any community. The seeds of all future learning are planted there, social and athletic skills are nurtured, and values are explored. For more than 100 years, the Lagunitas School District has played a huge role in the lives of children, parents, and most residents of San Geronimo Valley. For the past 40-plus years, the District has offered various programs to facilitate all of these goals. These programs have also been a reflection of various populations living in the Valley, and through the years, there has been tremendous parental involvement in all programs within the school.

In the late 1800s, when the population of the Valley was largely limited to the big ranches in Woodacre and San Geronimo, the first school was located on Roy's Ranch in San Geronimo (near the duck pond on San Geronimo Valley Drive), and the San Geronimo School District was formed in the 1870s. A second school was built in 1904 in Lagunitas as land was being developed there. (This building still exists as a private residence on W. Cintura Road in Lagunitas.) In 1924, a new school building was built to accommodate students from both schools, and the Lagunitas School District was born. In 1967, the building was condemned (and became the current San Geronimo Valley Community Center) and a new building was built next door. Later buildings were added for the Open Classroom on the upper campus in the mid-1970s. Some portable buildings were added for the Middle School in the early 1980s, and after a bond issue passed, a permanent building for the Middle School was constructed and opened by the mid-1990s. The Community Gym was completed in 2010.

The curriculum, teaching, and administration of the school was very stable and traditional until the late 1960s. At this time, the population of the Valley began to change. New residents, a good number of them artists, workers in the helping professions, and escapees from the Haight, found homes here. Often they found common ground around civil rights issues. Many were raising families. They became involved in cooperative pre-school groups. They wanted change in the school.

## The Open Classroom

Among them was Sandy Dorward, who was hired by the school as a teacher in 1970. Sandy and other parents, with support from the District Superintendent, began to develop an Open Classroom alternative. The group identified four cornerstones upon which to build their program: parent participation, choice, play, and equal weight given to emotional growth/development. The fall of 1971 saw the first multi-graded Open Classroom (kindergarten –

third grade) in the San Geronimo Valley, with Sandy as the teacher, joined by a very enthusiastic and skillful group of parent volunteers.

Judy Voets was a student teacher in this classroom at the time. When she completed her student teaching, she went to England to experience the “hands-on” approaches then becoming popular there. The British schools were using many materials and techniques that Judy recognized would be extremely useful for the program the Open's founding families wanted to create. She brought back progressive teaching tools that were not used in California at that time. Some 150 families supported an expanded Open Classroom. The program was welcomed by some and vehemently opposed by others, but the School Board election of 1972 proved that a majority of the community supported alternatives in education. Richard Sloan was elected to the Board with a mandate to create choices for parents. Board meetings were very contentious; one community member called Sloan a Communist, another said if the Open Classroom proposal passed, it “would be the end of Western Civilization as we know it.” Richard recalls that “it almost came to blows.”

The program was adopted, and the district reformed the school into three programs. Parents were given a choice between the Open Classroom, the Existing Program, which consisted of the same teachers and classes as before, and the ABC Program (also known as Back to Basics), which consisted of a beefed up curriculum. The Open Classroom was able to hire outstanding teachers, and parental involvement, including classroom and financial support, remained extremely high. The ABC and Existing Programs also had stable enrollments and satisfied parents because they appreciated having a choice: Some children thrive in structured environments whereas others thrive in less structured classrooms. They liked the fact that there were alternatives.

## Academics & Excellence

Within a few years, due to teacher retirements and declining enrollment, the Existing Program was discontinued. In its place, another program was adopted, called Academics Plus, which gave families an even greater choice in their children's education. This program offered greater enrichment in the curriculum including art and music. In the late 1970s, the ABC and Academics Plus programs merged into the A&E (Academics and Enrichment) Program, adding enrichment activities such as language (French) and dance. Parents of A&E students valued this program for many reasons: students learned in the traditional and structured manner; there were wonderful teachers; there were no combined grades; there were standardized tests by which comparisons could be made with other children and other schools. The A&E parents also were extremely active in the school, and would show up at





Board meetings arguing against combining grades, and in favor of standardized testing. (Eventually the A&E program was discontinued in the early 2000s because of low enrollment and District financial difficulties.)

### Montessori Program

In 1981, a group of parents began meeting to explore the feasibility of a public Montessori school in the Valley. Their children had attended Montessori preschools, and the parents were convinced that this educational method would be a good fit for the Valley. They proposed this to the School Board. Montessori education emphasizes mixed age classrooms, student choice of activity from within a prescribed range of options, uninterrupted blocks of work time, and a “discovery” model, where students learn concepts from working with materials developed by Maria Montessori and colleagues, rather than by direct instruction. Once again, there was great opposition to this and contentious meetings were held. The original proposal was turned down. However, with the discovery of a successful public Montessori program in the San Mateo District, support from Richard Sloan arguing that families should be given a choice as to school program, and a newly elected School Board, the Montessori program was adopted, and

classes began in 1982. The Montessori families were also tremendously involved in making their program a success. Enough money was raised to hire a Montessori trainer to work with the faculty here. The new program was popular, and some children came from other districts to enroll. It eventually grew into a K-5 program.

### Waldorf-Inspired Program

In 2004, the Waldorf-Inspired Program started in the Lagunitas School District with a kindergarten class. This also began with a group of parents wanting an alternative form of education for their children. These parents had petitioned the Ross Valley School District to start a charter school similar to the Novato Charter School, which had a Waldorf-Inspired curriculum and had been in existence since 1996. Ross Valley District was not interested, so a dialogue was started in the Lagunitas District with the addition of many Valley parents. Once again, Richard Sloan was very instrumental in encouraging the group and persuading other Board members to accept the proposal. Once again, there were major arguments and contentious Board meetings because the model of a charter school was new to this District, the Waldorf curriculum was new to many, and as always, there were financial anxieties. But the



*The first class picture of the Open Classroom. Among those pictured are founding teacher, Sandy Dorward, and students Andrew Giacomini, Erik and Kevin Meade, Marc Edwards, Kira Thelin, Kristy Mubic, Margaret and Heather Dorward, Renee and Todd Berardi, Jennifer Graham, Joe Soewith, Greg Radue, and Kate Edmiston. Judy Voets (not pictured) was student teacher.*



*A Brief History, continued*



*Judy Voets with Sandy Doward looking on*

concept of parental choice of program prevailed, and there were classrooms available as the A&E program had closed.

Waldorf education is based on the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. This approach focuses on practical, hand-on activities and creative play for young children, developing artistic expression and social capacities for grammar school children, and developing critical reasoning and empathic understanding for older children. As with the other programs, parents in the Waldorf-Inspired Program were extremely involved, both in the classroom and financially. Due to a change in funding for the School District (Basic Aid), not as many students were coming from other Districts, and there was insufficient enrollment to justify hiring more teachers. The program was terminated in 2014. Most parents in the program were very dis-



*Lagunitas School 1930s (Photo from the collection of Chuck Ford)*

appointed, but felt deep gratitude toward the District for having supported it for 10 years.

### The Middle School

For most of its history, the school district's programs each consisted of a kindergarten and eight grades, with one teacher for each grade (or in the Open Classroom, several grades together). In the late 1970s, the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from all programs wanted to be together with their peers and wanted a more "high school" atmosphere. Some were transferring to White Hill Middle School in Fairfax. The District then created the Lagunitas Middle School. Departments were formed, and students would have different teachers for different subjects and change rooms for the different classes. Middle School staff faces a challenge working with students from different programs, but they have been very successful at honoring those differences while providing students with skills to make the transition to high school. New buildings were constructed for the Middle School on their own campus, adjoining the other campuses.

Each segment of the Lagunitas School District—School Board, administration, staff, teachers, parents, and students—has done an admirable job over the years. Today, there are three programs in the District: the Open Classroom, the Montessori, and the Middle School. Each program has undergone challenging periods, but survived stronger because of the challenges. A constant has been the reflection of community values and desires, strong commitment to offering different programs to the community, and deep commitment to parental involvement in the lives of their children and the school. Current Lagunitas School Principal Laura Shain sums it up, "The School District has held onto its progressive educational approaches despite the political and societal pressures that have imposed upon much of public education in recent years. . . . Through determination and shared decision-making, the school has remained innovative and unique."

Retired Superintendent Larry Enos agrees, "The passion and involvement by the school community outweighs difficulties and helps maintain a dynamic and vital environment for the children of the Valley."

*This history of Valley schools relied on discussions with history guides Larry Enos, Laurie Klein, Heather Podoll, Richard Sloan, Bernie Stephan, Amy Valens, and Judy Voets. Thank you all.*





*Lagunitas resident, Jennifer Olson Spindell, writes: "The schoolhouse was the first for the Valley; it is located at West Cintura Avenue (across from Charles Lane, near the Lagunitas Store). The schoolhouse is now a private home, where our family resides. The schoolhouse over the years has been added on to; however, the original portion of the schoolhouse is still intact." Built in 1904, this is the schoolhouse that is pictured in the far right of the Del Mué mural at the Center. (Photo courtesy of Chuck Ford)*



## The Big Game, Lagunitas School—1969

By Paul Berensmeier

It is interesting how old memories can be stored at certain sites in the Valley. For example, a recent walk by an old coyote bush brought back a flood of memories that occurred over forty years ago . . . the memory of the Big Game! Yes . . . I remember so clearly . . . it had everything that big games have: big-time pressure, raucous fans crowding the field, the umpires having difficulty keeping the peace, and a close score.

The unforgettable year was 1969. The site was Lagunitas School. The age of the players was seven years. The fans were the second-grade class, and the umpires were the two teachers. For the first five innings of that seven-inning game, one boy went unnoticed by both players and fans. He was terrified of failing and managed to sneak unobtrusively behind a coyote bush by the edge of the fence when they were picking teams. That boy was me, and I felt great about the game. The score was close and I had no chance of failing or screwing up in front of the entire second grade; life couldn't be better!

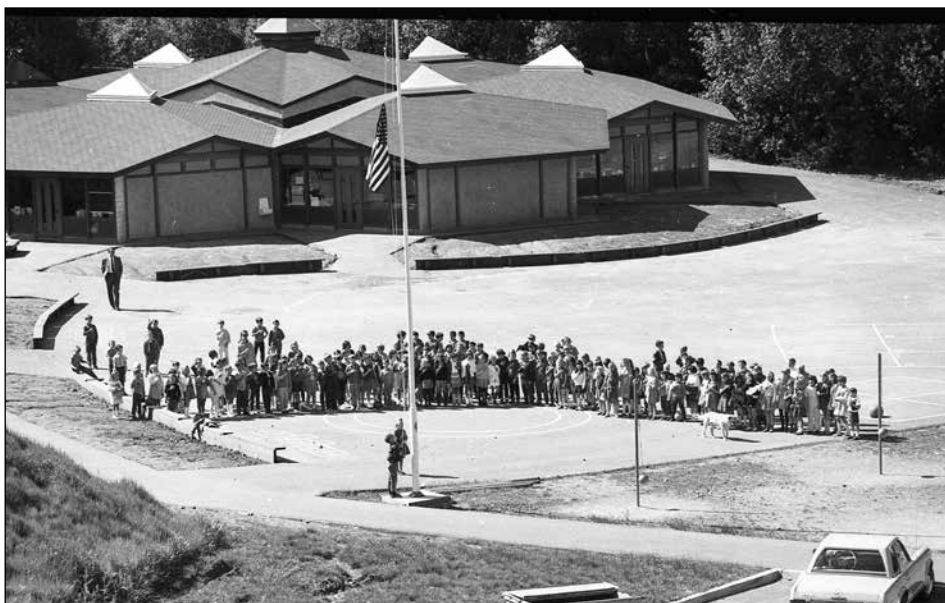
Suddenly, everything changed!. In the top of the last inning, I was spotted. To this day I can remember who the fink was—Richard Anderson, who was a great friend before this moment. “Hey,” I could hear his high-pitched voice ring out, “No wonder we’re losing, Paul’s not playing!” I was doomed. I vowed to kill Rich as I slowly walked out to right field, where I figured no one would hit the ball. I managed to get through that half of the

inning unscathed—no ball was hit anywhere near me.

When I came in and sat on the far end of the bench, hoping everyone would forget me, one of the teachers just had to remember and put me in the batting order. I was up fifth. The first two boys struck out. “Whew!” I thought to myself, “I probably won’t get a chance to hit.” But the next batter got a line drive hit and the batter before me grounded one through “the hole.” The noise began to build, crescendoing into mass seven-year-old hysteria. Two on, one in scoring position, two outs, and we’re down by one run. “Just great!” I muttered, as I approached the plate, trailing the bat on the ground behind me. “Just when everyone’s watching,” I continued thinking as I stepped into the batter’s box. The first three pitches were outside, so I figured I wouldn’t swing and get a walk. “That’ll fix ‘em.”

Then one of the teachers yelled, “Oh, no! Nobody gets walked in this game!” “Great,” I thought to myself, “Now I’ve got to swing.” It’s hard for me to comprehend how it happened but my dad said I swung the bat and hit the ball on what he called “the sweet spot.” The ball soared way over the outfielders’ heads, and before I knew it I had hit a home-run and both runners scored! We won the game! I had come from what I was sure would be utter failure and ridicule, to success and heroism. I ran around the bases and tagged home plate. Suddenly the whole class began pounding me on the back, including those who hit me as hard as they could because that’s what second graders do. But I didn’t mind. I couldn’t even feel the hard blows because I was so happy.

This joyful moment spawned a successful baseball journey through Little League (ages 11-12), Pony League (13-15), Drake High School . . . and continues in 2016/17 when I joined the age 45+ Senior Baseball League.



*Raising the flag at the opening of the San Geronimo School (Photo by Harlan Floyd)*





*The Roy House, originally on a knoll by the duck pond on today's San Geronimo Golf Course, served as the first school of the San Geronimo School District. The house was moved to Nicasio and featured in the 1982 film, "Shoot the Moon." It remains today as a private residence. (Photo by Harlan Floyd)*

## Halloween on Meadow Way, 1985

by Barbara S. Brauer

We'd lived ten years in Fairfax when my husband and I found a small house on Meadow Way in San Geronimo for ourselves, our small son Gordon, and fledgling home business, Wordsworth.

The first winter was a steep learning curve in Valley life, with only a woodstove for heat and infrequent buses to my job in the City. But good things happened, too. Neighbors became friends and playmates, and we joined the Babysitting Co-op.

In preparation for our first Halloween, I bought four times as much candy as we'd ever handed out in Fairfax. But it didn't last long. Group after group of trick-or-treaters came up the walk, and the candy was gone in no time. *Oh no!*

Embarrassed, hoping to escape notice, we turned out the lights and stepped out to join the throngs of children and parents streaming up and down the street. A few steps out of our gate, I overheard a voice, "Let's go in there!"

"Naw," I said. "I think they're out of candy."

This was our awkward introduction to the phenomenon of Halloween on Meadow Way. Over the years at Terry Garthwaite's home, Barbara Stevenson greeted children, inviting them in for a visit with the Talking Pumpkin. Next door, Open Classroom teacher Judy Voets, dressed as a baby, handed out treats. Valley Family Preschool director Judy Kuever came to her door at 352 Meadow in a witch's costume. Other neighbors joined in.

Year after year, each Halloween, the street became a boisterous river of revelers. On the center of the block, our home was in the thick of it. Our annual supply of candy now filled a grocery bag. Neighbors Tody and Gary counted more than 200 trick-or-treaters in one night.

Then suddenly, it seemed, the annual party was over. Now each October 31 an eerie quiet reigns.

But what better introduction to the Valley's children and family-centered community? Only here and nowhere else could a family find such a neighborhood!



# Our Community's Faith Organizations

by Suzanne Sadowsky

Among the various organizations, clubs and groups serving the San Geronimo Valley and Nicasio, the faith congregations have had a very long history. Collectively they have served the people of our villages far longer than any other nonprofit organizations. For more than 150 years the faith organizations—St. Mary's and St. Cecilia's Catholic Churches, the San Geronimo Community Presbyterian Church, the Buddhist Meditation Center at Spirit Rock, and Gan HaLev (the Jewish Congregation)—have individually and collectively served as anchors of community life. They have all provided a source of social engagement for their adult members and their children. They have contributed to the spiritual and emotional needs of Valley people as we experience life events—joys and the challenges—births, confirmations, b'nai mitzvahs, marriages, illness, loss, and death. The Valley faith groups have each in their individual ways and collectively worked to support the community at large and to create a sense of cohesion, appreciation of diversity in belief and practice, and their shared values. They have provided food for the homebound and homeless, and their members have worked tirelessly for other Valley nonprofit organizations. For over a decade, the Valley Faith Organizations have come together twice a year—in the fall for their Interfaith Thanksgiving Service and in the spring for an Interfaith Forum.

I asked representatives from each of the congregations to respond to a number of questions about their origins and founders, their mission, challenges and role of their organizations in today's world. Below are excerpts from their responses; you can read them in their entirety online. (See page 174.) Their responses follow in the order that they first began to serve the Valley.

## St. Mary's/Nicasio & St. Cecilia's/Lagunitas

St. Mary's Church in Nicasio has been ministering to the Catholics in West Marin for more than a century. The picturesque church on the Square was dedicated by Archbishop Joseph Alemany on October 27, 1867. In the mid-1800s, Nicasio was being considered as the Marin County seat. (Fundraising to restore the church's aging structure has been ongoing with a major celebration planned for October of 2017.)

St. Cecilia's Church in Lagunitas was built in 1912 (at a cost of \$4,000) along the railroad line that went from Sausalito to Cazadero up the coast. In December of 1934, the original St. Cecilia's Church was destroyed by fire. It was rebuilt and dedicated in 1936. During the 1990s, the

Church was threatened with closure, but a committee of active parishioners and community members convinced the Archdiocese of San Francisco to let the church remain open. Subsequently, a major restoration of the church and meeting hall took place.

Both St. Mary's and St. Cecilia's have been administered by priests appointed by the Archbishop in San Francisco. Father Cyril O'Sullivan has served as pastor for both churches since July, 2006. He is advised by a Pastoral Council made up of parishioners.

The main mission of the Catholic Church is to proclaim the teachings of Christianity in worshiping God and loving our neighbor. Parish events such as picnics, trips and parties are an integral part of building our community. In celebrating traditional Catholic liturgies, our local parishes hope to meet the needs of the people for a deeper spirituality in the face of increasing secularism. For many years we have joined with other San Geronimo Valley faith communities for an Interfaith Thanksgiving Service. Besides sharing our gratitude, we all contribute to the community Food Bank.

## San Geronimo Community Presbyterian Church

The San Geronimo Valley Community Church was first organized on March 13, 1932, under the direction of the Board of National Missions. The Church remained under the authority of the Board until June 27, 1954, when John C. Bonner was ordained and installed as the first full-time pastor who served until April 1961.

In late 2005, Reverend John Gerity Scott was called as the full-time pastor. He arrived with the agenda of expanding the church membership, fostering ecumenical ties, and strengthening involvement in the Presbytery of the Redwoods. Of particular importance to both Reverend Scott and the entire church was the congregation's willingness to hire an openly gay pastor. Reverend Scott scheduled new member classes, initiated a Valley Interfaith Thanksgiving service engaging Catholics, Jews, Native American groups and Buddhists. He joined neighborhood groups such as the Lions Club, the Healthy Community Collaborative and the Marin Interfaith Council, where he became Board President.

Reverend Kate Clayton became the interim pastor in March 2011 and was later called to be the Church's full-time pastor in 2013. Pastor Kate Clayton loves the diversity of West Marin and this congregation. She continues the congregation's tradition of interfaith work, and serves on the core team of West Marin Coalition for Healthy Kids.

The Church's Mission Statement: "We commit ourselves to worship God, grow in spirit and bring love, compassion and justice to our community and the world."

The present church buildings and grounds have taken



shape over a period of more than 80 years. In 1935 the original 1878 train station was purchased from the North Pacific Coast Railroad Company. The train stopped running in 1930. The building was remodeled to accommodate church services and was used for that purpose until 1964. Church Elder Jene Chadwick recalls that the train station was moved to its present location in 1964. The Train Station is now used for the Pastor's and the church and preschool administrative offices. The Conference Room is made available to community organizations for meeting space. Monthly free movie nights are held upstairs.

The annual Holly Fair is a highlight of the Church's annual calendar and of the community at large. It was started more than a half century ago by the Ladies' Guild. Each year in November the church welcomes 500 residents of Marin County and beyond for a delicious home-made turkey dinner and sales of crafts, baked goods, jams and jellies, a white elephant sale, outdoor games, and silent auction.

## Spirit Rock Meditation Center

In 1976 a group of West Coast Vipassana Meditation practitioners that included Jack Kornfield, James Baraz, Sylvia Boorstein, Anna Douglas, Howard Cohn, and others, founded the Dharma Foundation. Its purposes were to sponsor Vipassana Meditation retreats (the first being in Yucca Valley, CA, that same year) and to publish *The Inquiring Mind, a Journal of the Vipassana Community*, which it did for several years. In 1985, members of several Bay Area meditation groups incorporated Insight Meditation West for the purpose of acquiring land and establishing a West Coast Insight Meditation Center.

In 1987, a contract was drawn up to purchase 411 acres of undeveloped land in the San Geronimo Valley of northern California from The Nature Conservancy. Then in 1988 the title was taken on the Woodacre land, and the name Spirit Rock Meditation Center was formally adopted. Since 1990, attendance at Spirit Rock has increased enormously. Hundreds of people now attend classes, day-long programs and residential retreats each week at the center in Woodacre.

Spirit Rock Meditation Center is a spiritual education and training institution whose purpose is to bring people to a depth of realization of the Buddha's path of liberation through direct experience; to provide the community of practitioners with inspiration and teachings to integrate and manifest wisdom and compassion in all aspects of their lives, for the benefit of all beings. The leaders of the meditation center today are Co-Guiding Teachers, Sally Armstrong and Phillip Moffitt; Executive Director, Michelle Latvala. A volunteer Board of Directors, comprising teachers and sangha members, is the central decision-making body for Spirit Rock.

Amidst changing political conditions worldwide, our role as a meditation center has expanded to providing spiritual refuge and supporting the community with practices, teachings and discussions that nurture our internal life in support of external service.

## Gan HaLev—the Jewish Congregation of the San Geronimo Valley

The idea of a Jewish Congregation in the San Geronimo Valley emerged at a small gathering in the home of Woodacre resident, Suzanne Sadowsky, on February 20, 1992. Suzanne had submitted a brief notice that was published in the January 1992 issue of *Ridgelines/Stone Soup* newsletter:

“A Jewish congregation is forming in the San Geronimo Valley to celebrate Jewish holidays and Shabbats. Other activities might include children's Bar/Bat Mitzvah classes, adult education, a community Seder, etc. . . .”

At a Board meeting on September 1, 1993, the Congregation adopted bylaws that were signed by Suzanne Sadowsky, David Knepler, Michael Chadwick, Laurie Chorna and Gary Mitchel. Articles of Incorporation were filed with the State of California and approved on October 26, 1993. Gan HaLev's mission: “To develop a permanent community which comes together to celebrate Jewish life—to worship, educate, socialize, share and explore our religious and cultural heritage.”

Gan HaLev sees itself as an independent, progressive and welcoming congregation. It is not affiliated with any of the national Jewish organizational movements and sometimes it has been described as “post-denominational.” Its members come from all over the United States and as far away as Asia, South Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Members have had a variety of religious backgrounds—Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and Renewal Judaism, as well as other religions. Many are self-described secular, cultural Jews, agnostic, atheists, pagan and Jewbuhs. In the 1990s the Congregation began to call itself Gan HaLev, which in Hebrew means *Garden of the Heart*.

Shortly after joining together, the Congregation learned about Torah Scrolls from Europe that had survived the Holocaust and were being repaired and maintained by the Czech Memorial Scrolls Trust in London. After much correspondence and many phone calls, the Congregation was given the opportunity to acquire a Scroll on permanent loan as long as it continued to exist.

*A healthy social life is found only, when in the mirror of each soul the whole community finds its reflection, and when in the whole community the virtue of each one is living*

RUDOLF STEINER





Summer 2010

## Homegrown Hero, Gary Giacomini

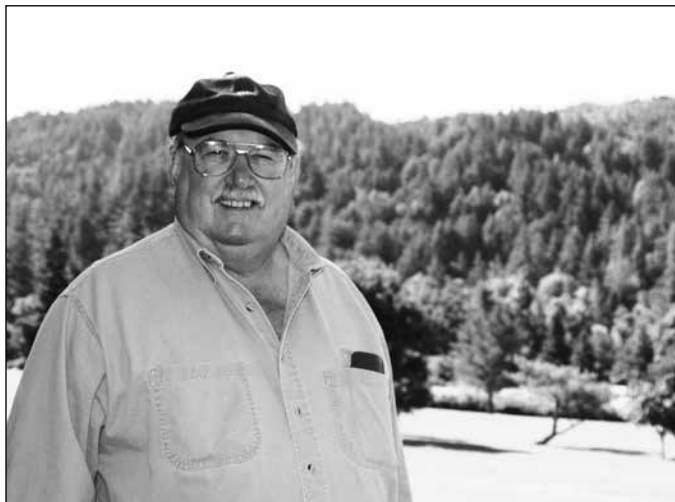
By Liza Crosse

*On September 11, 2010, the Community Center was pleased to honor Gary Giacomini at the Annual Under the Stars Gala. This article appeared in the June 2010 Issue of Stone Soup.*

Did you ever consider that the battle to save the San Geronimo Valley was part of a movement of global importance? Indeed, the storms that raged in Marin in the 1960s, '70s and '80s were precedent setting—showing the nation and the world that “progress” could be averted and special places saved. While there are many heroes in Marin who helped make that profound change, the guiding force at the eye of this era’s hurricane was Gary Giacomini.

He came to the world, and the Valley, in the usual way. But he brought with him a powerful intellect and a voice that carried authority, persuasiveness, humor, and, when needed, sharp barbs. And Gary used these tools to the utmost over an extraordinary 50-plus-year-long career in Marin’s politics. Most striking has been Gary’s willingness to take risks—balanced by strategic and political instincts that turned what were often extremely unpopular positions into triumphs.

Gary came to politics in the usual way as well, starting small and local when he was elected in 1968 to the Lagunitas School District Board of Trustees. Back then the big issue was the formation of three new academic programs—notably the Open Classroom. When I sat with Gary recently he recalled the knock-down-drag-out battle over



the allocation of funding and resources for the programs. “Three hundred angry people attended meetings, and they were screaming, ‘It’s a communist plot!’” In a move that changed the lives of generations of Valley kids, the board formed the three programs in a single night, on a 3:2 vote.

During this period, the Marin County Board of Supervisors had approved the new San Geronimo Valley Master Plan, bringing the promise of 5,000 homes, shopping centers and the East/West freeway to the Valley. All West Marin was open to development, and Gary realized that the key to saving our county would be the designation of A-60 zoning (one unit per 60 acres) over Marin’s ranch lands. Inspired by the importance of the issues, and in spite of having a young family and having to give up his legal practice, Gary decided to run for a seat on the Board of Supervisors. In the historic 1972 election Gary was elected, tipping the balance on the Board, which immediately overturned the Valley Master Plan and the freeway plan on a 3:2 vote. Most importantly, they rapidly enacted the A-60 zoning.

Gary recalls the implementation of A-60 zoning as the single thing he is most proud of in his 24 years of service as a supervisor. But it wasn’t easy. Ranchers, a good number of them Gary’s relatives, had vested development rights, and they grimly urged Gary to remember that “blood is thicker than water.” Hardest of all, Gary recalls, was his cousin Waldo, who had plans for 400 homes and a marina on what is now the restored Giacomini Wetlands. In a many-hours-long meeting, and in spite of screaming and vehement protests, the Board took its action at midnight—reducing the development units in West Marin from 1.1 million to just over 3,000 units. Waldo didn’t talk to Gary for years.

It took a decade to actually implement the zoning, ranch by ranch, and to everyone’s surprise, the land did not decrease in value. Gary realized later that the action made development entitlements rarer, therefore more valuable, a fact which helped sustain the A-60 zoning in a series of lawsuits claiming that the County had “taken” valuable property. Additionally, Gary kept the County focused on sustaining agriculture, using the supervisors’ powers to raise taxes and fund the construction of dairy barns to help ranchers comply with new environmental regulations.

Gary recalls 1972 as a “heady year,” and that it was thrilling to make enormous strides in the arena of conservation. The Marin Open Space District was formed and funded the same day as he was elected. There was land that needed saving and money to buy it. It was also time of great personal loss, with the passing of his wife, Andrea, mother of his two young sons, Anthony and Andrew.

Through the '70s Gary also led the Board of Supervisors in getting Congress to protect enormous swaths of land in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the Point Reyes National Seashore. In a series of actions the Board





identified over 120,000 acres of land to be protected, and Gary and his colleagues worked with Congressmen Phil and John Burton who pushed through the legislation. Again, Gary matched his conservation focus with efforts to protect agriculture—supporting leases for ranches in the park, and supporting MALT (Marin Agricultural Land Trust).

The other thing Gary is most proud of in his career is the fruitful evolution of the Marin Community Foundation (MCF) and Buck Institute for Age Research. In the late '70s Beryl Buck's \$12 million bequest to the poor and needy of Marin had literally hit pay-dirt—oil, that is—and burgeoned to over a quarter billion dollars. The San Francisco Foundation, which managed the funds, filed suit to break the Buck will, claiming that some of the millions should go to other counties. Gary went on a campaign, calling the San Francisco Foundation representatives “grave robbing bastards.” Gary recalls with some amazement that one day he was speaking about the issue, and off the cuff he suggested that, rather than break the will, “some of the funds be used to benefit all humankind.” Since we all age, he quipped, perhaps some of the funds could be used to create an institute to deal with the problems of aging. Eventually, the judge agreed, and the suit was overturned, for the benefit of Marin. Over time, the Buck Institute has blossomed beyond all expectation, and the MCF has given over \$900 million in grants to Marin causes.

Gary's service to diverse other organizations and causes is immeasurable. He served for 20 years on the Golden Gate Bridge Board, ten on the Coastal Commission, and on the MCF Board of Trustees. In 1982 Gary married Linda, bringing a new partner into his life.

When asked about the Community Center, Gary responds with high praise—that he, and the people of MCF, recognize that the Community Center and its

staff—especially its Director, Dave Cort—are simply the best, providing optimal service to local communities and to those in need. “Keep on truckin’,” he advises. When asked about his role in supporting the Center's projects and programs—most notably



Supervisor Gary Giacomini riding in the Center's project Western Weekend Parade in Point Reyes Station 1988

the new Gym—Gary is modest—recalling Turkey Day at the Center in 2008, when the recession had really hit home and there was a line of hundreds of people waiting for food for Thanksgiving. He says that the Foundation as a whole supports our good work—he doesn't exert any particular influence—“but sometimes I can sweeten the pot.” He did, that particular Turkey Day. Just as the Center was running out of food and about to turn people away, a call came from the Foundation—reporting that \$20,000 was coming immediately to help serve the needy. Instead of turning people away, Dave and staff members quickly went grocery shopping.

Gary is quick to credit his elected and professional colleagues, along with many community leaders, for these enormous accomplishments. But we all know that the most important achievements in history are made when the right person is in the right place, at the right time.

Thank heavens that, in this place, and at that time, it was Gary.



Gary Giacomini passed away at his home in San Geronimo in December, 2016. Here Lagunitas School District children hike the Zig Zag Trail on the Maurice Thorne Open Space Preserve in honor of his birthday in April, 2017.



# Samuel P. Taylor Park: More Than You Ever Knew

*from a memoir by Frances Rundall Gregg, shared by Susan Gregg Conard, with thanks to Margo Schmidt*

The Gregg family, Harold and Frances and four daughters, Chloe, Susan, Linda and Louise, came from Sebastopol in spring of 1942. Harold was working for the Marin County Planning Commission after his work as the architect designing Hamilton Air Force Base. The family were living for a brief while with Frances' parents, who happened to be the first resident doctors in Petaluma.

In his free time, Harold went house hunting, successfully finding a home finally in Yolansdale. The family arrived to take possession of the new house. Leaving the toddler twins in the car with oldest daughter, Chloe, Frances and Harold, with Susan in tow, walked up to the porch and knockd on the door. The door opened and the occupant told them, "Try to get rid of us." This was our first lesson in tenants' rights. Money had been paid for the down payment, but we became homeless. The family returned to Petaluma.

The tide was about to turn. The elderly owner of the property known today as Samuel P Taylor Park passed away. She had been diligent in her attempt to keep loggers

off her property, but the rules were soft and some cutting occurred. The owner made a request in her will about protecting her land from loggers. The paper work came across Harold's desk at the Planning Commission; interested in her request, Harold requested to go to Washington, D.C., to have the property declared a national park. This was war time, maybe not the best time for a request. Harold returned and suggested that the county take over the property, but there was not enough money to support a park. Harold's trip to the state capital in Sacramento was a success, and the land became a state park.

Now that the public was permitted to come to the park on the weekends, the park needed a supervisor. Harold, as an adventurer, asked Frances, "How would you like to go camping?" Frances was a good sidekick, so the answer was "Yes." The goal was to camp for the summer, but it turned out to be a year. The Gregg family became the caretakers of the park. Home was a tarp to cover an area that was the kitchen, with orange crates for shelving. There were two tents with cots, more orange crates, one for each of the two daughters, Chloe and Susan. The other tent was for Harold, Frances and the twins, Linda and Louise. A fire was going all the time in the fire pit and the propane stove helped with meal preparation. Harold engineered a water heater to hold clean water. No purified water for the twins diaper cleaning. The rule was "No talking to Mom" unless you worked the toilet plunger up and down in the washtub to wash the babies' diapers whenever you came to talk.

On his way to work, Harold took Chloe to Lagunitas School; Susan was not old enough yet for school and often went to work with Dad. She would visit the librarian and all those wonderful books in the basement of the county office on Fourth St. in San Rafael. Harold continued to actively look for a house.

On the way to and from work Harold frequently picked up hitchhikers. In the mornings on his way to work he often picked up Madame Prevost, an elderly dowager in Victorian dress, taking her to the bus stop in San Rafael. On one of Harold's commutes "home to the park," he picked up Madame Prevost at the San Rafael bus depot along with her cane, umbrella and two bags. She had taken the ferry from San Francisco and then the Greyhound bus to San Rafael depot. (The Greyhound bus started into town from Inverness at 6:00AM, stopping at bus stops through West Marin, ending at the San Rafael bus depot, then reversing the route at 6:00PM.)

Harold drove Madame Prevost to the bottom of Tamal Road in Forest Knolls. It was raining, so Harold insisted on driving Madame to her house. She invited him in, perhaps for tea. A conversa-



*The Hotel was built in 1884. Camping at Camp Taylor was allowed at least as far back as the 1870s through the early 1900s. (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)*



tion ensued, Harold talked of his housing situation, and Madame offered to sell him this house, her summer home. The deal was sealed; the family packed up the camping gear and took possession of the house.

Madame, however, found life in her former home with the Gregg family quite to her liking and didn't leave. Harold enjoyed her; he loved character and diversity, but as time went on Frances became tired of her demanding to be served. Madame had her bedroom off the kitchen and she became the "aristocrat" of the house. She would bang her cane on the floor three times for a cup of tea, breakfast, or a glass of wine from the wine cellar. This began to make Frances' life very difficult. After five months of Madame pounding her cane for Frances' attention in the Gregg's "B&B," Harold received a surprise phone call from Frances. (Our phone number in those days was 14R11.) "I've had it! You can choose to live with Madame Prevost or you can choose to live with us!" Frances and the girls were picked up by Grandpa Rundall to live in Petaluma until Harold made a decision. Harold talked to Madame; he helped her pack, then moved her back to San Francisco. The Greggs began to enjoy the house on Tamal Road just the six of them.

The Park became Samuel P. Taylor State Park named for Mr. Taylor who operated the first paper mill west of the Mississippi River. It became a weekend retreat for people who live around the Bay Area. A park ranger was hired to protect the park and the public, and the Gregg family visited frequently.

## Death Looks Down

by Linda Gregg

Death looks down on the salmon.

A male and female in two pools, one above the other. The female turns back along the path of water to the male, does not touch him, and returns to the place she had been.

I know what death will do. Their bodies already are sour and ragged. Blood has risen to the surface under the scales. One side of his jaw is unhinged. Death will pick them up. Put them under his coat against his skin and belt them there. Will walk away up the path through the bay trees.

Through the dry grass of California to where the mountain begins. Where a few deer almost the color of the hills will look up until he is under the trees again and the road ends and there is a gate. He will climb over that with his treasure. It will be dark by then.

But for now he does nothing. He does not disturb the silence at all. Nor the occasional sound of leaves, of ferns touching, of grass or stream. For now he looks down at the salmon large and whole motionless days and nights in the cold water. Lying still, always facing the constant motion.

(From *All of It Singing: New and Selected Poems*)



Boaters at Camp Taylor, circa 1907–1915 (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)



## Profile: David Wilson

by Amos Klausner

David Wilson's great grandfather Henry Landt came to California from New York to start a life as a pioneer and farmer in Plumas County. He established one of the first fish hatcheries in the state and gladly sold fish to the gold mining industry. Story has it that he almost staked his own claim when he found gold north of Sierraville but neglected to mark the location properly. "When he returned, he couldn't find the gold so he named the area Humbug Valley," says Wilson. It's a name that still stands today.

With many of his great grandparents born in the Golden State and five generations of his family still living here, David Wilson is first and foremost a child of California. Having grown up in Lagunitas, he's also a child of the San Geronimo Valley. His father Woodrow, named after the President, grew up in Corte Madera. His mother, Thomasina, was born in San Francisco. They met in 1939, in San Rafael, and were soon married. Woodrow and Thomasina looked for a home in San Anselmo and even saw a house they liked in Ross for \$7,900, but they couldn't afford it. Looking further west, they decided to settle in Lagunitas

where they purchased a home on three acres for \$4,700. Woodrow commuted each day to his job at the Larkspur lumber yard while Thomasina took care of their growing family, in the end raising 12 of her own children and three more of her extended family members.

Now 73 years old, Wilson came of age in the Valley during the 1940s and 1950s. The train had long since stopped running and many of the weekend vacationers that owned second homes in the Valley had stopped coming. You might say that things had gotten downright quiet. Even without the train, David remembers looking forward to the weekends when at least some weekenders would roll into town with kids that represented a welcome influx of playmates for small town boys and girls.

Fishing played a big part in the lives of kids and adults alike. These were in the days before protections were needed and before the dam was built that created Kent Lake. Opening day of the fishing season was always a big deal and trout were plentiful. On warm summer days, Wilson and his family would head up into the headwaters of the creek system toward Big Carson Creek and fill sacks full of crawdads. It was also a time when people would dam up the creeks and create deeper water for swimming and for



*Train cars on the siding to the right of the new depot are from the North Pacific Coast Railroad—the first railroad company in the Valley. The low building is the original General Store. The trees to the right will be the location of the store that exists today. The old county road to West Marin (now Sir Francis Drake Blvd.) is the sweeping curve headed west. Lagunitas Rd. can be seen crossing the tracks and disappearing into the canyon. Not in view was a small trout farm near the creek where customers could “fish” for trout and pay by the inch. (Photo and caption information courtesy of David Wilson)*



fishing. Wilson remembers a time when, “I entered a local fishing competition and won. For a young kid that was pretty exciting.”

School didn’t interest Wilson much where he felt the sting of a wooden ruler more than once. But dances and girls did. As a teenager, Wilson attended events at the

dance halls in the Valley and on the other side of White’s Hill. There were hard times in the Valley too. When he was 14, Wilson was visiting friends a few doors away when the family home went up in flames. Two of his siblings were caught inside and died in the fire. The community held a fundraiser for the family to help them rebuild, testament to

the ways in which you could rely on your neighbors in the San Geronimo Valley. The family eventually rebuilt on the same spot.

Wilson’s mother, Tomasina, was a busy homemaker but also a burgeoning real estate magnate. She started hiking the hills around Lagunitas and found distressed properties. After some due diligence at the county office, she contacted the owners and made an offer. She got the better end of the several deals and ended up with a small portfolio of properties. That led to a second career as saloon owner. In 1969 Thomasina purchased the Forest Knolls Lodge and changed the name to the Paper Mill Creek Saloon. Back then it was a biker bar with a healthy Hell’s Angels clientele. Wilson jokes that it was rowdy, a real “bucket of blood” kind of place and if there wasn’t a fight each night, there was something wrong. “People literally got thrown through the windows,” he added.

Today, David Wilson is very much a Valley historian. Over the years he has collected a wide range of photographs of—and ephemera from—the Valley. His photos include original buildings: churches, social halls, early commercial businesses and, of course, numerous shots of the train. (He even has a photo of the old post office in Forest Knolls that had, at one time, a jail in the back.) Wilson was kind enough to share several of these with the Community Center on the occasion of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. “It’s great that I can share these photos with all the people who live in the Valley. Things may have changed a lot, but it’s still a beautiful place,” Wilson reminisced.



*This small Forest Knolls building was located near the existing saloon. It boasted a real estate office, post office and, in the rear, a small jail cell. (Photo from Collections of Newall Snyder and David Wilson)*





Autumn 2016

## 2016 Gala Honoree, Steve Kinsey

by Wendi Kallins

On a crisp clear day in 1981, Steve Kinsey was admiring a ridge-line view above Forest Knolls accompanied by a friend who was urging him to move here from Arizona where he was finishing school. Steve was struck by the natural beauty, but he remarked, that it would never stay that way. “Oh no,” said his friend. “The people here won’t let it happen.”

That revelation led to a lifetime of service to help protect Marin’s precious open spaces. Steve soon became head of Friends of the Valley, in an effort to protect those lands on which he stood. A decade later, he was elected to the Board of Supervisors. By that time he had been involved in issues that spanned fish protections, securing Marin’s water supply, trail enhancements, funding for the Community Center and developing a gym/arts/teen complex. Running for office was a “natural extension of the community service I was already involved in,” he explained. “I have a deep appreciation for this place we call home and for strengthening community,” he added.

After almost 20 years in office, Steve has much to be proud of as he looks back on his accomplishments. He put together the package that gave us the Stage Coach, finally providing regular transit services to West Marin. Over the years he helped to strengthen and diversify Marin’s agricultural network. “The industry was going down when I started. We urged ranchers to create value-added products like cheese and eggs or helping them go organic.” He took the lead in getting the Board of Supervisors to join in the current lawsuit with the [National] Park [Service] in order to preserve agricultural use in the park that has been going on for 150 years. “It’s 20% of our agriculture industry, and we also need to keep supporting the ranchers and farmers in reducing the impact on the land,” he explained.

Considered one of the region’s foremost experts on transportation, Steve headed up the local Transportation Authority and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission for many years. He worked to pass a local transportation tax which now supports local bus service and Safe Routes to Schools. He’s glad that the County finally stopped the ongoing sinking of White’s Hill and built Brown Bridge. The bumpy road through Samuel P. Taylor Park was finally paved after 90 years. “It was an enormous challenge given all the various agencies and special interests involved. It was essentially a fish project with a road in it.” An avid hiker and runner, he also oversaw a significant expansion of the county’s trail network.



Steve’s many successes hinge on the fact that he takes the systemic approach. “I play off the idea that all things are connected. You don’t just solve one problem but look at the range of issues that address many problems at once. It takes a lot of work and communication. You have to break down the pattern of isolated activity within a bureaucracy.”

His love of place is especially strong here in his home of the San Geronimo Valley and he admits taking special care to bring resources to the Valley. “The Valley has a cohesive sense of community that respects privacy but comes together to help each other. We have a predominance of natural surroundings with so many points of access into it.” Here in the Valley, Steve also helped to acquire the senior housing at French Ranch and the trailer park. He is happy that we were able to secure 400 acres of open space and trail systems on French Ranch and further protected open space expansion of Giacomini Open Space. The Loma Alta purchase opened up trails down to White Hill school.

Even before he was elected to office, Steve took a lead role in winning a Healthy Start grant that launched the health and services program at the Community Center. While in office, he used his design skills to make sure the new gym integrated the Loft teen center. He is pleased to have been able to get ongoing funding at the Center allowing the Center to expand cultural activity to include Latinos, the Food Bank, and senior services. He hopes the Valley can find a way to continue to protect and restore salmon by working in a spirit of cooperation.

“Marin’s biggest challenge is keeping it a place where our children and seniors can afford to stay,” he says. “But it’s bigger than housing. We need to improve mobility on congested streets and highways for all users.” The fiscal and environmental challenges of climate change are also high on his list of priorities. But the housing crisis is getting so bad that he thinks we are seeing a shift in public opinion and that is now becoming a majority view that we have to address this crisis. “With good design and early communication, I hope that we can find a way to resolve the extreme shortage of housing.” But he worries it will also take courage for elected officials to take action even though some people will make a lot of noise. “I hope that the Marin community can create a new vision like the one we have been guided by for the last 50 years that protects our land and our community.”



# The Friends of the Valley

by Wendi Kallins

In February 1980, developers Sid Hendricks and Dennis Horne proposed a development of 149 exclusive and gated homes on one of the largest undeveloped tract of land in Marin County. This 1600 acre tract comprised the entire south ridge of the San Geronimo Valley. At an emotionally charged Planning Group meeting attended by about 300 people, the public reaction to the developers' proposal clearly demonstrated that the community was going to have to actively participate in the planning process to preserve the basic character and planning objective as set forth in the San Geronimo Valley Community Plan adopted in 1978.

Friends of the Valley, a volunteer group dedicated to preserving the beauty and character of San Geronimo Valley, volunteered to create an alternative plan to demonstrate that a viable and sensitive project could emerge from the community's guidelines. Over almost two years, more than 20 volunteers gave 5-10 hours per week to do research and painstakingly analyze the proposal. Under the skilled guidance of architects, contractors, and planning professionals, they became experts on such aspects of the development as:

- The geology of the site
- Open space preservation
- Comprehensive analysis of the access roads
- Zoning changes
- The biotic impact on plant and animal life and watercourses
- Development of affordable housing

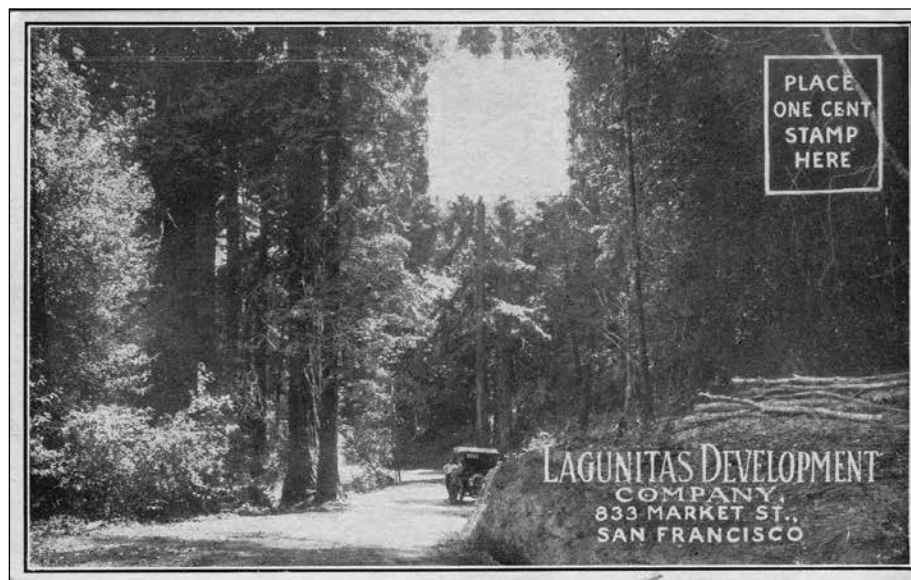
Many long intensive decision-making workshops were held in an effort to reach a consensus on the proper land

use of this delicate piece of property. The final product was an alternative plan that moved the houses off the ridge and placed them as logical extensions of the existing villages. It was more consistent with the wishes of the Valley residents, and more likely to meet county housing policy goals with respect to diversity.

Sadly, in the end, the Board of Supervisors dismissed these efforts and granted permission for the development to go forward reaching all the way up to the ridgelines. But providence and the economy were on our side. Few lots sold and the developers ultimately were forced to sell the land. The Open Space District purchased the bulk of the property, now known as the Giacomini Open Space. In an ironic twist, the developers were left with a few parcels just above the villages, much like the proposal that was put forward by Friends of the Valley. Ultimately only a few houses were ever built, and the ridges and open space have now been preserved in perpetuity.



*Friends of the Valley, 1982  
l-r Marshall Johnson, Stephanie Furniss, Phil Sotter, Max Kepcke, Rose Rutman, Wendi Kallins, Cathy Fahy, Jean Kinsey, Steve Kinsey, and Lissa Englert (Photo courtesy of Wendi Kallins)*



*Postcard (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)*



# San Geronimo Valley Music History: 1966–Present

by Laurence Brauer

The San Geronimo Valley's musical fame (or notoriety) began in 1966 when many of the musicians who created "the San Francisco sound" actually lived in the Valley. The Grateful Dead and Quicksilver Messenger Service arrived first. The Dead moved from Olampoli to the old scout camp on Arroyo Road in 1966. The Dead and Quicksilver lived near each other and engaged in acid-assisted "Indian and Cowboy" battles; the Dead were the Indians, Quicksilver the cowboys. (Sadly, in Grateful Dead history, the Valley is more known as where Jerry Garcia died in 1995 from heart failure at Serenity Knolls.)

Other bands soon followed Quicksilver and the Dead. Big Brother and the Holding Company moved down the road from the Dead in July 1966. Guitarist Sam Andrew remembers, "It was getting kind of scary in the City and the Haight. The 'Summer of Love' was over before it began. People were coming to San Francisco from all over the nation after the *Chronicle* and *Time* magazine starting writing all this stuff about it.... We just wanted to go someplace where it was nice and calm so we decided on Marin."

"One day we all piled into a car, drove over to Marin, picked up a newspaper and looked up 'Houses for Rent,'" recalls drummer David Getz.

"That same day we found a big house in the little town of Lagunitas. Everything seemed to work out right. Nothing could go wrong; God had taken care of us perfectly. On a big butane tank coming up the driveway, someone had scrawled 'God is Alive and Well.' Later another had added 'in Argentina.' Eventually our house became known as 'Argentina.'" Singer Janis Joplin and the Dead's Ron "Pigpen" McKernan became drinking buddies and frequented the Papermill and Speck McCauliffe's until the Dead moved out later in the year due to the septic system backing up and the Big Brother musicians finding separate residences outside the Valley. "Argentina" house was briefly taken over by members of the Sons of Champlin.

In 1967, the Sons began living at Ron and Marsha Thelin's Red House on Resaca (see story on page 108) in Lagunitas. Sons' cofounder Tim Cain, recalls, "Our group of crazies were what people had labeled Hippies by that



Ron "Pigpen" McKernan, Bob Weir, Jerry Garcia, Lagunitas, 1966



Sons of Champlin Capitol Records promo shot 1969

time, although we had no idea what we were until we got tagged. We thought we were just a bunch of nature-loving music enthusiasts living as close to the land as we could, hanging out in peace with our women, our friends, and our beautiful San Geronimo Valley. During that time there were many people, young and old, coming to San Francisco (and consequently Marin) to see what was the big deal with the Hippie Revolution, whatever that was. We didn't know a revolution was going on!"

The Monterey Pop Festival and commercial success of the Jefferson Airplane caused the major record labels to come calling. The Bay Area bands' lifestyles and idealistic approach clashed with the more traditional aspirations of the labels' corporate culture. Everything from song lyrics to cover art sparked intense disagreements. The Sons' first album, *Loosen Up Naturally*, gained rave reviews and their live shows were even better, but they failed to gain a wider audience. The music business never knew how to deal with their eclectic sound and unconventional perspective, though the band continued in various forms until 1977. Some members of the Sons reunited in 1997, recorded a live album in 1998, and, with Bill Champlin's return to the Bay Area, have been occasionally performing ever since. In 2005, they released their first studio album in 28 years, *Hip Lil' Dreams*, and Tim Cain rejoined the band in 2010.

The Joy of Cooking were another groundbreaking band. The *Chronicle's* Jon Carroll described them as "a remarkable rock and roll band, half ballads and half boogie, with a driving rhythm section fronted by two swell women, Toni Brown (a smart, crafty songwriter who could evoke sentiment without sentimentality) and Terry Garthwaite, who sings like an angel with dirty wings." At the time, women's musical roles were limited; women were not supposed to lead rock bands. Garthwaite and Brown wanted to create good music, not fulfill stereotypes.

Terry Garthwaite moved to the Valley in 1972. "Toni lived in Fairfax. I almost bought a house in San Anselmo,







*Joy of Cooking: Toni Brown, Fritz Kasten, Ron Wilson, David Garthwaite, Terry Garthwaite, 1971*

but it didn't work out. Then I was shown a couple of places in San Geronimo and it was too charming to resist." Terry's brother, bassist David Garthwaite, "brought his family to the Valley after I'd been here for a bit, raising his three daughters here." The *Joy of Cooking* recorded three albums which have aged better than many of their better selling contemporaries. Brown and Garthwaite then recorded the excellent *Cross Country*. Brown became a youth counselor and photographer. Terry remained in the Valley and continues singing, writing, recording solo albums, and producing. "The Valley was close enough to venues for me (there were some fine clubs in Marin)—and far enough away to offer peace of mind. There's no feeling like coming home after a gig, late at night, driving over White's Hill, and breathing in the calm of country. This is home. In '76 my son was born and I found this to be a wonderful place to raise a child. Friendly neighbors, good school, great kids, plenty of sports . . . Why leave?"

And there's only one meadow's way to go  
And I, and I say "Geronimo"  
And there's only one meadow's way to go  
And we say "Geronimo"

Those lines conclude Van Morrison's "Fair Play" from *Veedon Fleece*, the reflective masterpiece recorded in 1974 after he moved to San Geronimo from Fairfax. Morrison and his Caledonia Soul Orchestra played a memorable school fundraiser at the Woodacre Improvement Club. One of Morrison's neighbors was tabla master Zakir Hussain. Morrison "would come and hang out in the living room and just see what we were doing." Hussain ended up playing on Morrison's 1979 album *Into the Music*. Shortly thereafter, Morrison moved from his Meadow Way home (now owned by the Giacomini family) to England and Ireland.

Elvin Bishop, after three albums with the Chicago-based Paul Butterfield Blues Band, decided to become his own bandleader. He brought a house in Lagunitas in 1974, dismantled the deck outside his 1915-era hunting cabin,

and used the wood to build a greenhouse. While he's continued to tour the world and record his unique brand of blues ever since, locally Bishop is as renowned for his fishing and garden. His 2005 song "That's My Thing" declares, "I raise a big ole garden because it really gets old eating that junk out on the road. You see I'm from the country and I know what I need. My home-grown tomatoes and potatoes and peas." His 2014 album with its Bishop-esque title, *Can't Even Do Wrong Right*, was recorded at his Hog Heaven Studio in Lagunitas. As *Guitar World* said, it's "rousing, down-home, feel-good music."

Many musicians have become active members of the community, most notably folk singer-songwriter Kate Wolf (see story on page 68). She'd recorded four critically acclaimed albums when she married Terry Fowler and came to the Valley in 1982. The next year, she



*Elvin Bishop in his garden (elvinbishopmusic.com)*

released her live *Give Yourself to Love*, and then decided to take a year off. She worked part-time as a production artist for the *Point Reyes Light*, and took classes, planned activities, and performed at the Community Center. In 1985, she was back on the road with a new album, *Poet's Heart*. Her appearances on *Prairie Home Companion* and *Austin City Limits* gave her national exposure and increased her growing reputation and following.

In April 1986, Wolf was diagnosed with acute leukemia and underwent chemotherapy. After recovery and full remission, she compiled a retrospective of her recordings, *Gold In California*, before succumbing to the disease. Possibly the finest American folk singer/songwriter of her generation, Wolf created a musical and personal legacy for which she remains revered. She was the first musician inducted into the NAIRD Independent Music Hall of Fame. The annual Kate Wolf Music Festival in Laytonville features an eclectic mix of music from both up-and-coming acts and big-name stars inspired by Kate and her timeless music.

Since the heyday of the late 1960s and 1970s, the Valley has been a place where musicians often stay, content to live in a place they love. Woodacre resident and renowned jazz drummer Harold Jones (Count Basie, Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan) is "on call" for Tony Bennett, and leads workshops at colleges and universities around the country. Walt Dickson and the Sky Blue Band, and Sheri Cooper and Clancy Bounds (Cooper Bounds) forge their own



music and release albums independently. Saxophone and flute master Shawkie Roth has released solo albums as well as recording with several artists, most notably Stephen Halpern. Roth is well known as one of the originators of New Age Music. His inspiration comes from the practice of meditation combined with a relaxed lifestyle and a spiritual consciousness. He is a frequent performer at Valley venues. Cooper and Bounds with their “original songs for the whole family” won the John Lennon songwriting contest in 2007 with “Jack Rabbit” from *The Oh Oh Moon*.

Tim Cain had dropped out of the Sons of Champlin in 1970, unable to reconcile “the beauty of my new agrarian life, and simultaneously leading the life of a rock star,” moved to a tree house at the end of Creamery Road, and then a commune in Northern California. In 1985, Cain “came back to the Valley with my terrific new wife Gay Cain and our son Bing, and have been living here ever since, glad to be back, and happy to be with you in one of the most lovely spots on Earth.” Tim began a new career as a children’s music artist with his “sing-along concerts for kids.” As anyone who’s attended any of his Valley performances can testify, Tim combines spontaneity with humor that entertains parents almost as much as their ecstatic children.

Some of those children have gone on to musical careers. Coot Wyman and Shayne Tolchin, childhood friends in San Geronimo, formed Mystic Roots while attending Chico State in 1996. Now based in Southern California, Mystic Roots continues building its ever-expanding following due to its live shows, international touring schedule, and the hit single “Summer Festival.” “Wyman and Mystic Roots returned to the Valley in August 2010 to play a rousing benefit performance at the Community Center. “I love the Valley with all of my bleeding heart,” says Wyman, “I can’t live there now with my touring but I plan on coming back to retire.” Using the open area between the Center building and school classrooms for the stage, numerous performers, along with Mystic Roots, have performed

benefits for the Community Center. From the Summer of Love Festival hosted by Wavy Gravy, jamband masters Zero and Tea Leaf Green, and many others have given their talent and created memorable moments to the Center’s music-friendly setting and audience. In recent years, Valley keyboardist Michael McQuilkin has been hosting his “Family Music Hour,” using the Lagunitas



Michael McQuilkin

School Multipurpose Room to provide a performance showcase for both talented up-and-coming Valley musicians and veterans, including Tim Cain, Kira Thelin, and Howie Cort.

One of those outdoor benefit performers was New Monsoon, whose incendiary live shows established their international reputation.



New Monsoon

Aside from their two officially released live albums, one can download their performances on Nugs.net. The band came together during the El Niño winter of 1997-98, when “Every day was a New Monsoon” according to co-founder Bo Carter. “That’d make a great band name,” replied guitarist Jeff Miller. Miller moved to the Valley in 2003, followed in 2005 by keyboardist Phil Ferlino. “While New Monsoon has been part of the jam band scene,” says Ferlino, their music synthesizes genres, “everything from bluegrass to reggae, and funk, with stylistic comparisons to world music, blues, bluegrass, and rock and roll.” In 2014, New Monsoon released *Diamonds and Clay*, which writer Dennis Cook said “affirms New Monsoon as torchbearers for rock & roll with something substantive to say about the human condition.” Recently, Ferlino and Miller joined the Kate Gaffney Band, which also features former New Monsoon drummer Marty Ylitalo, Valley bassist David Russ, and singer-songwriter Gaffney, for whom music “is all about the songs and the players.”

Saying something “about the human condition” inspired Miller and Ferlino’s other project, the Contribution, a “jamband supergroup.” They released *Which Way World* in 2011 and followed it in 2017 with *Wilderness and Space*. Ferlino says, “One single will be released each month starting in February, each for a different charity as our ‘Contribution.’ The entire collection of songs will then be released as a full length (ten song) album near the end of 2017.”

Singer-guitarist Jeremy D’antonio recalls how he came to the Valley. “My girlfriend and I went camping at Samuel P. Taylor Park. There was one of those crazy, torrential rainstorms and we fell in love with it. So we found a place to live in Woodacre. It’s magical to me.” While playing a festival with his band Tiny Television, he met singer-guitarist Darren Nelson. “We started talking and Darren said, ‘I live back in the redwoods.’ I said, ‘Oh, yeah, me, too.’”

“As we kept talking, I finally said, ‘I think we’re neighbors,’ recalls Nelson. “It turns out we live within 150 yards of each other.” They became good friends and also discovered a special musical chemistry. Tiny Television’s sound evolved into a new band they patriotically and poetically dubbed San Geronimo. Described by the San Francisco



*Bay Guardian* as “hard charging Americana” the band’s two-and-a-half year residency at Phil Lesh’s Terrapin Crossroads afforded them the perfect venue to hone their songs and sound. The result was their 2016 debut album *Better Days*, which prompted Paul Liberatore to write, “As this first album’s title suggests, there may be better days ahead for San Geronimo. But it’s doubtful that any band could come up with a better first album than this one.”

“I’ve always been able to keep up my music and be happily at home here,” says Terry Garthwaite. “The slow pace and comforting surroundings have drawn me into a calmer creative space. My music, my focus now is more geared toward helping others and making music communally.” In 1990, she and Barbara Andino-Stevenson created a children’s art program, “Sounds for Art.” Terry’s work evolved into exploring music’s healing nature, leading to the critically acclaimed *Affirmations* in 1992 and, in 1998, *Sacred Circles*.

On Terry’s 2017 album, *Shine On*, she brings things

full circle. Recorded in Atlanta and Sebastopol, the album features former Joy of Cooking bandmates Fritz Kasten on drums and brother David on bass, joined by David’s daughter Oona, a former “Sounds for Art” participant, contributing stunning vocals alongside her father and aunt. Terry’s longtime collaborator Becky Reardon adds guitar along with Kate Wolf’s masterful accompanist Nina Gerber. “In Sebastopol I recorded at Jeff Martin’s Studio E, an old transformed barn with chickens rooting around the edges. Lucky the rooster happened to be outside the studio door one afternoon just as I was finishing a song that ends ‘till the morning comes for you,’ and he crowed in perfect timing.”

*Note: The Valley has long been home to dozens of musicians, writers, and artists. Due to space limitations, this article only touches on a small sampling of this rich and diverse musical community. Our sincere apologies for all omissions.*

## Marcus Uzilevsky

Valley artist Marcus Uzilevsky was internationally recognized for his “linear landscapes” artwork. He was also an accomplished musician who first gained a measure of fame with the New Christy Minstrels in the 1960s. Performing as Rusty Evans, he was a rockabilly, folk, and country singer/guitarist who recorded several albums over his

48-year career, along with touring nationally with Ring of Fire, his Johnny Cash tribute band, before his death at 78 in December 2016. He said, “I’d like to see art and music flourish side by side.”



Marcus Uzilevsky (photo by Michel Kotski)

## How I May Have Helped Make Huey Lewis a Star During My Time at Rancho Nicasio

*By Alan Charne as told to Anne McClain*

In about 1970 I was booking music for a few months for Rancho Nicasio. At the time, Huey Lewis and the American Express Band, as they were known back then when they were first starting out, was having a pretty decent following. So I called them up and I asked the manager if they would play and he said yes, but we won’t headline because we’re nervous that if we headline and we bomb that that will be bad for us. So I said, I don’t think you have anything to worry about but, ok. Rather than just being the opener, I did talk him into splitting the bill with a band called Fat Chance that was a popular band in Marin in those days. So with a split bill both bands are given equal billing side-by-side and they did play together and it was a good night with a packed house. Then, within a year or so they changed their name to Huey Lewis and the News, and the rest is history. So I do take partial credit for their success having talked them into at least splitting the bill that night.

*Great bunch of people here and I like the music.*

CARL MEHM



Rancho Nicasio (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)



# The Red House, Forest Knolls

by Jasper Starfire Thelin

My dad Ron Thelin, with his brother Jay (both Eagle Scouts who served in the Army), opened The Psychedelic Shop on Haight Street in San Francisco in 1966, and were suddenly in the heart of the national counterculture hurricane. He and my mom, Marsha, were already in their mid-twenties, and already parents (Kira was a toddler), so they were de facto “elders” in the blooming Haight-Ashbury, where every day fifteen year olds were arriving on buses from across the country. Involved with feeding and helping people with the Diggers, publishing the *Oracle* newspaper, the Human Be-In and the Summer of Love, the urban craziness became too much. Instead of trademarking the name “Psychedelic Shop” (and ensuring his offspring residual wealth, surely), they gave away everything in the store as part of the “Death of Hippie” ceremony, and moved to the Red House in Forest Knolls. (Watch for Marsha Thelin’s insights about those heady years in her forthcoming memoir *Mrs. Hippie* [say it out loud]).

Needless to say, there was plenty of high-minded partying, back-to-land spirituality and bioregional brainstorming among the commune of people that also moved there. I was born in front of the living room fireplace on a stormy night with dozens of people watching, the “midwife” having the qualification that she’d delivered her own child in a car a few years earlier.

But, for the *Community Guide*, in this time of divided national echo-chamber politics, I’d rather shine a light on the way the arriving counterculturalists interfaced with the locals: by working side by side on practical things. Many locals were of a conservative persuasion, like flat-top-coiffed Don Yerion who owned the Forest Knolls gas station, and weren’t keen on the idea of all these long-haired men without traditional jobs, and their rainbow-clad wives and naked children, arriving en masse into the SGV. So my dad



Ron Thelin with Marsha, Kira and Jasper at home in Forest Knolls, from a postcard urging voters to write Ron in as a Board of Supervisors candidate for the 1972 campaign.

would sit at the bar inside the service station (where the Farm Stand is now) and drink a beer with Don.

This type of direct community engagement (instead of staying siloed) led to creating a community garden on the strip of land between Sir Francis Drake Blvd. and Castro Street in Forest Knolls, which led to workdays to turn the downtown dump area into a children’s playground, which led to Lagunitas School’s upper campus play structure rebuilding days, and soon enough a softball team was spawned for more social crosspollination: “The Valley Eagles.” Bolinas joined the league, too. Their team name: “The Bolinas Eaglefuckers.”



Painting of the Red House done in 2011 by MOT

Such hearty rough and tumble collaboration continued. The “Gratis Builders” came together, a green teeshirt with a beer can logo as their unifying principle, and built a house of innovative wheelchair-friendly design for Aneice Taylor in Woodacre. (See story on page 137.) When the Red House needed major home improvement (a not-infrequent occurrence), my parents organized The Siege of the Red House. Structuring the workers with military nomenclature, Dad was the general, with lieutenants shoring up excavation, carpentry and masonry brigades, and captains and sergeants deployed across the property (I was a private, helping choose stones with a good flat side for a retaining wall). Scores of family members and friends camped out at the house, cooking, partying and planning in the evenings.

These connections are extant today, many now codified and fully accessible through the SGVCC, instead of only for those that happen to get wind of events and opportunities. The best raffle prize every time is winning a day’s labor from half a dozen people to come work in one’s yard. My wife Mia won the Garden Goddesses a few years back. It was fantastic!

I’m so proud to be a native son, and to be raising my own kids born here in the Valley with a partner who grew up here, too. God bless us, every one.



## Profile: Peter Lind

by Cindy Purkey

Editor's note: *Pete Lind currently lives in Woodacre. Pete is an amazing drummer and has collaborated with piano player John Allair for over 60 years as well as playing regular gigs throughout the Bay Area. Pete's daughter Cindy Purkey, her husband Jim, and granddaughters Emma and Stella live in Woodacre. Pete's daughter Jenny Tabarracci lives in Novato with her husband Mike.*

Pete was born in South San Francisco in 1939, but lived in Marin County from the time he was 13 years old.

In 1952, at the age of 13, Pete lived and worked on the Farley Ranch in Nicasio, which was owned by Bud and Celina Farley. He slept in the tack room and would get up early each morning to round up, on horseback, the 300 head of cattle for milking. Other jobs on the farm included weaning calves, cleaning horse stalls and bucking, mowing, lifting and loading, and filling the barn with hay.

"You really get to the know the personalities and faces of each cow," he remembers with a smile. "Like Squeaky, who always tried to sneak back in after eating and get another meal." Pete and the other hands on the ranch would attach each cow to the milking machine twice a day. It was a risky job as you had to be careful not to be kicked. The goal of the farm was all about gathering food for the animals and raising them.

After the milking was done, the Farley family, Pete, and the rest of the farmhands would gather for breakfast together. Among the hands were Bill Irving and his sons Dwayne and Scott. The Irvings owned a ranch next door. It was located behind the intersection of what is now Platform Bridge Rd. and Point Reyes/Petaluma Rd., right past the Nicasio Dam. There was no dam there at the time, just pasture. The little bridge you see today when the dam is

low was the little road then. Sir Francis Drake Blvd. did not exist then.

On his days off, Pete would often go into Point Reyes Station and shop at the General Store. Today it is the vacant historical Grandi Building.

Pete spent a year on the farm until he was to attend high school. He could have attended Tomales, Drake, Tamalpais or San Rafael. He chose San Rafael, as his friends from the farm, the Irvings, were going there.

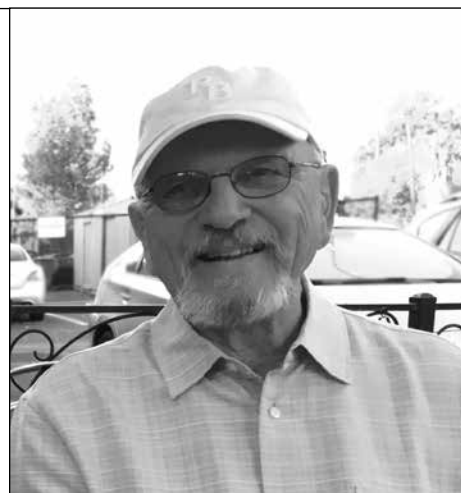
Pete's step-family was the DelaMontanya family. Maude Gardner (his step-great grandma) was a real estate agent and sold many properties in the town of Woodacre in the beginning. His step-grandfather was Lloyd DelaMontanya. He was a Woodacre fire chief. The family lived around the back side of what is today the Woodacre ballfield, and Pete has fond memories of spending Thanksgivings there.

Other points of interest:

The golf course was a cattle ranch owned by the Roy Family of Roy's Redwoods.

Rancho Nicasio was there (early 1950s), very much the same as today.

Nicasio was initially going to be the county seat (center of Marin) instead of San Rafael.



(Photo courtesy Cindy Purkey)

## Contentious Valley Meeting Late 1960s

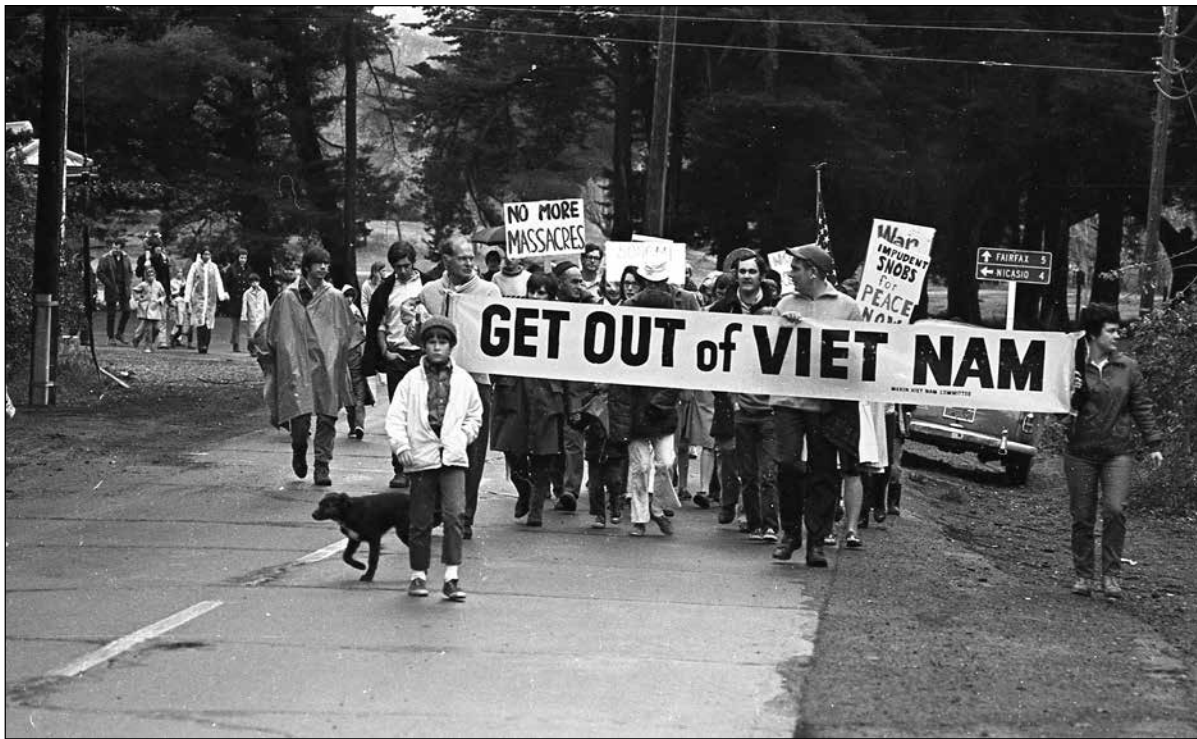


"These photos are taken from a series of photos of the Concerned Citizens Committee when they appeared in force at a School Board meeting advocating for a sheriff substation instead of a Community Center in order to protect the Valley against 'the dirty Hippies!'" recalls Jean Berensmeier. (Photos by Harlan Floyd)



# The Valley Speaks Out!

*These photos were taken by Harlan Floyd of a protest march through the Valley in the early 1970s. They depict the opposition to the Vietnam War. Among the marchers is Gary Giacomini (at top, facing page) who was elected to the Marin County Board of Supervisors in 1972.*



*(Photo by Harlan Floyd)*



*(Photo by Harlan Floyd)*



The Valley has a long history of activism and marches. On the first day of the Iraq War in 2003, students of the Lagunitas Middle School made their protest by walking out of class and marching to Fairfax. In early 2017, Open Classroom students from the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades marched in support of International Women's Day.



(Photo by Harlan Floyd)



(Photo by Anita Collison)



(Photo by Anita Collison)



## Frannie's Beer Joint

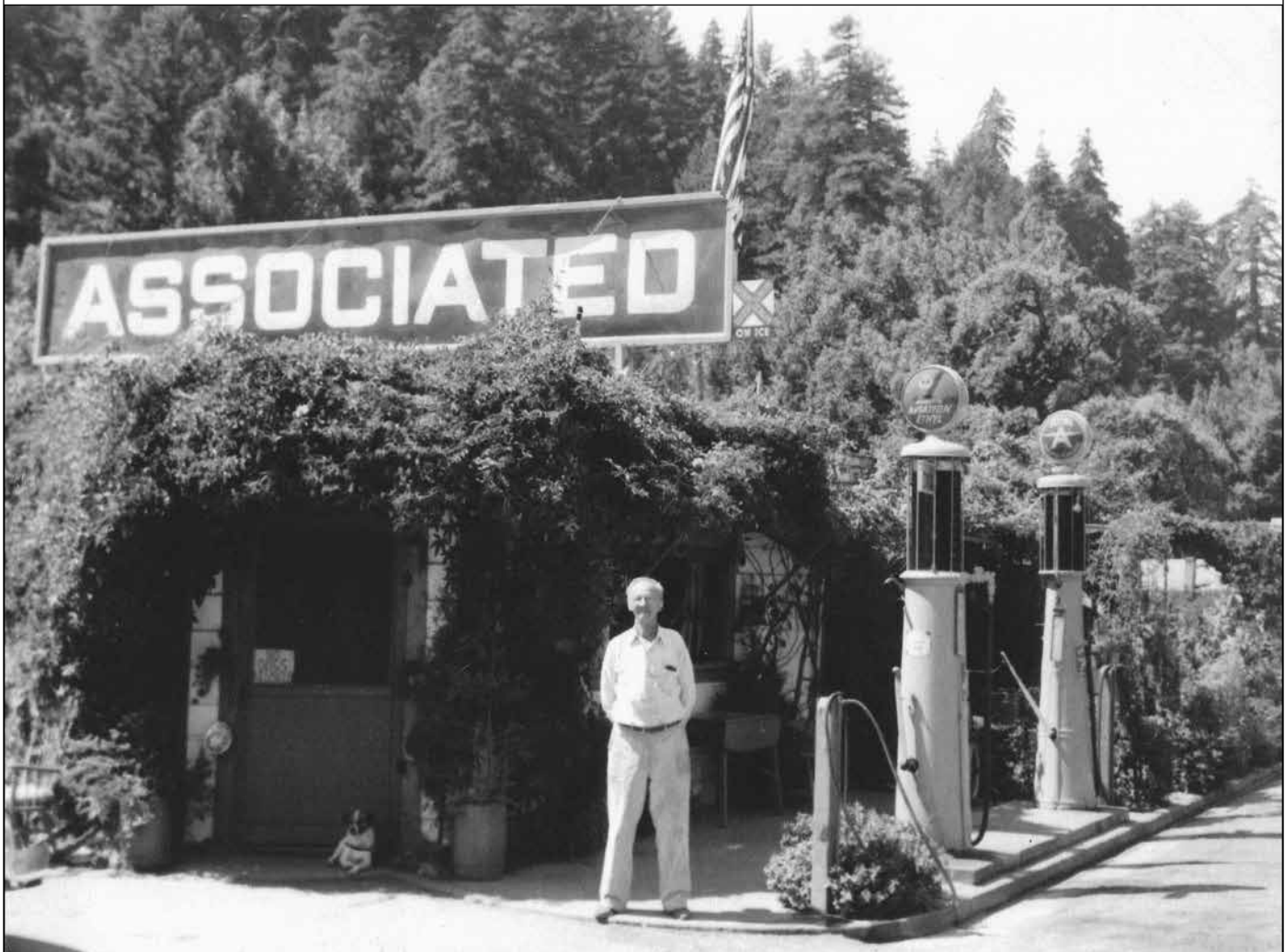
*by Lenna Matzen as told to Bruce Wick*

Pop Conrad and Frances Tedsen were “very good” friends. Frances was a former madam here in Woodacre, where she had the girls and ran rum during prohibition. (There was another “house” in the Valley at the trailer court before the Yerions bought it. They had a peep hole in the side of the store so they could see if an angry wife was coming.)

Frances ran her beer “joint” until the mid-sixties. Her eyesight was bad by then. Beer (that’s all she sold) was a quarter. She would put the beer in front of a patron and keep her hand on it until she could feel the money.

She lived in the west side of the building. The entrance to the bar was through the corner door. The bar itself was facing the door; to the left was the bathroom, cesspool.

Frances left the bar to Elmer “Skipper” Schivo about 1965 or so. About 1975 Skipper sold or gave it to Frank “Speck” and Dorothy McAuliffe, owners of Speck’s Irish Coffee in Lagunitas. Skipper tended bar for them. For a short time, Fay McNeily had use of the building and a bike shop also used it.



*“Pop” Conrad in front of the Flying A Gas Station and Frannie’s Beer Joint at the corner of Railroad Avenue and then-Sir Francis Drake Blvd. (today’s San Geronimo Valley Dr.). There were two other gas stations at the time, one in San Geronimo, called the Bull Rushes, between the church and golf course, and one in Lagunitas. The building’s current owner, Bruce Wick, plans to convert it into a recording studio.*





# Stone Soup

June 2009

## I Remember Forest Knolls, The Early Years

by *Walter Schivo*

My parents purchased a summer home on Arroyo Road in the 1940s, so every weekend and summer was spent there with my sister. There were four other family homes up by us. My father would commute to the produce district at three in the morning. I fished, hiked, hunted in the Valley, swam at the Woodacre country club and Shafter's, and picnicked at Camp Taylor.

My cousins Al and Mary Schivo purchased a house on Arroyo Road and built a barn and had show horses. I helped Al put the chain fence in front when I was around 14 and was paid \$20 and two sleeping bags. My other cousins Clarence and Georgia also purchased a home in Forest Knolls and played Whist.

One neighbor, Red Marselli, had a white horse he would ride, and every kid thought he was Hopalong Cassidy. Also next to us was Dorthy Sturla, assistant to A. P. Ginnani at Bank of America, Amelio Pacini, owner of Amelio's restaurant with his brother-in-law Ed Duinucci the chef. They would have some minor movie stars come up from LA on some weekends. I remember Muisha Haur being one of them. They used to make homemade wine. The Riley family lived up the road and Dr. Schmidt with 10 kids lived by us and added a pool.

Johnny Nielsen was the postmaster and we chased raccoons at night with his dogs over by the dam spillway. My uncle Elmer (Skipper) showed Speck how to make Irish Coffee and later

became their bartender. The place eventually burned down. "Old Pete" was a handy man and lived in a trailer across from Speck McAuliffe's bar in Lagunitas. He had a horse called Lightfoot he would rent to me for \$1 a day and I rode all over the place and would groom the horse afterward. One day I decided to mount up and ride and shoot my deer rifle, like in the movies, at a hawk flying over, but the horse bolted, the reins broke, and Lightfoot didn't stop running for a good mile.

I used to go up to Mt. Barnabe and got acquainted with Bill Humphries and his family. He was a radio operator W6ZUB and encouraged me to get my license KB6BKN, which I later did. The Bianchis, who lived below us, had chickens and made cheese, and there were cows grazing in their meadow. Their son Joe was the first milk delivery man (Lucas Valley Dairy) and would deliver to us. There were two gas stations, two grocery stores, Roberts (which later burned) and Roma Market owned by Sterling Witt.

There were two seasonal summer camps: Greggs' on the hill and Camp Lagunitas owned by Ed and Olga Barbano, both school teachers; he was a runner up in shotput at the Olympics. I got a job there at age 17 as a camp counselor and my assistant was Jan Wenner who later founded *Rolling Stone Magazine*.

On July 4<sup>th</sup> my father would bring up a large potato sack full of fire crackers, and we children and adults would all sit out in front lighting them for hours. Yes, I have some great memories of a most favorable time growing up with a loving family life and good friends.



*Forest Knolls view of Forest Dr. from Sanchez Rd. Some of these homes can be recognized today. (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)*





February 2002

## Phil Arnot

by Jean Berensmeier

*At the time of this article, Phil, a native Californian, was 77 going on 50 and living in a cabin in Lagunitas built by his grandparents. He has been a teacher, union leader, air force pilot, antiwar activist, runner, backpacker, mountaineer, photographer and writer.*

### Stone Soup: Your earliest Valley memories?

“My childhood summers in Lagunitas are rich with memories of walks in the neighborhood; on the slopes of Mt. Barnabe, gathering huckleberries on a trail just east of where the bridge on Mountain View crosses Lagunitas Creek and having huckleberry muffins for dinner. A love for adventure and the outdoors was the great inheritance I received from my grandmother. I remember the fire road we loved to walk, deep into the southern reaches of what we then called Lagunitas Canyon before Peters Dam was built and the filling of Kent Lake made Lagunitas Canyon only a memory. That cabin was built in 1926, house and land costing only about \$4000. I recall riding the train from Sausalito to Lagunitas a number of times. My mother would put 5-year-old me on the train in Sausalito, and my grandmother would meet me at Lagunitas. The Lagunitas Store was both grocery store and post office in the late '20s, and as far as I can remember, into the late '30s or even early '40s.

### SS: What are some of your recollections about the years you spent in the military in WWII?

“I was 18 years old when I enlisted, 19 when I graduated as pilot and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant from flight school and, at 20, too young to legally drink or vote, but legally qualified to fly bombing missions over Germany. I didn't think of myself as young then. Today I have a considerably different perspective. I remember devising an escape kit that I kept with me. It was a chest pack that contained maps, food and drugs in the event I ever went down. Somehow, I had the confidence that I'd get through unhurt. I flew bombing raids over Germany aiming at military targets. Some of the bombs we dropped not only “injured” civilians, but killed them. This was not deliberate, but happened inadvertently because Germany's military targets were almost always located inside large cities. Later I happened to see a film, *The Memphis Belle*, about a B-17 in WWII. As I relived the content, saw the cabin interiors (startlingly accurate in detail) and kids (like myself) dying so young, I broke

down. It was then I realized how very steeled I had kept myself since those war days. This released the fear and grief that I had repressed so long . . . it simply poured out.”

### SS: You're anti-war?

“I am opposed to war and have been to many rallies, marches and demonstrations. I was outspoken at a time when there were only a handful speaking out. It was embarrassing for my wife . . . social engagements were often awkward . . . it was a difficult time. But the movement grew. A great memory was participating in the Peace March in SF in 1970 and looking back from the crest of the hill. There was a sea of thousands of people joined together opposing the Vietnam War. I must say that I am most proud of having spoken to over 50 groups, ranging from 5 to 500, as a volunteer speaker for Physicians for Social Responsibility. I went to Nicaragua to prepare a fundraising sound-slide program for an American health project. I traveled in areas where there was danger of Contra ambush. I lucked out and the slide program helped raise \$50,000 for the project. I write many letters to politicians and consistently ask friends to do the same. I'm reminded of the adage, ‘What we've learned from history is that we've learned nothing from history.’”

### SS: What got you into teaching?

“Two things got me into teaching. My idealism and the fact that the free summers gave me time to indulge in my love for wilderness and the mountains. I could have had my famous dad's medical practice, but I saw that his every hour was taken up with his work (which he loved), but that wasn't for me. I went into secondary school teaching and taught U.S. and World History and International Relations. The teacher's watchword was to “open young minds.” In the '80s, it was “to raise the level of consciousness.” Looking back at the conservatism in those days I am amazed at the free rein I had in my teaching. I covered the traditional curriculum and moved right into the controversial issues of the day: about war per se, its causes and results. There were units with pro and con speakers on the draft, nuclear power and the Vietnam War. I was accused of “selling America short.” My response was that “I'm not selling America or anything else . . . I'm telling the truth.” Once I teamed up with two other teachers, and we did a unit with 150 students where we simulated a model of the UN. The kids learned to politically represent their adopted nation so they could represent that country in the General Assembly. A group called Parents Under God objected, calling the UN “satanic.” I invited them to observe our “General Assembly.” They did and fussed, fumed and blew a lot of smoke, but it never went anywhere.”

### SS: Why unionism?

“In my long teaching career there were many administra-



tive policies that were adverse to public education. Class sizes were excessive, salaries were low, hiring and firing policies were unfair, and non-tenured teachers had it hard. A strong teachers union was the only tool there was to deal with these problems. When merit pay was proposed, we strongly opposed it because we saw its use as a political device by administrators to reward the compliant teacher and punish those teachers who had the courage to speak out against unjust administrative policies. I recall that in the spring there was never enough money to meet our pay demands, but at the end of the summer money always materialized for other uses. We wryly called the phenomenon the Miracle of James St., which was where school decisions of this type took place.”

**SS: Have you really been a runner all your life?**

“I like to say that I started running when I was two and first said ‘No’ to my mother. In 1939, I wanted to be on the high school team and wear a uniform. I tried out unsuccessfully for the hurdles and floundered around in some other events that were known only by their last names, and I tried the 440 and came in third. I not only made the team and got a uniform, but I graduated to ‘Phil.’ And, of course, nothing succeeds like success. The 440 became my event. I was second at All City as a Junior and won it as a Senior. This was at Lowell High School, which in those days was the academic citadel in SF along with a fine athletic tradition. (If a little name dropping is permissible, Art Hoppe was in my class and Pierre Salinger six months behind.) In Masters Track, I had the 5th fastest 800 meter time in the world in my age group (55-59) in 1980. Was second in the U.S. Nationals that year and won the Pan-American in Los Angeles setting the meet record. Had the third fastest 400 meter time in the U.S. in 1981 and placed second in U.S. Nationals 400 meters at Eugene, Oregon, in 1984, my last year of competition. I like to run alone and generally work out at Pt. Reyes, Taylor Park or on the Marin College track. Last month I ran 100 miles, but I notice I’m slowing up . . . doing between a 7:10 or 7:30 mile now.”

**SS: What got you into backpacking and mountaineering?**

“Besides those wonderful summers in Lagunitas, there would be the school year Sunday hikes on Mt. Tam in the late ’30s and early ’40s. We’d start up Tam from Mill Valley and circle around ending in downtown Ross. We’d board the orange clang-clang train to Sausalito and then grab the ferry home to SF. The ferries were great fun in those days with lots of immigrants singing native songs, playing music, wearing lederhosen . . . it was wonderful! It was only natural that these adventures would become more ambitious hikes that evolved into backpacking and literally elevated into mountain climbing. Ended my last,

and 80<sup>th</sup>, 7-14 day backpacking trip as professional guide last summer. Best mountaineering accomplishments were reaching the summits of Mt. McKinley (20,350’) in 1975 and Huyana Potosi (19,995’) in the Bolivian Andes at age 63 in 1987.”

**SS: What got you interested in Point Reyes?**

“My introduction to the land that was to become Point Reyes National Seashore was in 1933. My grandmother knew some people who lived in Bear Valley and, because of her infectious charm and enthusiasm for nature, she was given virtual carte blanche to this then-remote ranch country. Tagging along with her, I got to see and appreciate something of this area as early as age nine. Little did I know that I would someday come to explore the whole area until I knew intimately the high hills overlooking the sea, the deep forests, the perennially green meadows, the sandy beaches, the steep cliffs rising abruptly off the beach, the waterfalls plunging into the sea, the wildlife, the ocean caves and the springtime wind that sets the hillside grasses and flowers to dancing.

Writing *Exploring Point Reyes* was the logical extension of this experience. I wanted to open the eyes of people in this large metropolitan area to the great wilderness experience they have right here in their own backyard.”



*Posing by the “ADOPT-A-TRAIL Friends of Phil Arnot” sign at Bear Valley, Point Reyes National Seashore*



# The Valley in the 1940s and 1950s: Grace Dickson Tolson's Memories of the Valley

*As told to Carol Whitmire and Petra Toriumi and compiled by Carol Whitmire. (Photos courtesy of Dickson Ranch)*

In 1943, when Grace was born, Dickson Ranch was a 500+ acre working dairy ranch, with cows, chickens, and pigs to feed the family, and horses for the cowboys. The ranch, together with adjacent land, had been purchased in 1853 by Adolph Mailliard, who had bought it with some \$50,000 of his wife's money. (She was Annie Ward Mailliard, sister of Julia Ward Howe who wrote the "Battle Hymn of the Republic.") Most of the Valley settlers had come from back east, including William J. Dickson who, with two of his brothers, Calvin and George, came to the Valley and found work with Mailliard, running his dairy and raising cattle. "Mailliard borrowed money from everyone," and ultimately had to settle his debts by selling off parcels of his land holdings. William, Calvin and George each got ranches, and, in 1864, a deed to the 500+ acre parcel on which Grace was born almost 80 years later, was signed over to William, her great grandfather. William's brother Calvin was an agent for a bank, and he bought what was known as the "upper ranch," which now includes the Flanders Ranch.

William had come to San Francisco from Vermont, leaving his wife, Jenny Barr, behind while he settled. Jenny told William that she wouldn't move west until he had a "proper" house for her, and the original Dickson ranch

house was built in 1870. Today, that house has housed six generations of the William Dickson family.

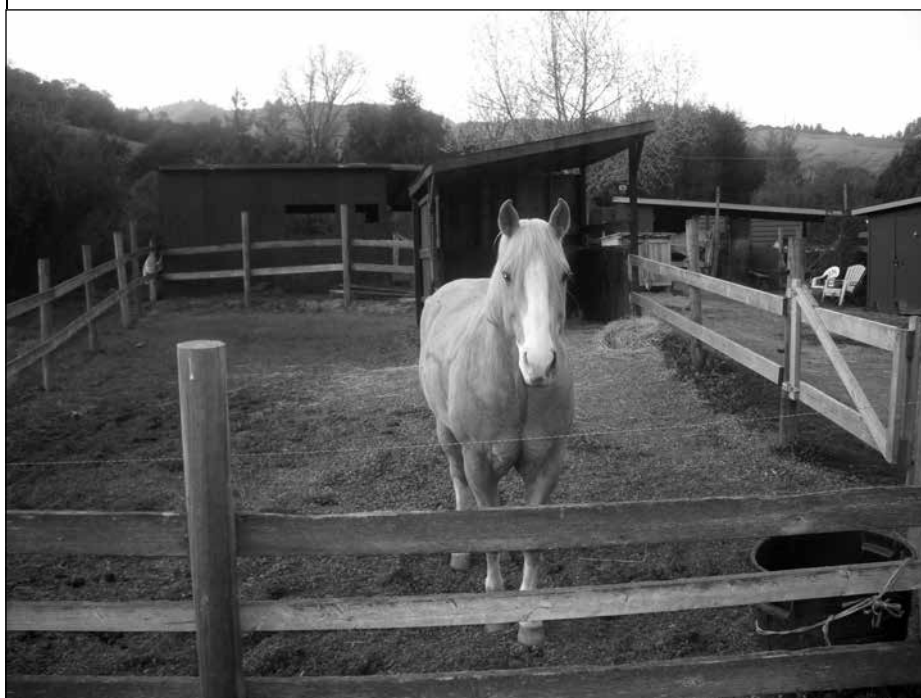
The original Mailliard Ranch had a huge house (known as the Mailliard Mansion), three barns, a slaughter house, and bunkhouses as well as various dairy structures. Grace's grandfather, Fred Dickson, inherited the ranch and dairy, which was known as the Woodacre Dairy.

When Grace was a child, one of the original bunkhouses and one of the Mailliard barns remained on the family ranch, which by then was owned by her father (Bill, aka Mel) and his wife, Thelma. The home, now occupied by Thelma Dickson, and Grace and Chuck Tolson, was built in 1941. Grace now runs the horse boarding business from her kitchen there as well. One of the Mailliard bunkhouses, a portion of the slaughter house, and one of the old barns are still at the western end of the ranch.

When Grace was growing up, she was only permitted to play in the front yard of their home. She found out why when she was 7 or 8 years old. One day she snuck over to the hay barn, crawled up on bales of hay, and watched one of the cowboys trying to break a horse.

Unfortunately, the horse got the better of the cowboy, who was thrown and badly hurt. Grace never told her parents what she saw when she broke their rule by going beyond the home yard, but ever after she felt that her transgression caused the cowboy's injury.

What is now Railroad Avenue had, at least as late as the 1920s, been railroad tracks. Many of the houses here were summer cabins, and fathers of the summer families travelled to and from the City (San Francisco) by train every day. At that time what is now Central was the main street, and the post office was located approximately at its current location adjacent to the tracks facing Dickson Ranch. By the 1940s, when Grace was growing up, the tracks had been replaced



by Railroad Avenue, and mail was delivered by truck, but Grace remembers Ellen Clark, daughter of the postmistress at the time of the train, telling her about how, when the mail came in, the engineer slowed the train way down and tossed the mailbag out the door as he chugged past the post office.

Shortly after the turn of the (20th) century, the Mailliard children parceled out and sold more than 40 lots in Woodacre. Cottages were built as well as a grocery store which was located at the corner of Railroad and Carson. In 1911, the majority of the Valley was sold by the Mailliards to the Lagunitas Development Company, who subdivided the property and created most of the lots that exist in today's four villages. (Many of those lots were raffled off at San Francisco movie theaters in the 1920s.) When the train still ran, there was a grocery store located just proximate to the train stop at Central and Railroad but Grace remembers a grocery store, the White Spot, much closer to the ranch.

Adolph and his wife Anne Mailliard had built an 18-room mansion with 12 fireplaces where today the Woodacre Improvement Club is. The mansion also had tennis courts and swimming pool. In 1938, residents of the Valley formed the Woodacre Improvement Club, and obtained use of the Mailliard mansion and property, including the tennis courts and large pool divided into three sections of varying depths. The mansion was the site of wonderful activities and parties as Grace was growing up. The one that Grace remembers most happened the year that Bill (aka Mel) and Thelma Dickson were chairs of the Improvement Club committee, and produced an incredible fundraiser—a full Aquacade, “The Wizard of Oz,” and an antique car show that filled what is now the baseball field. Grace was the Tin Woodsman in the Aquacade, and stood so still that everyone thought she wasn't real! There was also a jungle ride where human “animals”

jumped out to give the kids a thrill, many exhibits, and a barbecue. Both Grace and Petra (now Toriumi, and five years Grace's junior) remember all the fun parties and activities at the mansion, but all that ended in 1958 when the mansion burned down. The Improvement Club was rebuilt at the site of the mansion and remains a community focus today.

In the early 1950s Grace got her first job, replacing her brother, Mel, delivering the *IJ* (*Independent Journal*) on the flats. In those days, paper routes were boys' jobs only, but Grace was able simply to take over Mel's route. She started out by delivering the papers on horseback, but one day the horse ran away with her, scattering all her papers, and Grace switched to her bicycle for transportation.

When Grace was 12, Dr. Nutting, a family friend, asked the enterprising girl to take care of his horse on the ranch. He paid her \$32.50 per month, which included feed. The ranch was no longer a working dairy by this time (mid-1950s), so the family brought in all their hay from the Dickson Brothers Ranch at Black Point; Grace's \$32.50 was pretty much clear profit. This was the beginning of Grace's horse career. As a young teenager, Grace expanded her horse boarding business to include a string of rental horses from Tahoe who wintered at Dickson Ranch. Ida was the matriarch of the horse pack. At least once a week, Ida would barge through the corral, gather up her string, and in the dead of the night march them over to a neighbor's garden for a midnight snack, and then on a neighborhood walk up to the Fire station. At 3AM, 13 year-old Grace and her dog Puppet would be chasing after the horses; she would round them up, and with Ida in the lead, bring them back to the ranch and into the dilapidated corral. Years later, Grace's mother, Thelma, mused to Grace that she wondered how she had let the young girl go out alone in the middle of the night.

Summing up her memories of the '40s and '50s in the Valley, Grace noted that this was a simpler time when all the young families did things together—Kite Days, Camp Taylor, home parties with games, square dancing at Forest Farm Camp, and travelling dinners. “We were outside all the time and made our own fun. We were really creative.” That fun and creativity can be seen throughout the six decades that Grace has been a leader in the Valley.



# Idyllic Childhood Years

by Petra Toriumi

My parents, Howard and Irene Martin, were both raised in Montana and came to San Francisco during WWII shortly after marrying. They bought a two-room hunting cabin on three acres of redwoods at the very top of Conifer Road in Woodacre in 1941. They would work on it over the summer weekends and moved in December of that year. The floors were cement and were covered with Navajo rugs from Montana. They later built a corner fireplace; Dad did the outside in cinder blocks, and Mom the inside with flagstone. I was born in February, 1948. I spent the first eight years of my life on top of Conifer Road.

There was one other family on top of Carson Road, the Dorais, with five kids. We all played together and are close to this day, even though everyone is spread afar. The older boy, Mike, used to ride his bike to Drake High School in the early '50s through the old railroad tunnel.



*Cabin 1948 last house on Conifer toward ridge (Photo courtesy of Petra Toriumi)*

My father was the Dean of Business Administration at Golden Gate University in San Francisco. He drove to Fairfax every day and connected on the Greyhound bus. My mother shopped at Alpine Market, Fairfax, on the corner of Broadway and Bolinas. I always thought that it was rather bohemian of them to move up into the middle of nowhere under the redwoods with hardly anyone around. But it was oh—so wonderful!

Dean de la Montanya was our milkman (Lucas Valley Milk), and during the summer, since we were last on his route, he would dump his ice bags out, and we had huge chunks of ice to play with. He also, on many occasions during the winter, would pull my mother's car out of the mud. Lloyd de la Montanya kept his cattle up on the hill just beyond our house. The road was blocked by a cattle gate (we called it the "bull fence") that we were forbidden to go beyond because of the bulls he kept up there. Lloyd would drive by our house in his jeep once a week to check on his cattle and would wave to my mother with his left arm, his only arm. He lost his right arm in a hunting accident when he was a kid.

We had a 170 pound great blue dane named Caesar. Caesar had the run of the hills (which was probably the cause of his demise in 1953, strychnine poison). One night my parents had company for dinner, and Caesar came scratching at the door. Dad opened it for him, and he came prancing in proud as pie and dropped a bloody deer head in the middle of the floor in front of the company. During hunting season (and after) lots of hunters came up and shot illegal deer and cut the heads off and left them—a trophy for Caesar.

Every Christmas, my mom would bundle us up and Dad and my uncle Jim (who moved from Montana to a cabin on Conifer and Fir in 1951) would hike up in the hills and cut down our Christmas trees. Trucks would come up from Dickson Ranch for their trees, also. It was very much fun! During the winter, very few people lived up in the hills; they were mostly summer homes and were vacant.

I went to Lagunitas School from kindergarten through second grade. My two biggest memories were the Mayday dances that each class did (first grade was a marching dance to "Anchors Away" in sailors' outfits), and then we all had a partner for dancing around a maypole. I also remember crawling under our desks with our hands over the tops of our heads during bomb drills. It took years for me to get over being terrified of a war.



*Mrs. Guthrie's Kindergarten Class, 1953 (Photo courtesy of Petra Toriumi)*

We moved from Woodacre to San Anselmo in 1956. Dad was unhappy with the constant bickering with the School Board, and also the family was growing and two rooms were becoming too small. They had started logging Bates Canyon, and trucks would also go by on their way up to the new Kent Lake Reservoir that was in progress.

Those were idyllic childhood years (just touched upon) which I was fortunate enough to give to my three daughters. Right after my husband Gerry and I were married in 1972, we were lucky enough to be able to purchase a home out here in Woodacre and raise our girls. We've been here ever since, and I delight in hiking the hills and going by our "forts" in the redwoods where I grew up.



## The Anaya Family and the Valley

by Anne McClain with help from Marty Meade

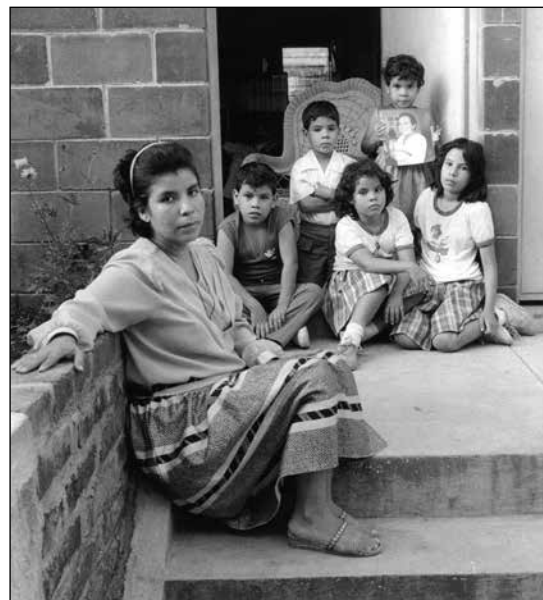
If the Valley were to have a sister community, a good case could be made for El Salvador. During the civil war in El Salvador the Valley became deeply connected to that country. Through Marin County's Interfaith Task Force, former Valley resident Kate Bancroft became a "human shield" for human rights activist Herbert Anaya and made several trips to El Salvador to work with him. The death squads finally caught up with Herbert on October 26, 1987, murdering him in front of his children on their way to school. Kate immediately returned to El Salvador and helped Mirna, his wife, and the children leave for safety in Canada.

After several months there, Mirna asked Kate for help with the children as she would be going to Costa Rica to work with CODEHUCA (The Commission for the Defense of Human Rights in Central America) and to make a new home for the family. Five children is a lot for a single mom living in a one bedroom apartment in Forest Knolls, so Kate put the call out to the Valley community for families willing to take in the children. As is so often the case, the Valley community came through and the Anaya children (Rosa, Gloria, Edith, Miguel and Rafa) became a permanent part of the Valley family, living here and in Costa Rica until returning to El Salvador.

Even after peace accords were signed and the Anayas returned, it was not yet safe for them. Marty Meade writes, "Mirna, who continued as a lawyer, was stopped by six men in masks, who ordered her out of the car. Mirna decided instead to drive off, and in doing so the men fired 12 rounds wounding Miguel who was in the back seat of the car. KPFA reported the story, word quickly spread in the Valley, and money was gathered from dedicated Valley people to bring the children back to safety." Valley host families over the years were, Alan and Lynn Charne, Tom and Amy Valens, Kathy (Perkins) and Tom Eller, Teryl (George) and Bob Densmore, and Marty and Bud Meade.

Over the ensuing years the Valley community continued to support the family emotionally and financially as needed. The relationships have been maintained, weddings attended and births celebrated. An update from Marty says, "Mirna Anaya Perla became the head of the Supreme Court in El Salvador. Gloria is now a lawyer working with the Central American Union. Edith is a medical doctor working with her people. Rosa is an internationally known expert on human rights conditions within the gang community. Miguel is an IT worker studying to be a psychologist, and Rafa is also a lawyer. Altogether they have 9 children between them."

For more on this story you can read the book, *When the Dogs Ate Candles, A Time in El Salvador*, by Bill Hutchinson, 1998.



*The Anaya Family*

## A Romantic Nicasio Story

By Jody (Cooper) Martin

When I was in my 40s, I was widowed and living two miles up a dirt road in Nicasio with four sons. I loved my home, and had no intention of moving after my husband died, despite some suggestions from my parents and sister that I would be lonely there. No way. I was near my friends and very involved in the Nicasio community. My sister commented that I would certainly never meet anyone new in such a small country town. After a couple of years, a single man moved in just up the road, and we both had horses and began riding together regularly. In about two months he asked me out to dinner, and we began spending more time together.

After another year of fun times, trips with and without my boys, and many more horseback rides, he asked me to pack a picnic and join him on a morning horseback ride up the hill behind my house. When we were half way up, a small airplane circled overhead, then dropped a package with a small yellow parachute. When we rode up to check it out, there was a box with my name on it. When I opened it, there were many flowers and a lovely card asking me to marry him. Over our picnic lunch, we decided to get married the next day at a family party, and surprise my extended family. That was 28 years ago this month, and we are still having a great time together. I was so lucky to marry a man who loves being in our beautiful valley as much as I do, and to be able to be in the same home for 42 years and still counting.



## The Lagunitas Brewery

by Bob Baker

It should come as no surprise to anyone in the Valley that the now world-famous Lagunitas Brewery had its origins in Lagunitas. How this came about, though, is an interesting story.

Tony Magee and his wife Carissa began brewing in their home on Rodeo Drive at the suggestion of Tony's brother who worked at a brewpub in Oregon. Intrigued, Tony purchased a kit and gave it a try. His first attempt turned out to be "pretty vile," but fortunately for us, he brewed a second batch which he says "was transcendent." After perfecting a few recipes, he began selling his kegs to various West Marin establishments, including the Papermill Saloon, the Sand Dollar and the Pelican Inn.

Carissa soon tired of the boil overs on the kitchen stove, and after it actually caught fire one day just before Thanksgiving in '92, she "strongly suggested" Tony look for other venues for his brew house. Conveniently, the House of Richard building (now Marin Tack and Feed) in Forest Knolls had a space available, so Tony packed up his equipment and moved a few hundred yards down the road. (If you visit the Tap Room in Petaluma today, you will see the old House of Richard sign on the wall.)

With some used equipment scrounged from here and there, the nascent Lagunitas Brewery got going in earnest in early '93 in the back of this huge building, where the concrete floors could support the heavy fermenting tanks. It is here that the Pale Ale and Cappuccino Stout brews were developed. More and bigger equipment was further scrounged and the production rose dramatically.

Unfortunately, Tony had not considered that Valley septic systems and breweries are not always compatible, and one fateful day the "kettle runoff" overflowed the septic tank and into the little apartment next door. The yeasty bubbling ooze didn't stop there, but continued down Sir Francis Drake Blvd., which naturally alarmed the Forest Knolls denizens.

After this setback, Tony and Carissa were at a crossroads. . . . Should they fold and go back to their day jobs, or say "damn the torpedoes" and give it a go at another location? Fortunately for us beer lovers, they chose the latter, and moved the operation to Petaluma. They say it was the gorgeous drive along the West Marin back roads that was the deciding factor in their choice. That, and the fact they had a city sewer system. The rest, as they say, is history.

Today, Lagunitas Brews can be found in all 50 states, increasingly worldwide, and are a source of pride for us in the Valley.

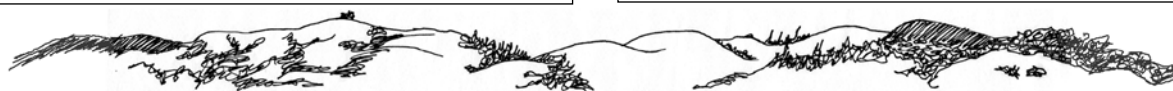
## Home Builder Harlan Floyd

by Anne McClain

Harlan Floyd documented some interesting times in the Valley through his photographs and some interesting Valley characters. He also built many homes in the Valley. It was a real treat to work on Harlan's crew. Not only did he hire and train women to work as carpenters, he made it a point to have women on his crew. (I was one!) He had a certain sensibility that he brought to the houses that he built, something of the English countryside. Shingles cut in special shapes and made into patterns was another hallmark of his work. When I worked for Harlan, Friday was chili cook-off day and the crew competed to see who made the best chili. Recipes were often the lunchtime topic of conversation.



(Photos by Harlan Floyd)





## Learning to Drive in Woodacre

by *Andy Giddings*

I'm probably different from most people when it comes to driving. In 1964, I took a short cut and secretly taught myself to drive at age 12. I started by learning the clutch of the '46 Willys backing it out of the garage then driving back in. It was Dad's hunting jeep, rough around the edges, but a solid, if hard-riding scamp, with a small 4 banger and mud and snow tires. My civic-minded parents [Marylou and Al] were forever attending evening meetings, giving me the opportunity to venture out on a small loop up Oak Grove, left on Elm, down Castle Rock, across Garden Way, left on Redwood then back on Crescent, and back to the safety of the garage. I was filled with the profound glee each and every time that only forbidden fruit seems to provide. After a year or so I started venturing onto dirt Salix and sometimes up to the top of Carson turning around on the Conifer dirt, heading up past the old Korth house on the way to Giacomini Preserve.

It was there on a rainy night my early driving years came to a halt. In slippery conditions I slid off the road and got stuck. I immediately put the jeep into low range and got out and locked the hubs. It was looking good rocking back and forth in the slop until on one of the reverse surges, the jeep jumped with good traction and smashed into a big log on the ground. The rear tailgate was smashed in and the spare tire mounted there was tweaked at a weird angle. I powered forward out of the mud, got out and recoiled in horror at the damage done.

The drive home was sheer terror, trying to think of any way to possibly explain the wrecked tailgate. In the end I threw myself on the mercy of Mom and she conspired with me to hide it from Dad, who luckily didn't pay much attention to the jeep until deer season, still six months away. Mom got our friend Red Scanlon to take the tailgate to his body shop and fix the damage. The funny thing was it came back primed in black and not the green it had been before. Dad never noticed a thing and I kept my promise to Mom to never drive again until I had my license. She employed a novel trick, hiding short match sticks against the rear tires and making sure they weren't broken if the jeep backed up.

My glory days of driving the quiet streets of Woodacre ended with a whimper and fortunately no serious damage to anything other than my overblown ego.

## My Mother's Story

by *Martha McNeil*

Ellen Redding was born in Nicasio, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1899. Her birthplace was in a house located directly across the square from St. Mary Church. The family moved to their grandfather's ranch two miles away off of Rancheria Road. The ranch buildings and the house were at the base of a steep hill opposite Shroyer Mountain.

Ellen, along with her siblings, attended Nicasio School. After graduation, she decided to be the first in her family to attend high school. That was a challenge! She could go to San Rafael High School if she had a relative to stay with. She stayed with an aunt and uncle, but the challenge was getting herself to San Rafael from Nicasio. In those days the transportation was horse, horse and wagon, maybe a car to the train at San Geronimo Station then board the train to San Rafael. Ellen attended during the week and went home on weekends.

After finishing high school she attended California State Normal School in Berkeley to get her teaching credential. She had an aunt and uncle to stay with, transportation about the same.

Her first teaching job was at Burdell School, Novato. As the crow flies Ellen's house was two very steep hills away from Burdell School. She rode her horse over these hills through the fog to her first teaching position. Her class was composed of several children from the same family.

She would stop to visit Agatha Ryan and her brother, Dan. They would enjoy a cup of tea together in the afternoon.

After a few months Ellen had the opportunity to buy her uncle's car with the money she had made so far.



*Train headed for the Valley alongside Sir Francis Drake Blvd. in Fairfax. Note the top of the building in the background that now houses the Coffee Roastery. (Photo courtesy of David Wilson)*



## The Swimming Pool at Forest Farm Summer Camp

*from a memoir by Frances Rundall Gregg, shared by Susan Gregg Conard, with thanks to Margo Schmidt*

Harold and Frances Gregg bought more than 35 acres of property next to their house on Tamal Road, Forest Knolls, in 1944. This was to become the first multi-cultural, multi-racial private summer camp west of the Mississippi. Harold Gregg remodeled the barn with a kitchen, built platforms for tents, pens for animals, showers and toilets for boys and girls. Beginning with 17 campers ages 6 to 14 in 1945, by 1950, 75 to 80 were attending each summer, until the eventual closing of camp in 1977. Camp offered 3-, 6- and 9-week sessions in the years during World War II and after. Parents with means sent their children from Europe to escape reminders of WWII. Harold would pick up children at the San Francisco airport, train station, and bus depot. Lots of music, adventure and diversity were enjoyed at Forest Farm Summer Camp.

In the 1950s Joseph McCarthy's malice was spreading. Who were the Communists living among us? The FBI came to talk to Harold and took him away for questioning.



*(Photo from the Collection of Susan Gregg Conard)*

Harold and Frances sought counselors from the colleges and universities around the Bay Area. Many students were a long distance from home and looked for jobs locally for the summer. One counselor, Gloria, was an 18-year-old, Chinese-American student at University of California from San Francisco. She took her 6-year-old campers to the Woodacre swimming pool for their first day swimming lessons. Forest Farm camp was in its second year and our enrollment had doubled, but to invest in our own pool on the camp grounds?

At the gate Gloria was asked, "You're Chinese aren't you?" "Yes," she answered. "Well," with finality, "you can't



*Harold Gregg (center) with camp counselors (Photo from the Collection of Susan Gregg Conard)*

swim here! This pool is restricted!"

A few minutes later Harold and Frances drove into the parking lot to check on the campers' morning swimming lessons. Why was Gloria not with her campers? They found her outside the chain link fence that enclosed the pool area. Gloria's tears fell unheeded as she told how she tried to keep track of her five little charges playing in the water without their counselor. Harold stormed into the pool area. "OK, kids, lessons over for today. Quick, out of the pool!"

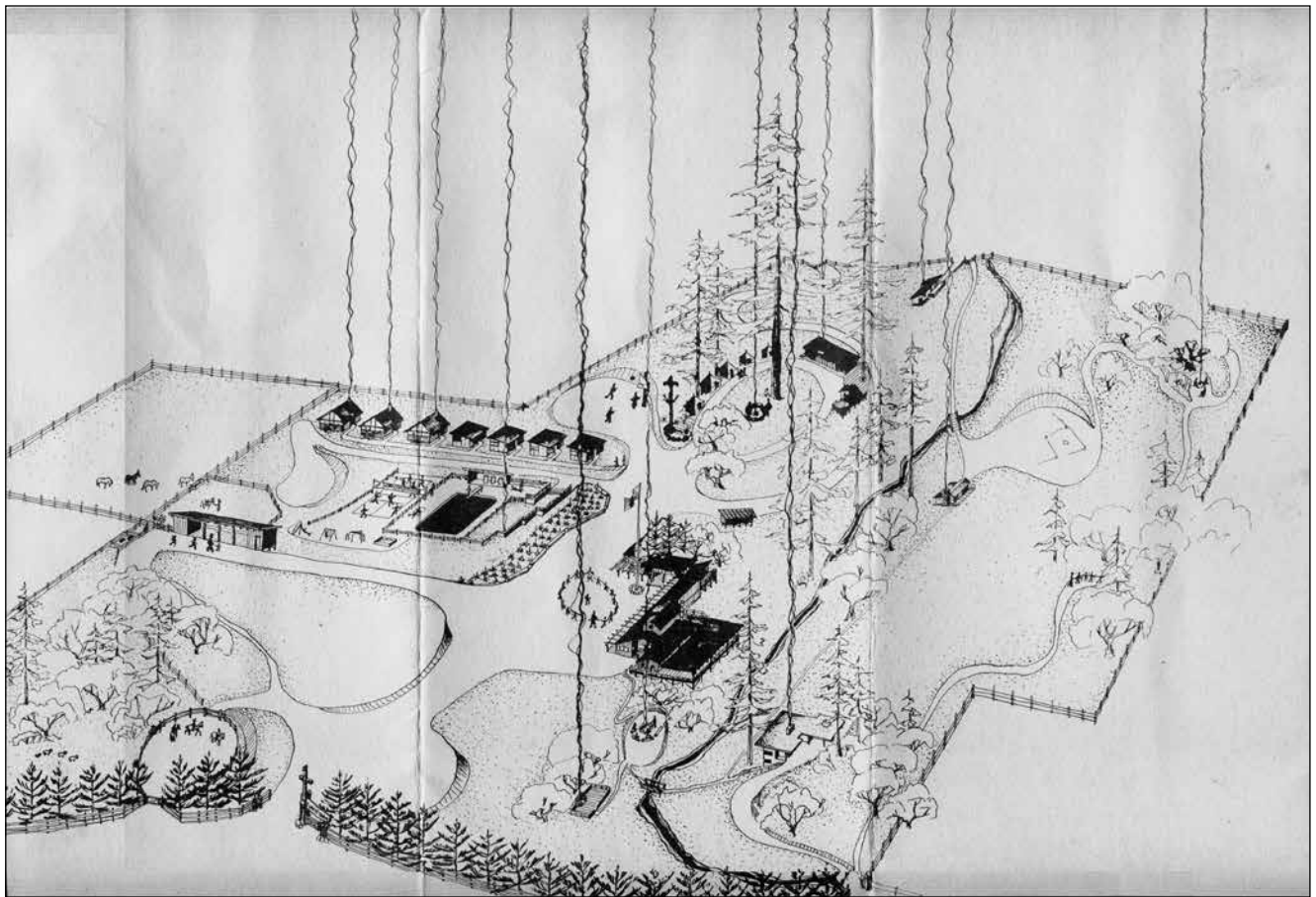
A surprised group of campers and counselors dressed in record time and were trucked back to camp.

"Everybody up on Oak Knoll, right away, important meeting." All raced up the hill to meet in a circle on the knoll, even the kitchen staff. "There was an unfortunate incident at the pool this morning." The discussion covered the incident, and the children were asked what could be done to solve the problem? After many suggestions, one little boy pointed to below the parking area, "Build our own pool." The making of a pool became the campers' focal point as they went through their day. Programs were rearranged, reprogramed. Digging and construction going on in the center of the camp proved to be a learning process in itself.

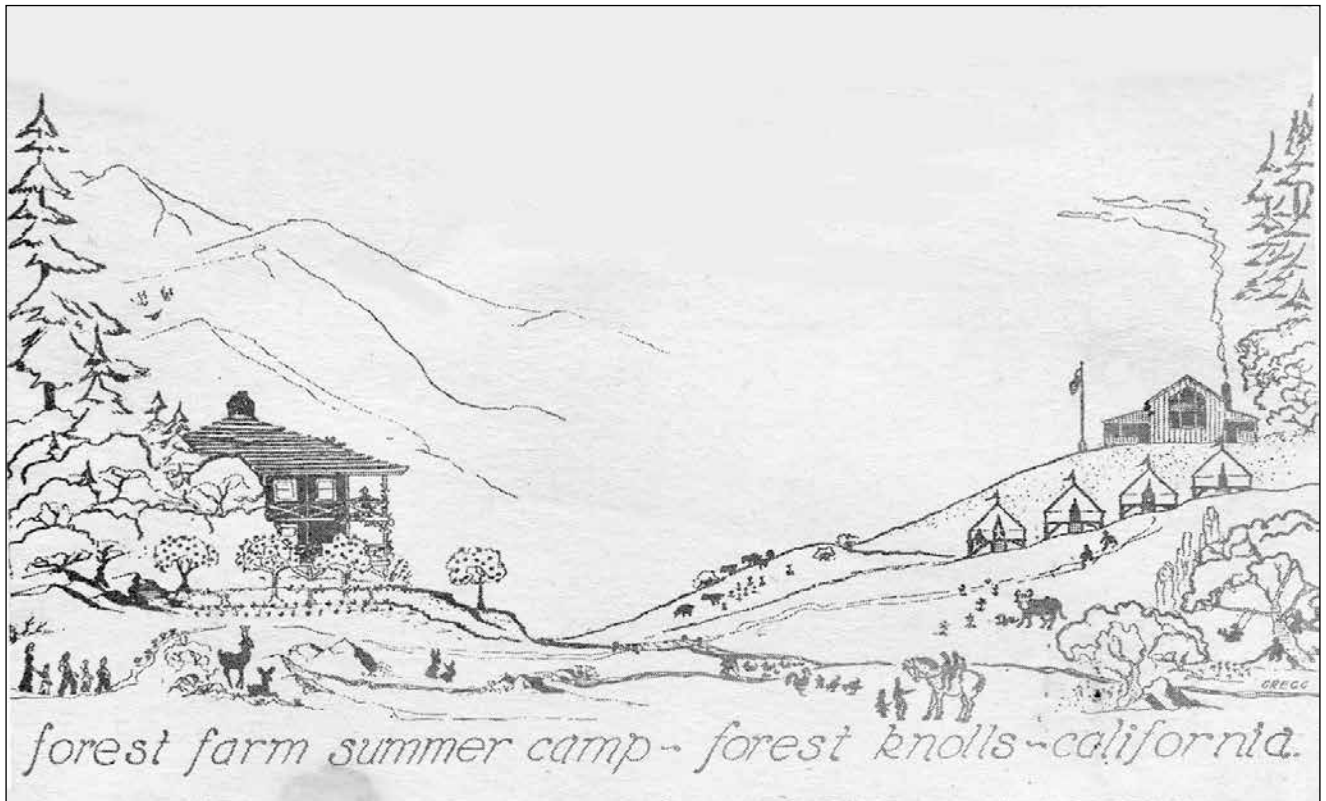
It became a great summer. There were trips to the coast—Stinson Beach, Heart's Desire, Shell Beach, Dillon Beach for overnights in the sand dunes. When parents drove in to pick up their children at the close of camp, campers themselves conducted them proudly to overlook the brand new swimming pool. Then a going away treat—38 campers celebrated their accomplishment by asking Gloria to be the first one to enter the pool and the rest of the campers jumped into that sparkling water to be with Gloria.

We were left with glowing memories, but with an expensive, unpaid-for swimming pool in our front pasture.





*Forest Farm Camp Map by Harold Gregg (From the Collection of Susan Gregg Conard)*



*Forest Farm Drawing by Harold Gregg (From the Collection of Susan Gregg Conard)*



## From Forest Farm Camp to Serenity Knolls

by Judy Voets

When I was 7 years old my parents told me that I was going to Forest Farm Camp for a week. I was told that the camp was near Camp Taylor where we went with many family friends for giant picnics and got to play capture the flag, and get wet in the creek and eat lots of yummy food.

When we got to camp my dad parked the car in the parking area located just after we entered Forest Farm property driveway. Just like we do today. My mom got my duffel bag out of the car and we walked down the driveway to the buildings that we can see today. The difference was that then we were met by Chiefie (Frances) and/or Hal who were the owners of Forest Farm at that time. I knew them from my school in San Francisco and they were friendly acquaintances of my parents. We were shown to my tent. The tents were in the same places that the cabins are presently—going down the hill.

The upper camp had not been developed then.

We then went to the dining area for snacks and to meet other campers and parents. The dining area was where the dining area is now except that its shape went back alongside the kitchen and was a giant deck with many tables on it. The kitchen was in approximately the same spot it is in now. We ate all our meals there and food that we didn't like we threw over the side of the deck to the oxen—yes, there were two of them.

So, you know where the room is that we meet in presently? Well, that area when I was 7 was the arts and crafts space. We did everything outside but all materials were stored inside something—I can't remember what.

The swimming pool had not been built yet . . . not for a couple more years. We went in a HUGE truck to WIC for swimming and to a stables in Forest Knolls for horseback riding and in the huge truck to Camp Taylor for barbeque and games.

The biggest difference between then and now is that there are no children at Serenity Knolls.

## Carrying

by Sara Tolchin

Spring comes into our valley along the deer paths,  
unpinning birdsong as she walks;  
she is the best dressed and the kindest;  
we all want to invite her to our homes  
and have her stay among us.

I cannot resist  
stealing along her nights with their lovely dark,  
songs to the moon and the youngest stars,  
the wash of the dawn on every leaf,  
the grace.

It was a Spring like this,  
I was with my daughter on the mountain;  
I let her go where she would  
among the wild iris and the blue-eyed grass;  
she filled her basket, she was overflowing.

Those were the days  
when her thoughts were still written on her face,  
when I began at last to understand  
my own mother's sleepless nights  
and the fury of her love.

And though the past  
is a dress I'll always wear,  
I am putting on a new one,  
letting the old threads fall to the grass,  
free as the hills.

On the trail home  
I drink from a stream  
as though thirst had just been invented.  
Beneath the crowding of the leaves  
and the cries of birds

the stillness holds,  
and into the stillness  
comes my knowing:  
we carry our daughters until they are too light to bear,  
then we carry our mothers; they are heavy as air.



# Forest Knolls Playground

by Amy Valens

1972 downtown Forest Knolls looked quite different from today. Crossing over the bridge from Sir Francis Drake, to your right was our tiny post office. In front of you was a vacant lot littered with garbage, with a weathered sign saying, “future home of the Forest Knolls Playground.” It was a frustrating sign. The lot belonged to the now defunct San Geronimo Valley Association, but there was no playground being built. That was about to change.

The owner of another piece of vacant land across from the old train stop wanted to condemn Castro Street so he could have a larger lot. Richard Gray invited people to his house to discuss a response to that proposal, and in the process opened the door to talking about the need for a playground. The people most involved initially were Richard, Sanda Logan, Ron Thelin, Alan Odie, and Amy Valens.

Richard joined the Valley Association, became its vice chair, and convinced them to sell the land to the County for development as a park. Over the course of two years, we got County funding to buy the land and build the structures, court, irrigation, plantings, etc. They would assume liability, but it was up to us to get it built and maintain it. Richard drew up the design for the general layout, and the next level of volunteer effort began.



Playground workday with Steve Kinsey at center, 1978 (Photo by Tom Valens)

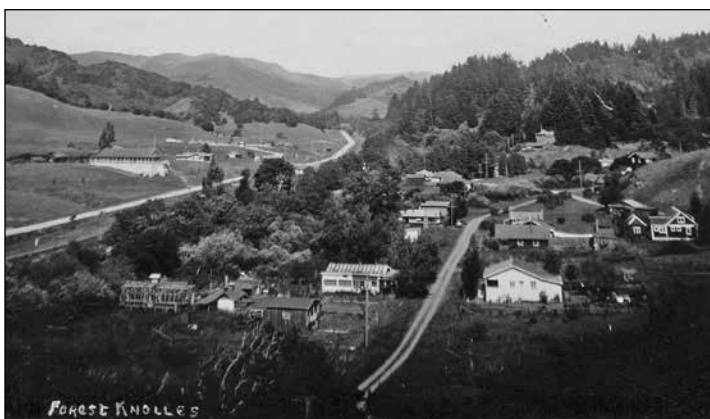
Ghilotti Brothers installed the basketball court for little more than the cost of materials. We worked with Lissa Englert to design the plantings. We hired Kurt Ware, an architect who specialized in working with communities, to design and build their own play structures, and rustled up folks for work weekends. It took many such weekends. Over time 100 people, including many young folks, came to dig, plant, saw, hammer or provide food! David Parle brought over his cherry picker so we could install the spiral slide the village kids had requested. Chris Gale climbed a huge oak tree to put up a hefty rope swing. The playground was completed in 1976. And then, once a week for years, we made sure a volunteer cleaned and watered.

The original play structures lasted 17 years. In 1993 another group of hardworking volunteers guided by LynnEl Powell, Vicki Bloom, and Fred Mundy worked with Steve Kinsey to finance and install new play structures that met updated safety and accessibility standards (a sad goodbye to the spiral slide). Richard Sloan poured the wheelchair ramp.

The County took over maintenance responsibility shortly after that. Most recently, with help from the Valley Planning Group, more shade trees, new tables and benches, and a toilet have been added. Come enjoy this Valley success story!



(Photo by Tom Valens)



Forest Knolls looking east, Sir Francis Drake Blvd. to the left and Morelos Ave. up the center right of the photo. (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)



# The Forest Knolls Doggie Olympics

by Bob Baker

In 1983, my wife Cathy, 4-year-old Nick and I moved to Forest Knolls, and opened our Vet Clinic in the old post office on Montezuma Ave., across from the Forest Knolls Park. We didn't know a soul in town, but soon found ourselves integrated into this unique little village.

Mid-town Forest Knolls, at that time, reminded me of Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*. It had an Asian-run grocery, The Little Store, a well-frequented bar, The Papermill Creek Saloon, a colorful band of wayfarers down on their luck, who often hung out in the aforementioned park, and now I was to be its "Doc." Interestingly, the real Doc Ricketts' granddaughter, Lisa, resided in Forest Knolls, too.

The Forest Knolls Park originated, I believe, as a vacant lot that was handed over to the Forest Knolls Improvement Association, which turned it into a park with a basketball court, picnic tables and a children's playground. Over the years, however, it had fallen into a sad state of disrepair, not having any funds for its maintenance. Every year though, the community would come together for a "Park Clean-up Day" in which we would do what we could to spiff the place up. One year we came up with the bright idea of having a fundraiser...and thus, the Doggie Olympics was born.

Long-time resident Dan Giddings, who had bravely defended the park from hippie squatters (the infamous "Forest Knolls Trolls") in the late '60s, made us a great sign to advertise the event, and someone constructed an Olympics-style awards stand. We also hit up the locals for donations for a bake sale, and to be on our panel of judges.

When the big day arrived, to our delight and surprise, a fairly large contingent of contestants showed up, along with their motley owners, and we announced: "Let the games begin!"

There were many events, such as the fastest dog, best tricks, high jump, loudest bark (judged by a sound engineer's meter), and the ever popular doggie/owner look-a-like. We also had a free-throw shooting contest for the humans.

After each event, we loudly played the theme from *Rocky* on our boom box, while the winning K-9s proudly received their ribbons and biscuits on the awards podium. A shiny trophy was given to the biggest point getter.

Afterwards, we tallied up the proceeds and found that we had made enough to provide for water and garbage service for a year and have some left over for a few much-needed repairs. Just as importantly, we had brought our little community together for a day and had a lot of fun!



Doggie Olympics winners "Best Tricks," Dave O'Connor at left



Tim and Liza Crosse with the trophy winner, Tess



Bob Baker secures the bar for the "High Jump."



Winners with their owners. l-r Susan Doyle, Liza Crosse, and Amber Holly, who went on to become a veterinarian



## Profile: Ronald Peter Marden

### A Book in Progress

by Grace W. Rogers

In 1961, eighteen-year-old Ronald Peter Marden came to our cherished Valley community with his mother, May Gainer. Pete, also known as Ron, was born with Neurofibromatosis, a progressively disfiguring disease. However, he decided to live his life on his own terms and “leave the rest to God.” His strong moral core of independence, loyalty, pride in his coping strengths, avoidance of charity, and determination to succeed regardless of boulders or closed doors grew from a family mantra: The Marden Way. May, his mother, and her fierce Rhode Island character was well known through her years with the Lagunitas School District both in classrooms and as everyone’s protective School Crossing Guard.

Examples of Pete’s pattern of turning challenges into strengths are numerous. In his quest to be a role model for short people, he applied to Little People of America, but was rejected as his 4’10” height exceeded the upper threshold by two inches. (Ironically, at his life’s end he met that 4’8” criteria.) He turned his general love of music and ability to associate everyday sounds with particular tunes into a lifelong passion for jazz. Singing in glee clubs and choirs until he felt his vision difficulties, which slowed the following of text, not music, was problematic for other

choir members.

During the San Geronimo Radio years he had his own jazz radio disc jockey show. He was an active participant in nearly every local activity, including San Geronimo Teen and Go Geronimo hitchhiking programs. From his early 20s, he stayed with his college graduate dream, receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Welfare in 1985 from Humboldt State University. The crowd at his 2012 San Geronimo Presbyterian Community Church’s memorial service overflowed beyond the available folding chairs, sanctuary and standing room capacity.

I started writing Pete’s story later that same year. Many Community members have been generous with their time and the sharing of memories. Pete’s story is complex. Threads of determination, courage, and loneliness run through the account of his accomplishments, difficulties and frustrations. Half the profits from the completed book will benefit Pete’s “second home,” his beloved church.



*Pete as a child*



*Pete with a statue of himself by Cornelia Nevitt*



*Fishing Papermill Creek, 1922 (From the Anne T. Kent California Room Collection)*

## Paper Mill Creek

To the Coast Miwok the stream was known as Tokelalume, then by the Spanish as Arroyo de San Geronimo. Now the “San Geronimo” survives only as the San Geronimo Creek tributary. The modern name, Lagunitas Creek, is derived from the several “lagunitas” (Spanish for “little lakes”) which have now been turned into reservoirs by dams in the upper watershed. It was once known as Paper Mill Creek because Samuel P. Taylor built a paper mill on the creek in Taylorville. This mill, the Pioneer Paper Mill, was built in 1856, the first in California.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lagunitas\\_Creek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lagunitas_Creek)



## Voting at the Center

*by Anne McClain*

I am not a “Vote by Mail” voter. I love the camaraderie of going in-person to the Community Center to cast my ballot on Election Day. I have two favorite voting day memories:

One is of a presidential election year, 2004, in which George W. Bush was on the ballot. The Center hosts monthly art shows and that month the artwork was by Ruben Raffael. Among the pieces hanging above the voting booths was his powerful image of a psychopathic looking George W. Bush with intensely glaring eyes labeled, “EVIL.” As far as I know, no one batted an eye.

An earlier memory from the early '90s: I walked to the polls with my dear friend, Yvette. We were both pushing strollers with our baby daughters tucked in and I had my old dog, Peach, along for the walk. Heading home to Forest Knolls after voting, my dog got tired and didn't want to walk anymore. Peach was a big dog and I couldn't carry her so I took baby Alexandra out of the stroller and put my dog in. Peach loved it and sat up happily in the stroller enjoying the ride. Our route took us right past the big windows of the former Forest Knolls Gas Station bar (now the Farm Stand). There were a lot of patrons at the bar that afternoon and they all got a big chuckle out of these women walking by with the big dog in the baby stroller!





## Photographs by Harlan Floyd



*Gary Giacomini, Lee Berensmeier, Jim Brown  
(Photo by Harlan Floyd)*



*Harlan Floyd (seated) and Lee Berensmeier (standing) created the Zinc & LaRue photographers booth, "Old Timey Photos," for the first Community Center (then the Art Center) Holiday Arts Festival in 1969. (Photo by Harlan Floyd)*



*Back row: Fred the trumpet player, Carol Floyd, Mary Stiles, Ellen Floyd, Harlan Floyd, Jr., Pamela, Laura Floyd, Glenn Woodruff, Joe Floyd, and Nick the dog. Sitting: unknown German shepherd, Harlan Floyd and family dog, Akela (Photo by Harlan Floyd)*



# Valley Scenes



*Small dam on creek, Lagunitas (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)*



*Speck McAuliffe's Lagunitas Lodge, burned down in 1983. A few of the stone pillars remain. The building in the background is where the veterinarian's office is now located. (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)*



*Lagunitas School in San Geronimo (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)*



*Woodacre Lodge Station 1914 (From the Collection of Jim Staley)*

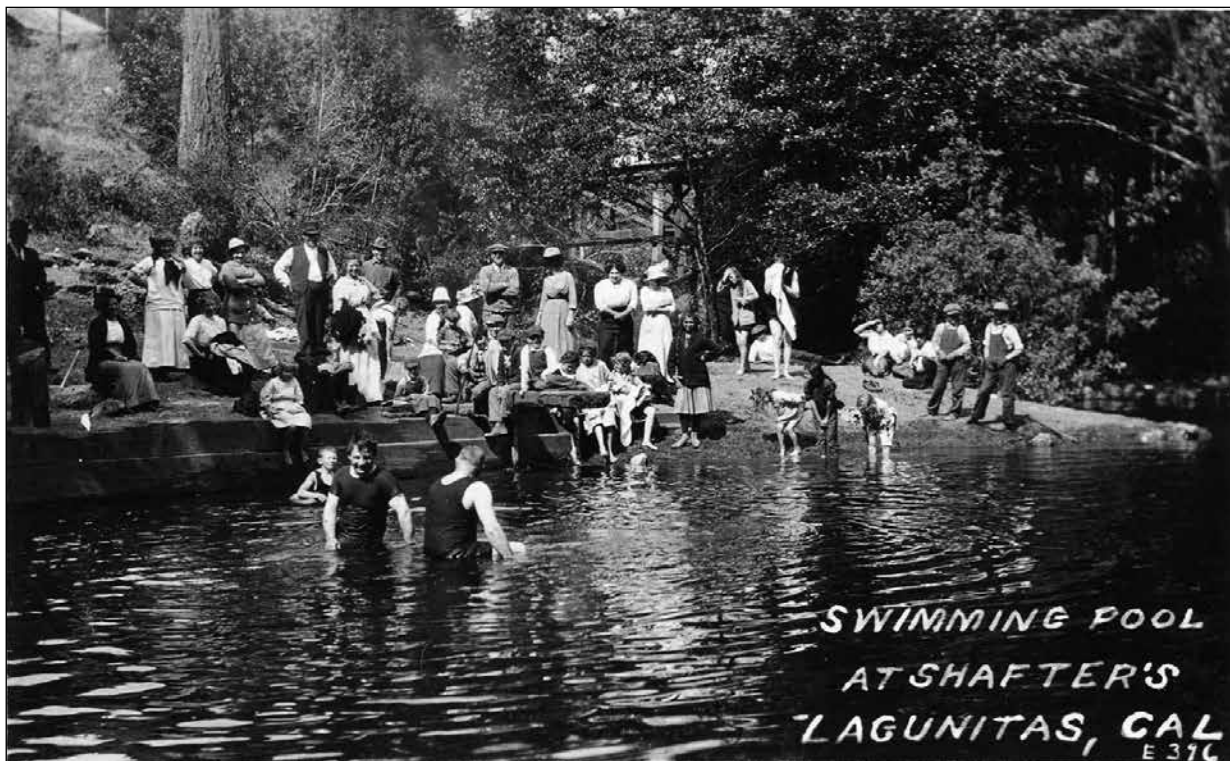


*The original St. Cecilia's Church was destroyed by fire in December of 1934. (Courtesy of John Beckerley)*



*The Grosjean Grocery Co., now the Lagunitas Store, and the Ice Cream, Candy and Coffee Parlor to the right. (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)*





(From the Collection of Newall Snyder)



(From the Collection of Newall Snyder)

Breathe pure  
mountain air

Camp Taylor—a quiet little nook, snug in the wooded hills of Marin County.

Good things to eat—well served in goodly portions—the best the market affords—and that's pretty good.

Clean, fresh, sunny, well ventilated rooms—neat as wax—baths hot or cold.

Boating, swimming and trout fishing—a wondrously pretty lake.

Bowling alley, tennis, croquet—invigorating—builders of appetites.

No public picnics between June 1st and September 1st to disturb our patrons.

Drives—Marin County drives are known the world over. Mountain roads—nearby red-wood groves for little family picnic parties.

Room and board—\$8 to \$12 week.  
Partly furnished camp cottages for house-keeping \$10 to \$20 month—two hours ride from S. F. Round trip \$1.15.  
Write for particulars.

**Camp Taylor**  
Marin County Cal.  
H. G. Martin Proprietor

Promotional postcard (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)

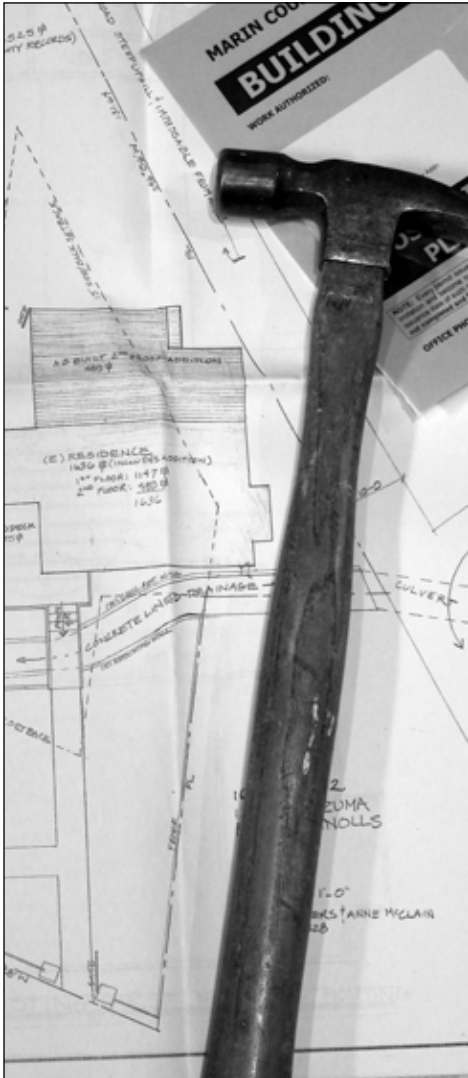


Waiting for the Train at Camp Taylor (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)



# Part III: Guide to Resources

## Chapter 5: Resources for the Community



*CERT volunteers practicing fire extinguisher skills.*



*Marin County Civic Center (Photo by Anne McClain)*



*Marin County Fire Department Woodacre Headquarters (MCFD website)*



# A Property Owner's Guide to Working with the County

*This article has been updated by Community Development Agency Senior Planner, Curtis Havel.*

The purpose of this outline is to provide Valley residents with information on how to legally improve private property and survive the Marin County building and land use permit process.

## Remodeling Projects

For interior improvements with no area added to the house, go directly to the Building & Safety Division counter and apply for a permit. You will need to have three sets of plans (homeowner drawn is fine so long as the plans are accurate and internally consistent) and your checkbook. The plan-checkers and building inspectors are primarily concerned with structural and fire safety, so include all the relevant construction details on your plans. Be prepared to wait three to eight weeks before hearing back on this "plan-check." The plan-checker may contact you for more information. Contact the Building & Safety Division for more details.

For additions, new buildings, or to try to legalize existing unpermitted living units or structures, you should first contact the Planning and Environmental Health Divisions and the Public Works Department. This will save you many hours/days of wasted work if what you contemplate simply cannot be allowed by one or the other of these departments.

## Planning

The Marin County Community Development Agency (CDA) Planning Division reviews all development applications in the San Geronimo Valley. The Valley is predominantly zoned R-1:B-2 and R-1:B-3, which are considered "conventional" single-family zoning districts that have established height, size, and setback requirements. Usually, if a project complies with the established standards no discretionary permit approval is required and the property owner may apply for a building permit.

If a project involves a deviation from the established standards (e.g., setback encroachment), then a discretionary permit approval, such as a Variance, Use Permit, or Design Review may be required before a building permit is issued. Design Review is also required in conventional zoning districts in the following instances:

- The project is for a new single-family residence on a vacant, substandard sized lot that contains less than 50% of the required minimum lot area pursuant to the zoning district or the lot-slope ordinance.
- The project is for a residence that exceeds a total floor area of 3,500 square feet.
- The project involves the development of a "paper street."

- The project exceeds a maximum building height in excess of 30 feet.
- The project is proposed on a vacant lot and is located within a Stream Conservation Area.

The CDA Planning Division has a detailed list of submittal requirements for various discretionary permit applications that can be obtained at the CDA Planning Division office or online at <http://www.marincounty.org/-/media/files/departments/cd/planning/currentplanning/publications/planning-applications/planning-division-application-submittal-checklist-booklet-version-241317.pdf>. In general, plans do not have to contain the level of detail or specificity that the Building & Safety Division requires for working drawings.

If a property has a "planned" zoning district designation, such as RSP, RMP or ARP, all but the most minor and incidental work is subject to Design Review or other type of discretionary permit approval by the County. The level of discretionary review usually corresponds to the size and complexity of the project. Typically, discretionary permits for a single-family residential or small-scale commercial project take between three and six months to process and provide for public notification to all property owners within 300 feet of a project location. For larger lots, the notices are sent to property owners within 600 feet.

The CDA staff encourages and places considerable importance on neighborhood input, so please advise your neighbors of your plans and attempt to resolve your differences early in the process.

In addition, the Sustainability team is responsible for administering green building, green business, energy efficiency, solar energy, and climate protection programs, and can provide you with technical assistance for "greening" your project. Go to: [www.marinsustainability.org](http://www.marinsustainability.org). Please contact Kellen Dammann at (415) 473-2698 for more information.

Furthermore, the Affordable Housing Strategist works to remove barriers to the retention and creation of new affordable housing and can assist you in that regard. For more information, log onto [www.marincounty.org/depts/cd/divisions/housing](http://www.marincounty.org/depts/cd/divisions/housing).

## Environmental Health

Among their other duties, the Environmental Health Services Division ensures that you and the public at large are not harmed by overloaded and failing septic systems. You are required by law to contact them before doing any repairs on your septic system. They will not allow additional bedrooms (or, in some cases, any additional square footage, regardless of use) on a property unless the septic



system can handle it, in accordance with their remodel and additions policy. On the small lots that most of us have here in the Valley, this usually means we cannot add additional bedrooms. Depending on available funding, Environmental Health Services also may be able to refer you to a free and confidential septic inspection program if you are within 100 feet of a creek. So check with them first before wasting your time drawing up plans for a building permit.

**Public Works**

The Public Works Department is involved in the engineering aspect of regulating property development in relation to access, drainage, grading, and general site characteristics. Depending on the extent of the work proposed, some projects might be required to update parking, access, and other site work to current County Code. Given the types of roads and terrain in the San Geronimo Valley, achieving the necessary access and parking is often a challenge. It may be helpful to visit the Department of Public Works at the County Civic Center, Room 304, to find out if your project requires improvement to access, parking, or other site considerations.

**Building and Safety**

A building permit is required for most construction. After obtaining approval of the discretionary permit from the Planning Division, if one is required, you may file a building permit application. The Building & Safety Division

will route your plans and application through the Planning and Environmental Health Divisions and the Public Works Department, where holds may be put on the project. The more completely you research the requirements with the above departments, the less likely there are to be complications in the review of your building permit. Please note that some types of building permits, such as those for replacement of a water heater/furnace, window, and re-roofing, can be issued immediately over the counter and do not require plans.

**Where to Go**

A visit to the Civic Center is advantageous as you begin any project that will involve new construction. On one visit you should be able to discuss your project with all departments. The Building & Safety and Planning Divisions share one counter on the third floor, Room 308, at the Civic Center. The Environmental Health Services Division regulates septic per unit and is located in Room 236 on the second floor of the Civic Center.

Planning Division	415-473-6269
Dept of Public Works Land Development	415-473-6528
Septic Hotline	415-473-2198
Environmental Health Services Division	415-473-6907
Building & Safety Division	415-473-6550



*Marin County Fire Department in Woodacre circa 1970s (Photo from the MCFD website courtesy of Senior Captain Greg Jennings)*



# Septic Systems: Proper Care and Concerns

by Kit Rosefield and updated by Rebecca Ng, Deputy Director of Marin County Environmental Health Services

First, know that all septic systems have a number of different components. Even a standard gravity system has at least four components that play a role in the performance and longevity of the system: the source, the treatment tank, the leachfield, and maintenance and monitoring.

The source may be the most important component. Your household's water use and waste habits can make all the difference. Maintenance of plumbing fixtures, landscaping, and how you treat the area above and around the system will determine how well and how long your system will perform.

The most prevalent cause of system failure is *hydraulic overloading* — too much water. Whether from excessive water use in the home or leaky plumbing fixtures, excessive water flow not only washes solids through the tank but saturates soils in the drainfield, preventing oxygen transfer to the microbes whose job it is to finish cleaning up the wastewater constituents.

Another major cause of failure is *solids overloading*. The only solids that should go down the drain are human waste and used toilet paper. Anything else, such as packaging, personal care products, and even facial tissue, should go in the waste basket. On the kitchen side, garbage disposals are not a good thing for septic (or sewers for that matter) as they put slowly decomposing solids into the system. Powdered laundry detergents are another source of unwanted solids as many brands have fillers that do not readily break down. All these unwanted solids inevitably have to be pumped from the tank and hauled to disposal. It's a much quicker trip to the trash can and direct to the land fill.

Improper planting of landscaping can ruin a system as roots may work their way into the septic tank, drainrock or drainpipe and plug things up. Maintaining vegetation on and around system components will allow ease of service and prevent root intrusion, and promote oxygen transfer to the soil. On the same note, driving, parking or allowing livestock to be atop system components will compact soils and slow down or prevent needed oxygen transfer to the soil. They can also cause damage to the disposal field by crushing trench laterals and distribution pipes.

The **treatment tank** (septic tank) is not only a separation device, but an anaerobic treatment unit. Almost all tanks these days have two compartments. The inlet compartment is where wastewater from the home enters through an inlet fitting, which facilitates separation of solids. The lighter materials, such as fats, oils, and greases along with unwanted synthetic fibers, float to the surface and form a "scum layer." At the same time, heavier solids, such as dirt from washing clothes and vegetables, and fillers from powdered cleaning products,

settle to the bottom forming a "sludge layer." These two layers develop at whatever rate you put things down the drain: The less down the drain, the less frequently you need to have your tank pumped. It's that simple. Larger tank size or capacity may increase the ability to store and digest sewage constituents. Typically septic tanks require pumping once every 3-5 years.

Between the two layers of solids in the inlet compartment is what's referred to as the "clear zone," where separated liquid is subject to anaerobic degradation. An internal baffle in the tank holds the solids back and through a mid-depth passage allows separated water to flow through to the outlet compartment. The water then flows from the outlet compartment via an outlet fitting (or even better: an effluent filter) and into the "soil treatment area" (drainfield). When properly functioning, these processes of separation and degradation represent from 25% to 40% of the wastewater treatment.

*Note: Systems that are subject to waste from folks who need extended medications, such as antibiotics, heart medication or chemotherapy, may need more rigorous maintenance. Never put old unwanted medication down the drain as these materials are toxic to the system and will kill the natural biology.*

The **drainfield** (leachfield) is actually a soil treatment component. Good soils affording adequate retention time will clean most or all of the wastewater constituents that the treatment tank leaves behind. The soils draw oxygen from the surface and help the natural bacteria clean up the wastewater as it flows through the drainrock into the surrounding soils. If the soils are too compact or swell because of clay or other restricting materials they will become saturated and the natural bacteria will die off. On the other hand, if soils are too porous such as sand, the wastewater races through the biologically active zone directly to the ground water with little or no treatment. If a treatment tank is not properly maintained, or if water moves too quickly, solids will carry through to the soils and plug up the pores. This is when things stop working and wastewater backs up.

With all that said, you see why maintenance and monitoring is a critical component of your system. Having an Onsite Service Provider (Qualified Inspector) check your system every year or two will not only help head off any problems before they start, but will help you know when tank pumping, plumbing repairs, or other maintenance issues need to be addressed. If you have a system with one or more pumps, routine maintenance and monitoring is even more critical. One thing you can do to help yourself and/or a service provider, is by installing water tight risers over the septic tank openings to allow for easy access for service and maintenance.

Improperly working septic systems contribute to a larger problem: impairment of the Tomales Bay watershed, including local swimming holes and Tomales Bay itself. Wastewater leaving a septic tank into an improperly designed or sited drainfield moves quickly to springs that make up the watershed. At the same time, many systems dug deep into the "alluvial zone" of the creeks and streams, do not allow adequate soil



contact or retention time and also contribute to the watershed problems. As you may know, Tomales Bay is on the USEPA list of 303d impaired water bodies.

State-wide regulations regarding septic systems are under review at many levels and changes are likely. Meanwhile, Marin County Environmental Health Services is approving new technologies that provide more options for home owners. The new technologies treat waste water to a higher level and may reduce the foot print of the older technology treatment systems for the constraint sites (due to small parcels, steep slopes, or proximity to water bodies or wells).

The San Geronimo Valley is our Home. It's up to each of us to keep our environment beautiful and safe by maintaining a properly operating septic system. If you need help, Environmental Health Services will work with property owners who have a marginal or failing system to bring the system into compliance. This includes setting up interim solutions for property owners that may want to connect to a community system down the road.

## Living with Propane

Propane is one of the cleanest burning of all alternative fuels and an approved, alternative clean fuel listed in the 1990 Clean Air Act and the National Energy Policy Act of 1992. Propane is also nontoxic, so it's not harmful to soil or water.

As a safety measure, propane has an odorant added so that you can smell it if it escapes — if there's a leak in the system or an appliance malfunctions. Make sure that you and all members of your household are familiar with the distinctive odor of propane gas.

### Important! If you suspect a leak:

**No flames or sparks!** Immediately put out all smoking materials and other open flames. Do not operate lights, appliances, telephones, or cell phones. Flames or sparks can trigger an explosion or fire.

**Leave the area immediately!** Get everyone out of the building or area where you suspect gas is leaking.

**Shut off the gas.** Turn off the main gas supply valve on your propane tank if it's safe to do so. To close the valve, turn to the right (clockwise).

**Report the leak.** From a neighbor's home or other nearby building away from the gas leak, call 911 or the Woodacre Fire Station at 415-499-6717.

**Do not return to the building or area** until your propane retailer determines that it is safe to do so.

**Get your system checked.** Before you attempt to use any of your propane appliances, your propane retailer or a qualified service technician must check your entire system to ensure that it is leak free.

## Energy Saving Tips

- Residential heating systems need regular tune-ups. Contact your local propane supplier to inquire about a home-heating system inspection program.
- Change your furnace filter monthly. Clean filters will save you money on your heating bill.
- Consider investing in a furnace thermostat timer that can save money by lowering your home's temperature when you are not at home.
- Protect against drafts around windows and doors by caulking and weather stripping.
- If you are purchasing a fireplace, consider one fueled by propane. Propane fireplaces burn more efficiently than wood-burning models and distribute heat more evenly throughout the room.

## Water Heaters

- You can save more than 10 percent on your water-heating bill by turning down your water heater from 140 degrees to 130 degrees.
- To extend your water heater's life and increase energy efficiency, drain it every six months to remove deposits and sediment.
- Install flow-restricting showerheads. You can reduce hot water usage by up to 50 percent without affecting shower pressure.
- Repair leaky faucets. A leak that fills a coffee cup in 10 minutes wastes 3,200 gallons of water a year.

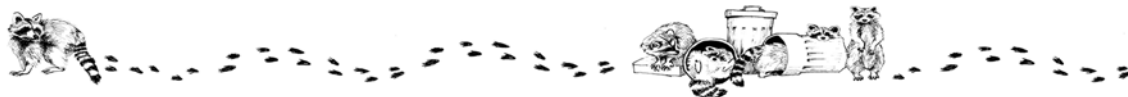
## Home Appliances

- Gas ranges with electronic ignition systems will use 40 percent less energy than a standing pilot system.
- Be sure that all burners are burning with a blue, cone-shaped flame. A yellow flame indicates clogged air inlets or burners that need adjustment. Contact your propane supplier's service department immediately if you do not see a blue flame.
- Check the seal on your oven door. Gaps or tears in the seal let heat escape and waste energy.

— *Propane Education & Research Council and [www.doacs.state.fl.us/standard/lpgas/consumerinfo](http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/standard/lpgas/consumerinfo)*

## Propane Providers

AmeriGas	(707) 795-7998
De Carli's	(707) 762-4511
McPhail Fuel Company	(707) 285-3525
Pro Flame, Inc.	(707) 823-2344
Suburban Propane	(707) 542-0833





## Aneice Taylor's Story

I moved to Woodacre in 1972 with my husband, Gage, and our two-year-old son Lincoln. We were delighted to buy our first home and felt we had found "our place" in the world. After living in our charming house in the redwoods for six years, we wanted more sun and migrated to Lagunitas. Our new house was actually an old house built in the 1920s by an Italian family. By then, we also had a two-year-old daughter, Deva. Our son was in the Open Classroom and our daughter went to the Montessori preschool, and we were well integrated into the community.

In January of 1982 a record-breaking El Niño storm hit the San Geronimo Valley. The school called and asked parents to pick up their children, and the Highway Patrol was alerting people who lived in the low areas to move to higher ground. We had been home for 10 minutes and were changing into dry clothes to go to a friend's house up the hill. There was a loud roar from behind the house, Gage ran to the back door and yelled, "Run!" We had made it to the front door trying to escape a massive torrent of water, trees and mud barreling down from above. In an instant, it hit the back of the house, moving it 35 feet forward and flattening it. I was pinned under the rubble. Gratefully my husband and children were not seriously injured, but my neck was broken and I was a quadriplegic.

In a blink, neighbors, paramedics and a whole community began years of helping our family. We no longer had a home, but the blow was softened as countless volunteers helped patch our lives together. Volunteers helped clean up the rubble, rescuing our things that were still intact. A local real estate agent and the County helped us secure a beautiful lot in the flats of Woodacre. Our local friend and architect, Jeff Kroot, designed our home and local contractor, Jerry Fitzpatrick, took on the job of organizing a team of volunteers.



*Aneice Taylor's new home and the Gratis Builders, 1983 (Photo by Chuck Ford)*



# Planning for Emergencies in the San Geronimo Valley

by Don Holmlund

Being prepared for power failures, fire, flood, and earthquake is a matter of sound planning and concrete action. Each year, disasters such as the Lake County fires serve as powerful reminders that you should involve your family in discussions about what to do before and during an emergency. According to some scientists, the epicenter of the 1906 earthquake which destroyed San Francisco was near Olema. And recent floods in the Valley have brought major destruction.

The January 1982 storm, for example, brought almost 15 inches of rain during a 24-hour period, and Lagunitas School District sent students home by 10:30 in the morning. Creeks throughout the Valley were overflowing onto roads, and refrigerators, toilets and porches were seen floating down the creeks. Major landslides caused severe injuries and loss of property, and the Golden Gate Bridge was closed because of a landslide.

Your plan of action will differ depending on the specific incident; for example, in a flood emergency, it might be best to stay at home rather than cross a hazardous creek to reach a shelter or evacuate. In the event of a wildfire, timely evacuation may be critical.

Whatever the disaster, do not take unnecessary actions: treat all downed power lines as live wires, do not cross flooded roads, and follow immediately any and all evacuation orders. Do not put your life in danger.

## Here are a few basic things to accomplish *now*:

### Power, Water, Food, and Emergency Supplies

As electrical power, propane used in appliances such as stoves and furnaces, and water supply may be interrupted for long periods of time, make sure you have a battery operated radio, an adequate supply of batteries, propane canisters, water, food, and first aid materials stored in safe places. Review all fire extinguisher locations and instructions for use, and check expiration dates.

### Communication

As communications may also be disrupted, make sure that emergency and important telephone numbers are posted and discussed with family members. Be sure to arrange a single contact out of the area to use as a family bulletin board in the event of a disaster. A family evacuation plan and contact list should also be drafted and practiced. During an emergency, tune into local radio stations (e.g., KCBS 740 AM and KWMR 92.3 FM) for verified information.

### Earthquake Preparedness

We are close enough to the San Andreas fault and the

Bolinas tectonic plate to warrant extensive earthquake preparations. Begin with preparations in the home by securing your water heater and gas pipes with metal strapping. Secure bookshelves and wall units with screws and brackets.

### How To Respond After a Major Earthquake:

Stay away from windows, fireplaces and skylights and remain where you are until fire and traffic hazards are controlled. Roadways may be overloaded and power lines may be down. Inspect all gas pipes, electrical lines and water pipes immediately and secure or remove loose or stacked objects on shelves. Earthquakes usually come in groups so even a big earthquake is likely to be followed by more potentially significant tremors.

Once local households have been inspected and severe emergency needs met, a neighborhood coordinator will activate your Neighborhood Radio System walkie-talkie to share information and needs with a village (e.g., Lagunitas) coordinator, who will then communicate needs with the Valley-wide system, which is linked to the County and other disaster resources. The San Geronimo Valley Emergency Readiness Group (VERG) is in the process of setting up this radio system. Currently, all Valley towns have links to this system, and all neighborhoods will soon have links. If communications are disrupted, volunteers will/may report to local post office parking lots to obtain information and direction depending upon their capabilities.

For more information specializing in Marin County preparedness, go to [www.Readymarin.org](http://www.Readymarin.org). The federal government also has many useful references at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov).

For more information and to become involved, please contact one of the Disaster Coordinators listed below.

### Disaster Coordinators:

**San Geronimo Valley Emergency Readiness Group - VERG**

Jim Fazackerley 415-300-7170

Brian McCarthy 415-613-6435

VERG facebook page: [www.facebook.com/](http://www.facebook.com/)



*Flood of 1982, corner of Montezuma and Juarez, Forest Knolls  
(Photo by Tom Valens)*



## Build a Kit



In the event of a major disaster, you might need to **Shelter in Place** and survive on your own resources for a minimum 5-7 days. You may be sleeping outdoors. Plan on what you will need to eat, sleep, cook, with or without the shelter and comfort of your home.

### Food & Water

- Water (minimum of 1 gallon per person per day for 5 days), chlorine bleach, and eye dropper
- Canned fruits, vegetables, stew, meat
- Dried fruits
- Dry cereal
- Crackers (low sodium)
- Canned tuna
- Nutritional bars
- Canned nuts (unsalted)
- Peanut butter
- Fruit or vegetable juices
- Powdered milk
- Bottled soft drinks
- Baby food and food for others on special diets

### Eating & Cooking

- Paper/plastic plates, cups, utensils
- Paper towels
- Manual can opener
- Alternate cooking source and fuel

### Sanitation

- Portable toilet or bucket with lid, toilet paper
- Diapers
- Disinfectant
- Feminine hygiene supplies
- Cat litter and plastic garbage bags
- Twist ties

### Health & Safety

- First Aid kit and manual
- Dust masks
- Soap, detergent, shampoo
- Toothbrush, toothpaste
- Medications
- Heavy work gloves
- Sturdy shoes
- Space blanket or sleeping bag
- Tent or other camping equipment
- Hearing aid batteries
- Goggles or safety glasses
- Scissors

### Tools

- Shovel
- Wrench (shut-off valves)
- 1/2" rope (20 ft.)
- Duct tape
- Broom
- Axe
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Portable radio and extra batteries
- Fire extinguisher

### Pets

- Leashes, crate, food
- Cat litter and plastic garbage bags

For more information, visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

ReadyMarin Checklists

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

This checklist and other handy checklists (Grab and Go Checklist, Evacuation Backpack, Evacuation Plan Checklist, and Mini-Survival Kits) are available at: <http://readymarin.org/readymarin/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/ReadyMarin-Checklist-Bundle.pdf>



## MMWD's Legacy and Future: Conservation and Efficiency

Over the last ten years, Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) customers have reduced overall water consumption by almost 10,000 acre-feet—more than 3 billion gallons—per year. That is the equivalent of building another reservoir at a fraction of the cost.

MMWD recently adopted another conservation measure that represents a new frontier for homeowners wishing to save both money and the planet: graywater.

Graywater includes rinse water generated by your washer, shower and sink drains. A graywater system diverts this water away from your sewer or septic system and directs it toward selected absorption areas in your yard. While graywater is not suitable for row crops, it works well for fruit trees and ornamental shrubs.

It is estimated that MMWD customers use up to one third of their water for landscape irrigation. Beginning in 2016, MMWD began requiring the installation of graywater systems in all new construction and in major remodels. In passing this ordinance, MMWD was the first water district in California to officially require the installation of graywater systems.



Graywater can eliminate or vastly reduce irrigation needs at a minimal cost. A simple “laundry-to-landscape” graywater system that diverts your washing machine rinse water is easy to install and doesn't require

a building permit. Through maximizing graywater reuse, MMWD customers could collectively create the equivalent of a second new reservoir in the coming years. For information about graywater rebates and assistance, visit [marinwater.org/graywater](http://marinwater.org/graywater) or contact MMWD's Conservation Department at 415-945-1520.

### More Resources from MMWD

💧 Get paid to save with rebates on a variety of water-saving items for your home and garden. Visit: [marinwater.org/rebates](http://marinwater.org/rebates)

💧 Call us! We'll send one of our water conservation specialists to your home or business to help you find ways to save. Call 415-945-1523 to schedule a free appointment.

💧 Not sure how much water your garden needs? See our Weekly Watering Schedule for recommended irrigation runtimes based on recent weather conditions. Visit: [marinwater.org/watering](http://marinwater.org/watering)

💧 Pick up free faucet aerators, toilet dye tablets and other conservation items at our office at 220 Nellen Avenue, Corte Madera, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

💧 Find more water conservation tips and resources at: [marinwater.org/conserv](http://marinwater.org/conserv)

💧 Learn about discounted rate programs for qualifying low income or medically disabled customers: [marinwater.org/discounts](http://marinwater.org/discounts)



MARIN MUNICIPAL  
WATER DISTRICT



# VERG – San Geronimo Valley Emergency Readiness Group

by Jim Fazackerley and Don Holmlund

The San Geronimo Valley Disaster Council was established in 1974 to raise awareness, prepare the community, develop a disaster plan, and work in coordination with the County of Marin in the event of a disaster. Disaster response by this citizen group is carried out through functional divisions: rescue, medical care, damage assessment, shelter, and communications. These efforts are coordinated with the Marin County Fire Department. Preparedness and planning efforts are continually underway in cooperation with the West Marin Disaster Council. In the past four years, the San Geronimo group has been revised and renamed VERG (Valley Emergency Readiness Group).

In a major emergency, the San Geronimo Valley Community Gym may be opened as a shelter and reception center. Since a limited number of people can be housed in an emergency shelter, it is vitally important that each individual household maintain food, water and emergency supplies sufficient for at least 72 hours. In addition, VERG maintains two trailers with cots, water, generators, medical supplies, personal hygiene kits, and cleaning supplies, and a variety of other emergency supplies and tools.

The main goal of VERG is to prepare the community. The most important key to recovery after a disaster is the planning that happens beforehand within individual families and neighborhoods.

Two valuable programs exist to educate our citizens: **The Neighborhood Program** features a presentation by a VERG representative and a representative from the Fire Department. Information and discussion center around disaster preparedness in families and the neighborhood. During these meetings, neighborhood coordinators are chosen who will continue to update the neighborhood on disaster planning and will communicate the needs of the neighborhood in the event of a disaster. Neighbors are also invited to join the VERG Neighborhood Radio Network to relay needs and information during emergencies. This network connects all Valley villages with each other and with emergency services.

The second program is **Marin County CERT** (Community Emergency Response Team) training, which is held several times each year and taught by Fire Department

personnel. Instruction includes household preparedness, disaster first aid, fire extinguisher instruction, and light search and rescue.

The best single source of information for San Geronimo residents is on the web at [www.readymarin.org](http://www.readymarin.org). For more information about getting prepared, becoming active with VERG, or attending future trainings contact VERG Coordinator Jim Fazackerley at 415-300-7170 or Brian McCarthy at 415-613-6435. Current information and opportunities can also be found on the VERG Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/VERG4SGV/>



*CERT volunteer, Elise Piliwale, ready for action!*



# Wildfire Preparedness in the San Geronimo Valley

by Ken Massucco, retired Marin County Fire Chief

Every year seems to bring more and more wildfires in West Marin and Northern California. Most of these were contained quickly, others have not been. Some of the largest fires in Marin have been in the San Geronimo Valley and West Marin. These include:

1923—Fire burned from Ignacio to Woodacre; scorched 40,000 acres and destroyed 35 homes in Woodacre

1945—Fire burned from the mill site where Kent Lake is now to Barth's Retreat on the north slope of Mt. Tam. The fire consumed 18,000 acres of brush and valuable timber.

1965—Chileno Valley Fire burned 2,600 acres and several ranches.

1995—Mt. Vision Fire burned 12,076 acres and destroyed 48 homes.

In 2010, the Marin County Fire Chiefs in an effort to help our residents be better prepared before and during a wildfire launched the "Ready, Set, Go!" program. More information about this program and how it will help you can be obtained by visiting the Ready, Set, Go! website at [www.readysetgomarin.org](http://www.readysetgomarin.org).

The main principles behind the program are:

**READY:**

The concept is simple. This first phase teaches homeowners to prepare their property well in advance of a fire.

**GET SET:**

The Set phase of the program stresses emergency preparedness and situational awareness.

**GO:**

Early evacuation is a key component in RSG.

There are a few minimum efforts you can take for making your home defensible and to help prepare yourself and your family for a wildland fire. These include:

Create 100 feet of defensible space around structures:

- Limb and prune trees within 6-15 feet off the ground and away from roofs.

- Remove leaves and needles and other dead or dying vegetation from roofs and gutters.
- Clear all flammable vegetation, trash and other combustible materials 10 feet around and above propane tanks.
- Keep firewood and lumber at least 10 feet from structures.
- Clear driveway of flammable vegetation 15 feet vertically and 10 feet horizontally from edge of a driveway.

Make sure attic vents, the underside of decks and balconies are properly screened to prevent ember intrusion.

Post a clearly marked address sign. (During a large wildland fires, resources would respond from throughout Marin or even from neighboring counties. Critical time can be lost if the street and address are not clearly marked).



Mt. Vision Fire, 1995 (Photo courtesy Marin County Fire Department)



CERT Volunteers Leo DenOuden, Alison Rider, and Skag Dukkers (Photo by Anne McClain)



## Fires on Montezuma Avenue

by Anne McClain

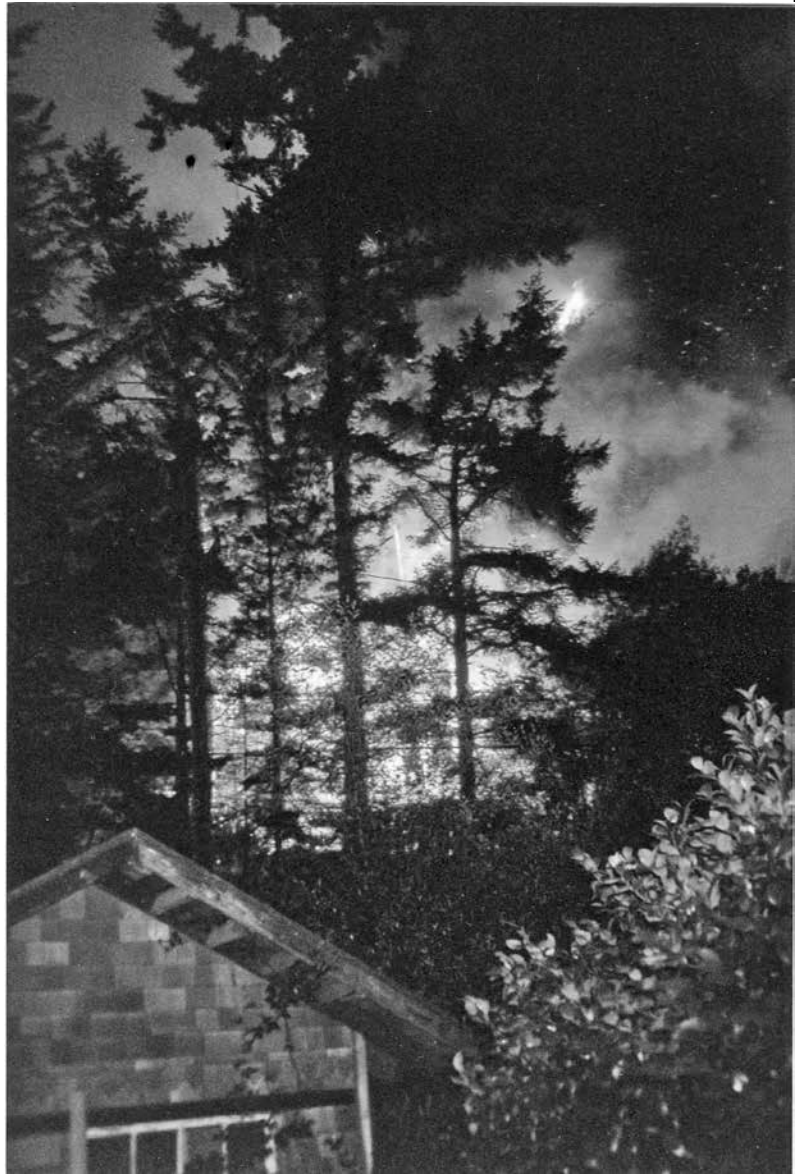
Skag and I have lived on Montezuma Avenue in Forest Knolls since 1983. Living here has been wonderful, like living permanently at summer camp. There are worries, however, chief among them fire, flood and earthquake. For several years we felt particularly stalked by fire. Over the course of about seven years, three house fires destroyed homes nearby, marching ever closer to our home.

Coming home from work late one evening we were passed by an ambulance, sirens wailing. Our street was a mass of flashing lights and fire trucks. Four houses away our neighbors' house had burned down and two lives were lost. Rumors were whispered that it was an arson attack because of a drug deal gone wrong. We never learned the truth, but it was certain that it was a tragedy.

Next, it was the house three doors away. Shortly after midnight our next door neighbor woke us up. (I am always thankful for our wonderful neighbors in our little neck of the woods.) This time no one was killed, but musician Luther Tucker was injured.

Finally (and I hope finally!), the house across the street caught fire early one morning. By this time I had become expert at dialing 911! The house was owned and built by a real character known as "Rocky." Rocky could always be seen cruising the neighborhood in his big old car full of stuff wearing sheepskin slippers and a kerchief around his neck secured with a bone. The house was a bit of a Winchester Mystery House with doors and hallways leading nowhere and some questionable electrical work, three units, and small propane tanks being used for cooking indoors. Although people lost all of their belongings, no one was hurt.

Things have settled down considerably since those days, and we now have better fire hydrants on Montezuma!



*Fire on Montezuma, Forest Knolls, 1996. (Photo by Skag Dukkers)*

## In Lieu Of

by Stefanie Marlis

I go up to the serpentine crown  
above the tumbling valley, and the dog  
disappears. Like a swami with two bodies  
a deer climbs over the edge of the ridge,  
stands, lifting and lowering her foreleg,  
unsettling the green dust.

*When the well's dry, we know the worth of water.*

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

50<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary



143

# Medical Emergencies

by Diana Rocha

## Heart Attack & Stroke Symptoms Require Immediate Treatment

- Heart attack and stroke are life-and-death emergencies: every second counts.
- Coronary heart disease and stroke are leading causes of death and disability.
- If you or someone with you has any of the listed symptoms, immediately call 911 to summon help.

## Symptoms of Heart Attack

- Chest discomfort. Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- Pain or discomfort in other areas of the upper body, such as one or both arms, back, neck, jaw or stomach.
- Shortness of breath, which may occur with or without chest discomfort.
- Other signs may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or lightheadedness.

## Symptoms of Stroke

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause

A simple test for stroke is to ask the person to do three things:

- Ask the individual to SMILE.
- Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.
- Ask the person to SPEAK A SIMPLE COHERENT SENTENCE. (“It is sunny out today.”)

If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 911 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.

## Other Emergencies

For other medical emergencies, such as drowning, electric shock, unconsciousness, and internal bleeding, phone 911 immediately.

**Note: 911 is the correct number for all emergencies. The glitch that delayed calls from cell phones has been fixed.**

## First Aid

- First aid information for a variety of conditions can be found at [www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid](http://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid)
- We recommend that you print out the condition you are most likely to encounter, review it thoroughly, and then place it in a very accessible and obvious place, such as on your refrigerator or next to your phone.
- We also recommend that everyone complete a class on CPR. Local classes are offered frequently through the American Red Cross, 415- 721-2365 or [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org).

## Bites and Stings

- Scorpion stings, snake and animal bites, as well as bites from black widow and brown recluse spiders require immediate attention and follow-up by a physician.
- Even bee stings, in the case of an allergic reaction, need prompt medical care.
- Particular treatment will be determined by a physician.

What you can do immediately:

- Wash the bite/sting with soap and water.
- Apply ice or a cold compress.
- In the case of snake bites, immobilize the bitten area and keep lower than the heart.

More information can be found at:

- [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org)
- [www.heart.org/](http://www.heart.org/)
- [www.calpoison.org/about/](http://www.calpoison.org/about/)
- [www.umm.edu/health/medical/ency/articles/blac-widow-spider](http://www.umm.edu/health/medical/ency/articles/blac-widow-spider)
- [www.umm.edu/health/medical/ency/articles/brown-recluse-spider](http://www.umm.edu/health/medical/ency/articles/brown-recluse-spider)
- [www.ready.gov/earthquakes](http://www.ready.gov/earthquakes)





# Mental Health/Mental Illness

by Marian H. Cremin, LCSW

If you or someone you know is showing signs of a mental health problem, there is something you can do about it. Nobody needs to endure this kind of pain alone. It is important to find a licensed clinician or doctor and ask questions. It is important to describe feelings, thoughts, and behaviors that seem painful, unusual, frightening, or dangerous.

There are many resources in Marin County and support for families. Start by consulting your family doctor, calling the local psychiatric emergency services, or calling the on-call nurse and asking questions. Most schools have counselors that can be consulted. You could get a referral to speak with a psychotherapist or psychiatrist.

## Suicide Prevention

**If you are feeling suicidal, you can get help. Call 911 *right now*.** That one phone call can save your life. If someone threatens or makes statements referring to suicide, *take them seriously*. Help them and do not be afraid to ask them questions. You may want to call 911 or Marin County Psychiatric Emergency Services at 415-499-6666 as well. If a seriously suicidal person forbids you to call, is angry about it, or upset, *you should call anyway*.

## Resources for Help

Here is a list of some of the numbers you can call if you are feeling emotionally or mentally distressed. You can also call if you are concerned that someone in your neighborhood, your family, or your greater community is in emotional distress or has other mental health problems. The important thing is to reach out and get help. You don't have to handle it alone.

Community Mental Health Psychiatric Emergency Services  
415-499-6666

A 24-hour staffed phone line and drop-in crisis center for mental health services.

Suicide Hotline  
415-499-1100  
A 24-hour crisis hotline for suicide and severe emotional distress.

Marin Alcoholics Anonymous  
415-499-0400  
Regular Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are held on Monday and Friday evenings at 8:00PM at the SGV Presbyterian Church.

NAMI-Marin (National Alliance on Mentally Illness)  
415-456-9416

Provides support and resources for families of those with mental illness.

Sheriff  
415-499-7233  
If you have concerns about the well-being of an individual, whether because of a mental health issue or other reason (e.g., an elderly neighbor who lives alone, or someone you haven't been able to reach recently), you can call the sheriff and request a welfare check. If you believe it is an emergency, call 911.

Center for Attitudinal Healing in Sausalito  
415-331-6161  
Provides free grief counseling and other volunteer services.

Low-fee counseling:  
Family Service Agency of Marin: 415-491-5700  
CIP — Community Institute for Psychotherapy 415-459-5999

## The Collagist

by Gerald Fleming

He'd hated "passed on" when he was younger, attentive lieutenant in *The Battle Against Euphemisms*, railed against it once at a dinner party, but fifty years later it seemed a good fit for him, the stone bastion between worlds long ago having become curtain, the curtain now membrane, the membrane thinning as if toward some birth, some expulsion.

She was gone now, and the process of erasure and reversal had begun: the photos spread on the table and in boxes at his feet, the letters, the receipts, reminders/reminders written in her hand, by her hand. What'll be done with it anyway, he wondered, and so day into late night it was razor-knives and scissors, one line in a letter sliced free, glued to the face of an old friend, the rest of it tossed across the room in an energy he'd not known for a long time. Photos trimmed, glued to photos. Her old horse Bolivia, long gone—broke loose that night to go back to her birth-place & die—now she had a rider: the uncle barely remembered, and there they go, the uncle mounted reverse on the horse, headed straight into a lake.

He could live like that for a long time, in the mess of it—a kind of invention of the new world—something to hold onto, something to pass on.



# LYME DISEASE

by Diana Rocha

## WHAT IS LYME

Lyme disease is a serious infection that can be transmitted by the bite of an infected tick, commonly known as the black-legged deer tick. First discovered in Lyme, Connecticut, in 1982, Lyme disease is one of the fastest growing infectious diseases in the United States. In September, 2015, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) revised their estimates, indicating that more than 329,000 new cases were contracted each year, an increase of up to 10 times what was previously believed.

Recent findings prove ticks that carry Lyme disease are widespread in the San Francisco Bay Area. The western gray squirrel is the principal host of the disease in northern California and easily spreads infected ticks wherever it roams. Marin County, in particular, is known as a hot spot for both ticks and Lyme disease. In addition, ticks in California stay active throughout the year. All this underscores the need for San Geronimo Valley residents and visitors alike to take precautions year-round.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A TICK

If you find an attached tick, you must remove it promptly and correctly.

### Proper Tick Removal

- Use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the skin's surface as possible. Avoid handling the tick with your bare hands.
- Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Don't twist or jerk the tick; this can cause the mouth-parts to break off and remain in the skin. Be patient. Eventually, it will come out.
- After removing the tick, thoroughly clean the bite area and your hands with a disinfectant.
- Apply an antibiotic ointment onto the bite.

Place the tick in a sealed plastic bag with a moistened tissue or cotton ball. Label it with the date of the bite and where you think you picked up the tick. You may choose to have the tick tested, especially if you develop Lyme symptoms. Testing ticks is more accurate than testing humans. Free tick testing is available at [BayAreaLyme.org](http://BayAreaLyme.org).

Lyme disease is commonly transmitted by tick nymphs. In this stage, ticks are no larger than a poppy seed and are very hard to see, so check carefully. Less than half of patients with known Lyme disease ever recall being bitten or having any kind of rash.

Ticks can stay attached for many hours or several days. The longer a tick stays embedded, the higher the risk of disease transmission. However, there is evidence that transmission of infection can take place in a matter of minutes, particularly if it's not removed properly.

## SYMPTOMS OF LYME

Symptoms during an acute Lyme infection include fever, chills, aches, pains and rashes. These symptoms can start anywhere from two to thirty days after a tick bite. The appearance of a distinctive expanding bull's-eye rash is 100% diagnostic for Lyme, but only occurs in a small minority of patients. No rash, or an atypical rash, is more common.

## WHEN AND HOW TO SEEK HELP

If you experience any symptoms following a tick bite, contact a Lyme literate medical doctor (LLMD) immediately. You can get a list of LLMDs in your area by going to [ILADS.org](http://ILADS.org) and [LymeCoaching.com](http://LymeCoaching.com), a San Geronimo Valley based service.

Lyme symptoms can mimic other diseases. This often results in misdiagnoses if one doesn't connect the symptoms to the tick bite. If caught early and treated adequately, Lyme disease can be completely cured. If not, the long-term consequences may include arthritic, neurological and cardiovascular conditions that can be permanently debilitating.

## PREVENTION

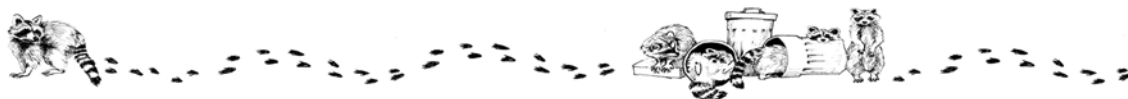
While not all ticks carry Lyme disease, they can carry other infections frequently referred to as co-infections. Prevention is key, especially when you consider that ticks have the potential of transmitting multiple pathogens in a single bite.

When spending time in nature, it's best to wear light colored clothing, long sleeves and long pants that are tucked into socks. Wearing light colored clothing will make the ticks easier to spot. Braid long hair or put it in a bun under a hat to protect your head. Use appropriate repellents on clothes and exposed skin. Make sure your kids do the same. Children ages five to fourteen are at the greatest risk and constitute approximately 25% of all reported cases.

Perform tick checks even if you only stay in your yard. It's currently thought that 75% of all Lyme disease cases are acquired from ticks picked up during activities around the home. Showering within two hours will help prevent ticks from attaching if missed during a tick check. A recent study showed that de-ticking clothing is best done by throwing clothes into a dryer on high for ten minutes before washing.

Do a tick check on pets before they come in from the outside to (a) prevent ticks that may be on them from coming into your home, and (b) protect them from getting Lyme. Animals are especially at risk if they spend time in tick preferred areas such as wooded, brushy terrain with high grass and lots of leaf litter. Speak with your veterinarian about additional prevention options.

More information can be found at [ILADS.org](http://ILADS.org) and [BayAreaLyme.org](http://BayAreaLyme.org). San Geronimo Valley and Nicasio residents can get free local consultations regarding prevention, treatment options, and Lyme doctors at [LymeCoaching.com](http://LymeCoaching.com).



# Wood Smoke, Public Health and Woodstove Replacement Rebates

(Source: <http://www.baaqmd.gov/sitecore/content/spa-retheair/home/stay-informed/particulate-matter/wood-smoke>)

Wood burning is the leading cause of wintertime pollution in the Bay Area. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District bans wood burning on days when pollution is expected to be unhealthy and Winter Spare the Air Alerts are called (some exceptions apply).

The nine counties that surround San Francisco Bay are home to almost seven million residents and an estimated 1.4 million fireplaces and woodstoves. The particulate matter, or PM, in wood smoke from these fireplaces and woodstoves has been a health concern in the Bay Area for many years.

Under certain meteorological conditions—cold, stagnant winter evenings—surface based radiation inversions form quickly in the Bay Area and PM levels rise rapidly. By the 1980s, wood smoke became the largest area-wide stationary source of PM in the Bay Area. Wood burning also generates carbon monoxide and toxic air pollutants such as benzene and dioxin.

Since the 1980s, many scientific studies have been published that correlate rising PM levels with serious health effects, such as asthma symptoms, decreased lung function, increased hospital admissions, and even premature death.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set a national PM emission standard for woodstoves at 7.5 grams per hour. Since July 1, 1990, all woodstoves manufactured in the United States have been required to meet this EPA standard. Previously, unregulated woodstoves averaged 60 grams of PM in an hour.

**The Wood Smoke Reduction Incentive Program** was developed to improve local air quality and reduce wintertime particulate matter pollution by helping Bay Area homeowners and landlords replace their wood-burning heating devices with cleaner options.

## Marin County Wood Stove Replacement Rebate Program

The County of Marin is offering rebates for the proper removal and replacement of non-EPA certified wood-burning appliances (e.g., wood stoves including inserts and traditional fireplaces) with cleaner burning appliances (EPA Phase II certified appliances, pellet stoves or natural gas appliances). This program is available to homes in unincorporated Marin County and any Marin city or town. Rebates are available on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are depleted.

[www.marincounty.org/-/media/files/departments/cd/planning/sustainability/green-building/marincounty\\_application.pdf?la=en](http://www.marincounty.org/-/media/files/departments/cd/planning/sustainability/green-building/marincounty_application.pdf?la=en)

## Winter Solstice on Mt Tam

by Dahlia & Jack Kamesar



We wake in the dark  
shed our history on the mountain  
as the woods close in around us  
we feel with our feet for the path  
follow our own hooded shadows  
through wind tossed branches

We pause with hope that the match  
will kindle a flame to guide us  
procession of candle lanterns  
flickering beams on twigs & roots  
shaken loose by the storms

We gather silently in the meadow  
cold wrapped around  
stars turn the sky

Hills in luminous mist layered to the sea  
cloud pageant of dragons and whales  
spills down the flank of the mountain

The astonishing light  
of our own being  
throws itself upon the land

Cacophony of sound  
We have come through  
This radiant and fragile time

Embraced by the Earth  
Sustained by the Light.

*This is the true joy of life, the being used up for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one; being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clot of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it what I can.*

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



# Chapter 6: Guide to Our Natural Environment



*Cow Parsnip (Photo Anne McClain)*



*Spawning Salmon (Photo Anne McClain)*



*Forest Knolls Creek (From the collection of Jim Staley)*



*Deer (Photo Anne McClain)*



*Trillium (Photo Anne McClain)*



# San Geronimo Valley Open Space Preserves

by Jean Berensmeier

Look around the Valley! It's hard to believe that until the 1970s there was no county public open space or public trails in the San Geronimo Valley. That changed in 1972. A survey done of over 80% of Valley residents by the ad hoc San Geronimo Valley Planning Group found that 88% of the residents preferred that the areas outside the village boundaries be preserved as open space. That fall two Marin elections took place that changed Marin forever. First, the Countywide Plan was adopted. The plan controlled or eliminated development in Marin's unincorporated areas and nullified the Valley's '61 Master Plan calling for 20,000 residents. It saved the ranches in Nicasio Valley and West Marin. Its passage also mandated that West Marin villages create Community Plans. At the same time, a bond measure passed that created the Marin County Parks and Open Space District to levy taxes to purchase and preserve open space. Currently, the county owns four open space preserves in the Valley, totaling around 2,500 acres. Following is a description of each preserve and how to access it.

## Marin County Open Space Dist. Preserves

### Roy's Redwoods

This is a 309-acre gem offering a redwood grove towering over an open meadow, grassland knolls, ephemeral creeks and abundant native plants and wildlife. The meadow is a popular family picnic spot, hosting weddings and Celebrations of Life, with narrow trails leading into the redwood understory. An equestrian trail starts near the entrance and travels above the meadow, over a small ridge and then down slope to a short tunnel under SF Drake Blvd. that connects with the Dickson Ranch. The preserve's unique watershed forms the headwaters of Larsen Creek, home of spawning coho salmon and steelhead trout. The preserve's

trails are open to hikers. Equestrians are limited to one designated trail. Bikes are not permitted.

*Access:* The trailhead is on Nicasio Valley Road .4 miles north of the junction of SF Drake Blvd. and Nicasio Valley Road. There is also an equestrian access from Dickson Ranch via a tunnel under Drake Blvd.

### Maurice Thorner

A series of steep switchbacks over mainly open hillside takes you to the top of this low rolling ridge of 33 acres, in the center of the Valley. Walk eastward to enjoy fine Valley views. Drop down on the east end to the multi-use bridge that crosses Nicasio Valley Road and joins a trail to Roy's Redwoods.

*Access:* Take School Road off of Sir Francis Drake Blvd. and park at the west end of the San Geronimo School parking lot where the trail begins.

### Gary Giacomini

This preserve wraps around the four villages on the south side of the Valley. It includes the fire road on top of the ridge, originally known as Pine Mountain Truck Road, now called San Geronimo Ridge Fire Road, that goes from the Cascade Preserve in Fairfax to Peters Dam adjacent to Taylor Park—a five-mile walk. On the way, you'll enjoy spectacular views of the Mt. Tam Watershed, the Valley, Mt. Diablo, Mt. Saint Helena and, on a clear day, the Sierra Nevada range to the east. Highlights include the dwarf Sgt. Cypress in moon-like landscapes on the ridge.

*Access:* From Woodacre, use Summit or Fire Road off



*Gary Giacomini Open Space, view north (Photo by Laurence Brauer)*



Conifer Way. In San Geronimo, take Manzanita Fire Road from Tamarack. In Forest Knolls, take the fire road off Cortez or Sinaloa. In Lagunitas, take the MMWD fire road near the Inkwells.

### French Ranch

This 383-acre preserve lies in the heart of the Valley. It features a trail connection to the trailhead at Roy's Redwoods and a trail to the top of the northern ridge. South-facing slopes provide superlative views of the Valley and San Geronimo Ridge.

At the western end of the preserve is a steep slope that includes significant areas of exposed serpentine. The unique soil derived from this mineral supports many rare plants. The French Ranch fire road allows access to the ridge and runs alongside a deep, forested canyon that is a haven for wildlife.

*Access:* 1) Main entrance on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. across from Roys Redwoods. Take West Nicasio Road. Walk .5 miles west to trailhead. 2) East of Wild Iris Road on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. is entry to Top Flight Trail that also meets the French Ranch Fire Road that goes to the ridge. Stay to right and you will reach Roy's Redwoods via West Nicasio Road.

More detailed information regarding the preserves, permitted uses, and use constraints is available at [marincountyparks.org](http://marincountyparks.org).

## Seduction

by Barbara Swift Brauer

The blackberries have stopped you and,  
in spite of yourself,  
you will walk no farther tonight.

Instead, with nothing more than the palm  
of your hand, you give in,  
cupping the soft fruit in one hand

reaching into the tangle  
with the other, snagging a sleeve,  
scratching a wrist.

Don't worry. You will not be here long.  
Before you know it, this  
will be years past.

Your knees will nag and the hill  
will be too steep.  
The evening chill uninviting.

No, the inconvenient succulence  
of this event comes only once  
and only now.



*Blackberries (Photo by Paloma Russ)*





February 2003

## Willis Evans Canyon

by Jean Berensmeier

It was a pleasure to join Supervisor Kinsey, Jared Huffman, chairperson of the Marin Municipal Water District Board, and members of Willis Evans' large family at a special dedication under the beautiful redwoods in Bates Canyon. We were there to rename the Canyon in honor of Willis Evans in respect for his lifetime dedicated to preserving watersheds and protecting fisheries. It was an idea spawned by Kent Julin, incubated by Liza Crosse, and hatched by Supervisor Kinsey and the Board of Supervisors in a special resolution for this purpose.

Willis was clearly delighted and completely surprised. "I'm astounded," he said. "It never entered my mind that they'd name a creek after me." And how nice that the Canyon is only a few steps east of his lovely home.

Willis is 83 now and jokes about his memory lapses but he has no lapses when it comes to his firm opinions and suggestions for the latest efforts he feels are needed to protect watersheds and endangered species.

### A Fishy Beginning

After World War II, Willis worked as part of General Douglas MacArthur's staff to support the Japanese fishing industry and help feed the starving nation.

He decided to move to Marin in 1953 where the experience in Japan qualified him to become a regional fisheries supervisor for the State Department of Fish and Game. He was in charge of supervising and reporting on streams and



(Photo by Laurence Brauer)

streams between San Luis Obispo and Mendocino County.

In 1967 Willis spent five years in Africa where he studied the growth of native river fish in a lake environment. He also taught local residents how to fish the large lakes.

Upon his return to the United States, Willis went to work for the U.S. Forest Service in San Francisco. He served as head of fisheries for the State's National Forest lands, focusing on stream protection in logging areas. He loved his home on San Geronimo Valley Drive and frequently took local groups for walks along the creek, educating them about good and bad creek care along with valuable information about fish and their habitat.

Willis retired in 1983 but never took a vacation when called on or when addressing the needs of fisheries. He served on the board of the Marin Conservation League for many years. Willis continued to frequently address public agencies with his views and recommendations based on a lifetime of experience sometimes going head to head with staff and/or decision makers in the process. He was always a gentleman but unwavering when he had come to a conclusion. He never gave up. As Huffman said, "Willis ferociously defended his belief in waterway preservation."

### Dedication

It was a pleasantly informative dedication guided by Supervisor Kinsey with appropriate remarks by elected officials, friends and family. Paul Berensmeier played a favorite tune of Willis' on his Indian flute.

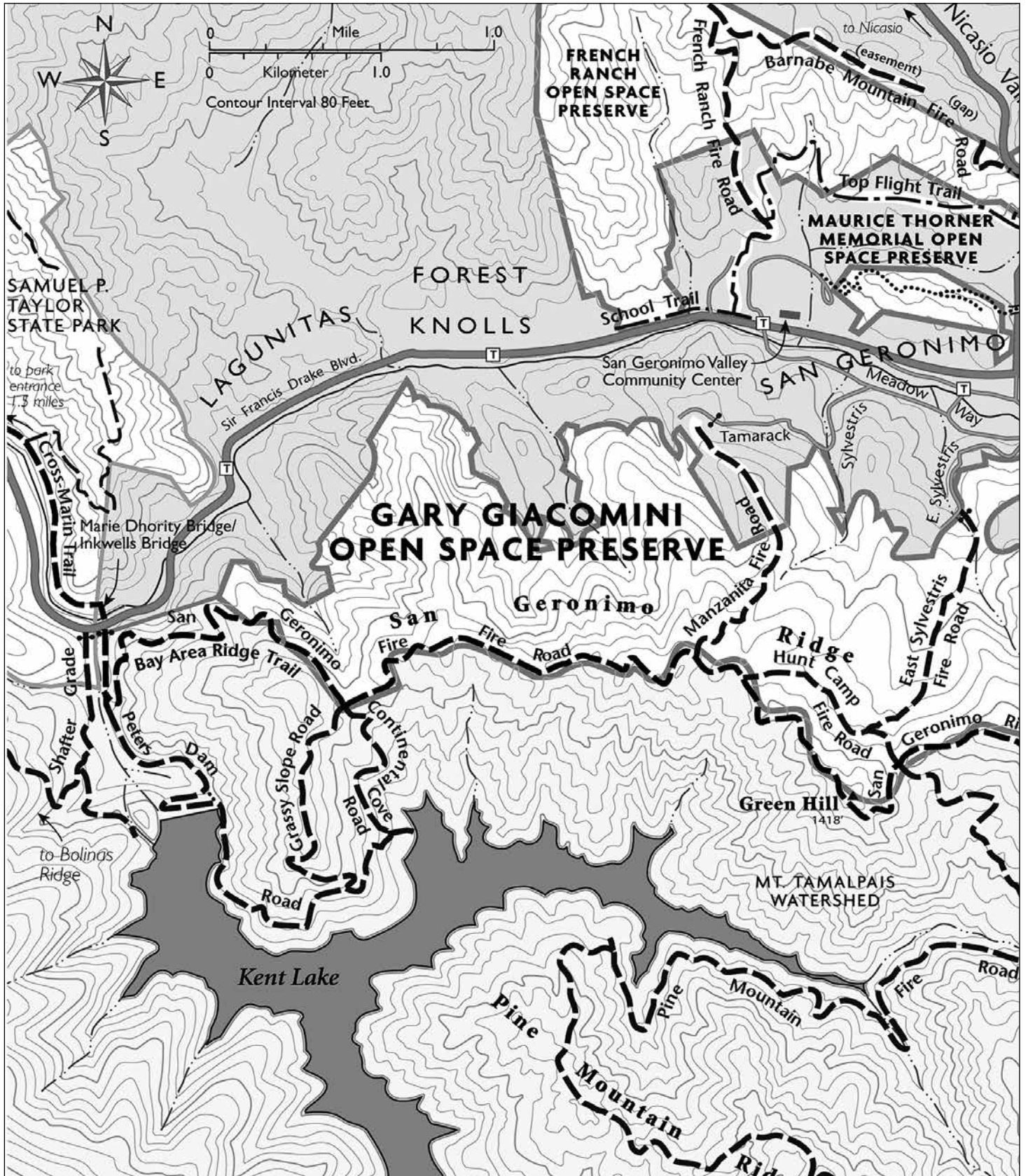
Willis' daughter Joan, deeply moved by the honoring, described the love of nature that Willis instilled in the family. She recalled a special game the family played in Devil's Gulch where each family member picked a fish and rooted for it to win the race upstream. "We had so much fun. Thank you, Dad."



(Photo by Laurence Brauer)



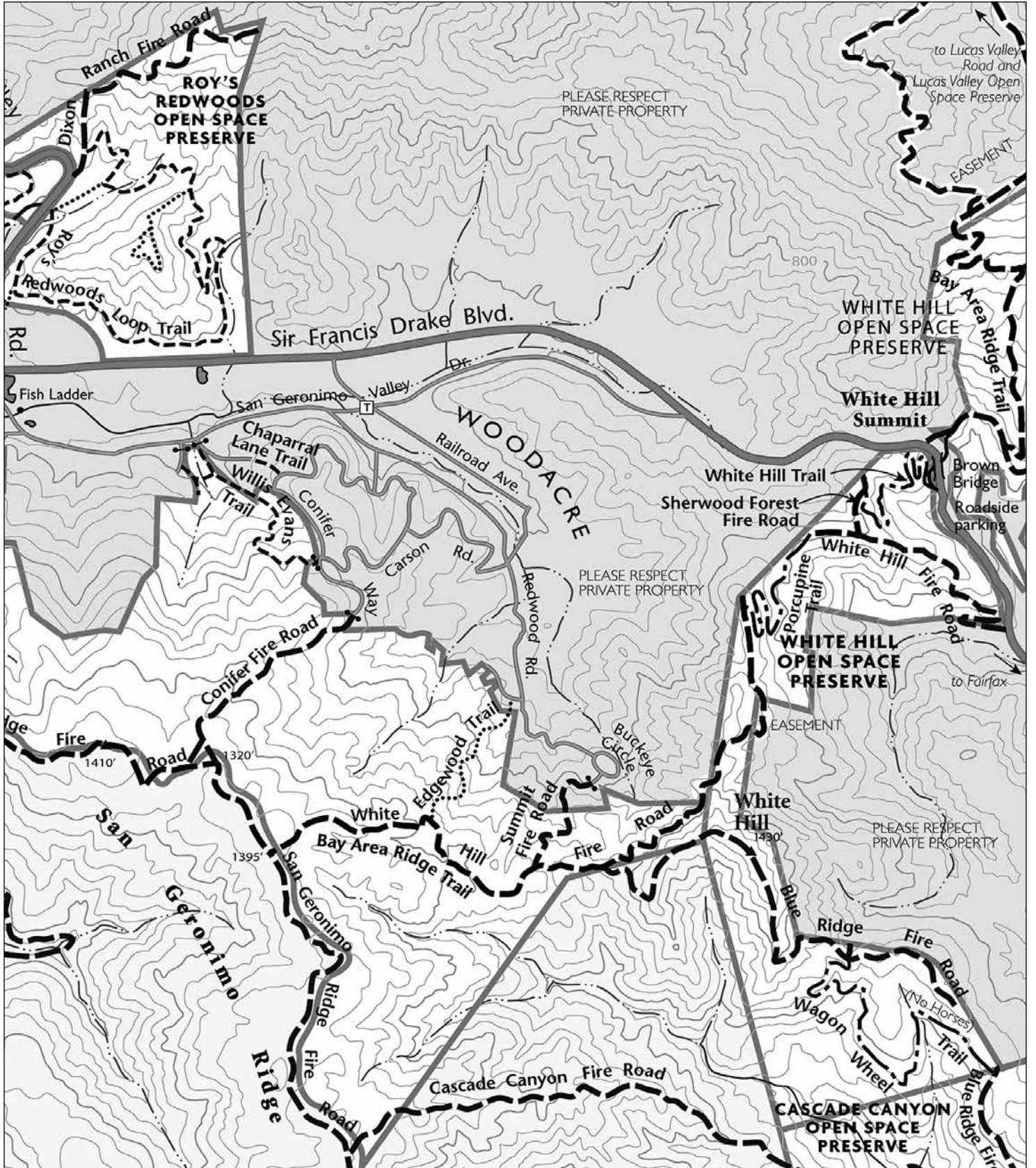
# Marin County Open Space of the Valley



(Courtesy of Marin County Open Space District)







# Living with Wildlife Neighbors

by Megan Isadore and Jean Berensmeier

Despite being on the edge of Marin's western urban corridor, the Valley enjoys a wealth of native and non-native wildlife in magnificent, forested lands. Raccoons, skunks, squirrels, deer and birds are seen frequently. Bobcats and mountain lions are seen—but rarely. Coyotes are making a strong comeback and the non-native but wild turkey is frequently seen in large groups in meadows on the Valley floor. One of our greatest gifts is the coho salmon and steelhead trout that spawn annually in San Geronimo Creek and its tributaries.

Living peaceably with some of these wild neighbors can be a challenge. Most human/wildlife conflicts involve keeping wildlife from dining on and inhabiting our gardens and buildings. Many wildlife issues can be solved by (1) not feeding animals outside, (2) not leaving water dripping or standing, and (3) closing off entry points to structures. Remember, if you're leaving out food for one cute raccoon or feral cat you're asking for trouble. You'll soon have local wildlife lining up for a handout. If a coyote joins the parade to your food dish—keep in mind they are predators and your pet cat or dog may look like better food prospects.

Mountain lions are also called cougars or pumas and live in remote wilderness areas, like the Mt. Tamalpais MMWD property on the other side of San Geronimo ridge or the north end of Devil's Gulch just below Mt. Barnabe. The problem is cougars wander, are curious and sometimes end up in town or on your favorite trail.

If you encounter a mountain lion here are six tips: (1) Don't run! (2) Give it a chance to leave. (3) Back up slowly. (4) Make yourself big by waving your arms or holding your jacket above your head. (5) If you have a small child with you protect them by putting them on your shoulders. (6) If the cougar acts aggressively and approaches or attacks—yell, keep on yelling and fight back. Aim for the eyes and face.

Following are a few of the most tried-and-true methods and tips of keeping your home and garden comfortable for you and considerate of our wildlife.

- The only method that keeps deer out of your garden permanently is fencing, unless you have time to spray deer repellent every week and after each rain. Try leaving a corridor unfenced, so deer can pass by, instead of through, your vegetables and ornamentals.
- To protect fruit trees from furred marauders, either cover trunks with a 3-foot high smooth material unsuitable for claw holds, or try hanging sponges soaked in predator scent from branches.
- Animals nesting in your house in spring and summer are almost always nursing mothers. Consider waiting

until the babies are old enough to leave with the mother before closing off the entrance to her home. If you must evict a mother and babies consider WildCare's exclusion service (information below), rather than using an old-fashioned pest control company who will trap and kill the offending animal. By law, pest control companies who live trap on your property must either kill the animal or release it on the same property.

- Raccoons, skunks, and opossums eat rats and mice! Skunks can clear your garden of slugs in a night!
- Yellow jacket wasps seek protein foods for the first part of the summer and sweet foods during the latter part. Eating outdoors can attract them. Avoid swatting at them, as when squashed they emit pheromones that attract and incite other wasps. Cover or remove picnic scraps, drink containers, compost heaps, and fallen fruit.

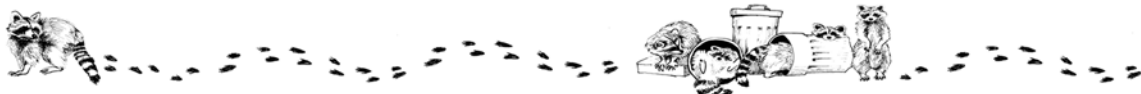
## Health issues

- Backyard wildlife will not attack you or your pets unless provoked. Clap, stamp, or make other noise before letting your dog into the yard at night, so wildlife will have a chance to scamper.
- California rabies vectors are skunks, bats, and foxes. There is very little raccoon rabies in California. Raccoons sometimes appear "rabid" when sick with canine distemper. Generally, a healthy-looking raccoon out in the daytime is looking for a snack and not in need of help.

Note: Wildcare offers a wildlife exclusion service for a fee. 415-453-1000 x 23, and a free online "24-point Do It Yourself Home Inspection Checklist." ([http://wc.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=Animal\\_Emails\\_24point\\_Inspection\\_January2013](http://wc.convio.net/site/PageServer?pagename=Animal_Emails_24point_Inspection_January2013))



(Photo by Megan Isadore)



## A Keystone Moment

By Paul Berensmeier

“Keystone” moments hold the fabric of our lives together and are largely why we are who we are today. These moments shape our lives, their unique message opening a new door, or revealing an exciting new trail to explore in the wilderness of life.

My Grandpa—“Santa” to old timers in the Valley—set the stage for my “moment” in a Point Reyes book store in the '70s. As an impressionable teenager eager to learn, I pulled a book from the shelf titled *The Tracker* by Tom Brown. “Grandpa, is this a good book?” Grandpa hefted it, getting the feel for it. He looked at the cover carefully. Then read the back. He opened the book in the middle and read. I stood watching every move. Grandpa would know. He looked into the distance, then back at me, and said, “Yes, Paul, that is an excellent selection.”

Soon I began practicing the tracking techniques. Very exciting! There were different levels. First, following deer prints to the source—the source being the deer itself. What an experience to track a deer and then see it burst out of concealment! Second, make oneself “invisible” by conforming your body to the natural shape of the environment and mentally merge with the foliage. What a thrill when my dog, Skye, stopped 15 feet away, appeared to look right at me, but then, confused, passed by. Third, communicate your intention to a wild animal and be convinced that it understands you. But how?

One day, as I drove up Alta Avenue in Lagunitas towards home, a tiny fawn ran across the road and stopped in the middle of it. I parked quickly and ran over. Suddenly I was standing face to face with a fawn. Big eyes . . . little body trembling. “Where’s your Mom?” I said. Then I remembered the tracking book. I relaxed and cleared my mind. Feeling the fawn’s fear, I looked into its eyes. I let the strong desire to help rise up and sent a nonverbal “thought-image” that I would help. Instantly, the fawn walked up to me, put its forelegs around my calf, hugged it tightly and wouldn’t let go.

I gently picked him up and drove home. He was unsure of the bouncing car, but didn’t seem frightened. Grandpa was overjoyed at seeing us but quickly suggested that I wipe my scent off the fawn with a wet rag and return him to a place in the nearby forest for his mother to come for him. I did so—carefully climbing a dirt hill into the forest canopy and placing him in a dense thicket. I returned the next morning on my way to school and found two sets of deer prints on the nearby trail. A doe and fawn’s prints. The mother had come back for him!

## My Fish Story

Why “I Brake for Coho” Isn’t Such a Weird Bumper Sticker After All

by Anne McClain

After being up for a few hours already in the predawn of the December 31<sup>st</sup> flood of 2005, I decided to take a break from pulling debris out of the culvert in front of our house halfway up Montezuma Avenue in Forest Knolls and walk farther down the street. I got as far as the park on Montezuma, behind the Little Store. Water covered the roadway and I could see that the creek was just skimming over the bridge. I watched as a car came slowly over the bridge, inching along, deciding if the water was shallow enough to continue.

Meanwhile, I noticed some debris in the water at my feet. Then I realized that some of the “debris” was moving, and it was heading *upstream* not down with the current! There were two salmon right there at my feet trying to cross Montezuma Avenue! I watched as one of them slithered its way across the high spot in the roadway. The second one seemed to get stuck at that point. I watched it for a moment, wondering what the “Endangered Species Act” position on impromptu fish rescue is, and then reached down and grabbed the fish. I couldn’t hold on to it long, but managed to get it to water deep enough for it to continue on upstream. The fish really knew which way they wanted to go even though they and the creek were far out of their usual boundaries. I was glad that the car didn’t decide to venture up Montezuma—it might not have been able to “Brake for Coho!”

Later in the day, when I related this story to a neighbor, he joked that the fish were probably trying to go visit Todd Steiner (of SPAWN who also lives on Montezuma.)

It was an awe-inspiring and for many a heart-breaking day. The big slide and the huge torrent of water roaring down Montezuma took with them giant trees, several bridges, a large shed and a pickup truck. Thankfully, no one was hurt. It is a cliché but a truth nonetheless that Nature is powerful. Not only for turning a trickle of a minor creek into a raging, destructive river, but also for the power that keeps the salmon on course, heading upstream to spawn, even when the “stream” is Guadalupe, Montezuma, and Juarez Avenues.

*Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like falling leaves.*

JOHN MUIR



# Pets in the Valley

By Robert Baker, DVM, with update by Diana Rocha

The Valley is a great place for pets, but there are a few local peculiarities and pitfalls to be aware of.

Foxtails and other grass awns are a major problem for dogs and cats. As the grass dries up, usually in May, the seeds find their way into our socks and into any and all orifices of our pets. For dogs, the usual fox tail sites are ears (sudden scratching, tilting head and pain), nostrils (sudden violent sneezing), and between the toes (pustular draining tracks). Cats are more likely to get foxtails under their eyelids, resulting in a closed, weepy eye. When possible, keep dogs out of dry, grassy areas. Whacking and bagging grasses around the house will also help.

Ticks are a year-round problem here, but their main population explosion is after the fall rains begin in November. These ticks can transmit Lyme disease and other tick-borne illness to dogs and cats, which in most cases manifests itself by achiness, fever and lethargy. A simple blood test can check for the disease and if positive, antibiotics started. Cats often get chiggers (tiny larval ticks) around and in their ears in the fall months. Chiggers cause extreme itchiness. Look for tiny orange dots in the ear folds, or little scabs on the ear margins.

To prevent tick-borne illness in both dogs and cats, it is advisable to use tick preventative medications. There are many tick preventatives to choose from; consulting with your local veterinarian is helpful for finding the right choice. (See page 146 for more information on ticks.)

Fleas, like ticks, are a year-round problem but the warmer months are the worst. The newest generation of topical and/or oral flea products have been a wonderful help in controlling and preventing flea infestations.

Heartworms are transmitted by mosquitoes and can cause severe heart disease and death if not prevented. Dogs are at greater risk of getting heartworm disease, but cats can get it as well. Though we don't have a severe heartworm problem in Marin County, mosquito borne illnesses are spreading due to climate change and it is advisable to have your pet on heartworm preventative medication year round. This is especially important if you plan on traveling with your pets to surrounding areas where heartworm disease is more prevalent.

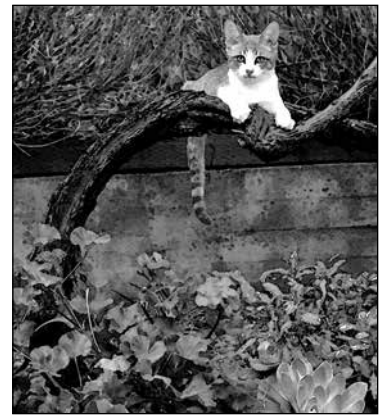
Rattlesnakes, though rare, are a threat to dogs, particularly those that hike with us in the hills. It is best to keep dogs on the trail and close at hand, especially in the warm summer months. If your pet is bitten do not attempt to tourniquet or cut the wound, just get your pet to a veterinary hospital as soon as possible. Fortunately, most snake-bitten animals survive with prompt treatment. If you believe your dog is at a high-risk for rattlesnake exposure, there is a rattlesnake vaccination available.

Those who hike or bike the trails with their dogs, need to be aware of their canine companion's physical limits. Cut pads, sprains, dehydration and collapse are frequent occurrences, particularly in older, overweight or out of condition animals.

There seems to be an increase in the population of wild predators (bobcats, coyotes and mountain lions) in the San Geronimo Valley, and with it, the worry that our pets may be at risk. Although reports of pets disappearing are not that common, it does happen. It would seem prudent to take reasonable precaution, especially if you live near or frequent our open space areas. The biggest problem for Valley cats is the common fight wound abscess. The best way to protect your kitty is to keep it indoors, especially at night, and to keep food and water inside. Keeping your pets up-to-date on their rabies vaccine is always advisable.

The nearest veterinary clinics are the San Geronimo Valley Veterinary Clinic (415-488-9791) and the Pet Emergency & Specialty Center of Marin (415-456-7372).

The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center Hotline is (888) 426-4435 and is available 24/7. Please note, a consultation fee may apply.

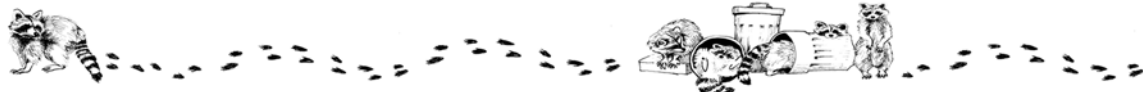


Carson (Photo by Debra Amerson).

## Thirteen Crows

by Albert Flynn DeSilver

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# Fun Valley Facts

## Elevations

Pine Mountain—1,762 feet (4<sup>th</sup> highest in Marin County)

Loma Alta—1,592 feet (5<sup>th</sup>)

Mt. Barnabe—1,466 feet (9<sup>th</sup>)

White Hill—1,430 feet (10<sup>th</sup>)

Woodacre—361 feet

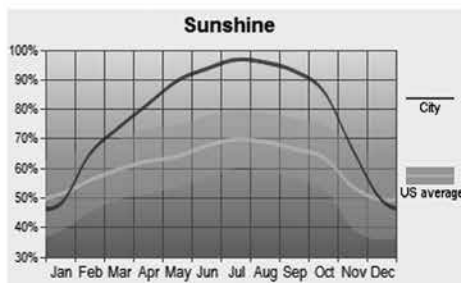
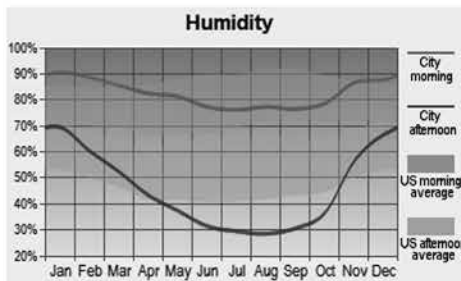
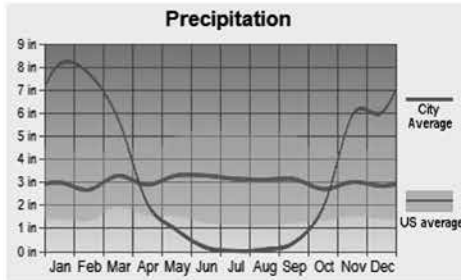
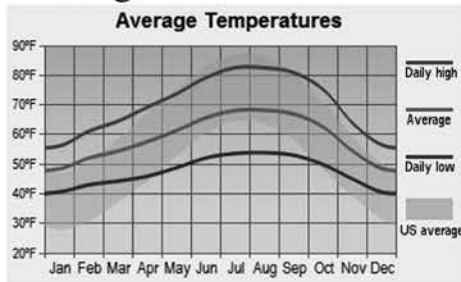
San Geronimo—292 feet

Forest Knolls—249 feet

Lagunitas—217 feet

Nicasio—194 feet

## Average Climate in Woodacre



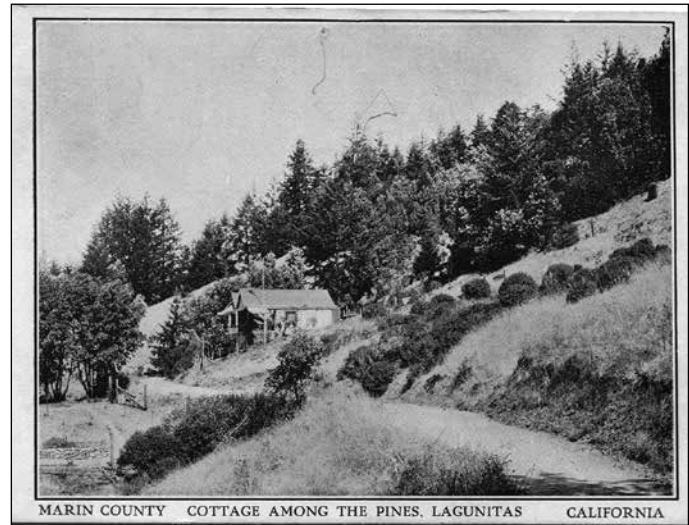
From [www.city-data.com](http://www.city-data.com)



*Maurice Thorne Open Space, above San Geronimo (Photo by Laurence Brauer).*



*View of Woodacre with Castle Rock and cows. The house still stands on Crescent Drive. (From the Collection of Newall Snyder and also contributed from the Collection of Jim Staley)*



*Postcard (From the Collection of Newall Snyder)*





*“One of the gasoline-electric cars standing at the Woodacre Lodge Station. Today the car would be on the exit road leading from the county fire station to the intersection of Carson and Railroad Avenues. [View toward the east] The Grand Stairway between the station and the park is in the center of the picture. The Woodacre Lodge Station was the primary station in Woodacre. Another station in Woodacre at Park Street was only a flag stop.” (Caption from Jim Staley. Photo from the Collections of Newall Snyder and Jim Staley)*



*“A wood-burning locomotive pulling a passenger train, which bears the logo of the North Pacific Coast Railroad, nears the apex of its arduous climb up the eastern slope of White’s Hill. After crossing the trestle it will traverse a 1,250 foot tunnel and be in the San Geronimo Valley. This trackage was abandoned in 1904 when the Bothin-Woodacre tunnel was opened.” (Photo and caption courtesy of Jim Staley)*





*"Several hikers have paused for a photograph on what appears to be a beautiful day for a walk in the early 1920s." (Caption from Jim Staley. Photo from the Collections of Newall Snyder and Jim Staley)*



*Lagunitas in the 1920s (Photo from the Collections of Newall Snyder and David Wilson)*



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*A great old horseless carriage parked outside of the Papermill Creek Saloon, Forest Knolls. In these early days the Saloon had a wooden porch on 2 stories. Now this porch has been enclosed and rebuilt in stucco. The store across the street is on what is now an empty fenced lot. For more on the store see photo caption on page 81. (Photo from the Collection of David Wilson)*







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<https://www.westmarinrotary.org>



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## SAN GERONIMO VALLEY PLANNING GROUP

FOUNDED 1972 AND STILL RELEVANT TODAY

**Our mission is to protect our village rural character  
 and the natural beauty of our open spaces**

### THE PLANNING GROUP

- *Provides timely and relevant information at our meetings, in our monthly newsletter, and on our web site [sgvpg.org](http://sgvpg.org)*
- *Puts on topical education and outreach events for our membership and community*
- *Works with the County of Marin, MMWD, State Agencies, and local partners on all Valley issues*

### ONGOING IMPORTANT VALLEY ISSUES INCLUDE:

- SEPTIC REGULATION
- AIR QUALITY
- AFFORDABLE HOUSING
- CLIMATE CHANGE
- COUNTY PROJECTS
- DEVELOPMENT PLANS
- EIR AND PERMIT REVIEWS
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- OPEN SPACE, PRESERVES & TRAILS
- SALMON RESTORATION PROJECTS
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**IF YOU LIVE IN THE VALLEY YOU SHOULD BELONG TO THE PLANNING GROUP!**

WWW.SGVPG.ORG  
 SGVPG, P. O. BOX 57, FOREST KNOLLS, CA 94933

OUR MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO ALL VALLEY RESIDENTS AND HELD ON THE 2<sup>ND</sup> MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH  
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Anniversary of the  
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## Gan HaLev

the Jewish Congregation  
of the San Geronimo Valley

joyfully salutes the  
San Geronimo Valley Community Center in  
celebration of the Center's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Since its beginnings in 1992, Gan HaLev has celebrated Jewish Holidays, and held meetings and classes at rented space at the Community Center. We have been a part of the Center's Holiday Arts Faire and we have joined with other Valley faith organizations for our Interfaith Thanksgiving Services which supports the Center's Food Pantry.

We are proud to join our neighbors and friends in extending our wishes to the Community Center – the Heart of the Valley – with our hopes for a long and sustainable future.

[www.ganhalev.org](http://www.ganhalev.org)  
[shalom@ganhalev.org](mailto:shalom@ganhalev.org)  
415-488-4524

**FM 90.5 PT. REYES  
89.9 BOLINAS  
92.3 THE VALLEY**  
STREAMING AT [KWMR.ORG](http://KWMR.ORG)



**Congratulations**  
to the San Geronimo Valley Community  
Center on 50 years of community-building.

**Here's to The Valley!  
Here's to The SGVCC!**



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## Our Mission

Our mission is to create, preserve and manage affordable housing in the San Geronimo Valley and beyond.

## Our Vision

We envision a culturally diverse and vibrant San Geronimo Valley community that retains its unique rural and natural qualities while offering housing opportunities for people of all income levels and walks of life.

[info@sgvcc.org](mailto:info@sgvcc.org)

**415-488-4890**

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

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of the earth.**

**Chief Seattle**

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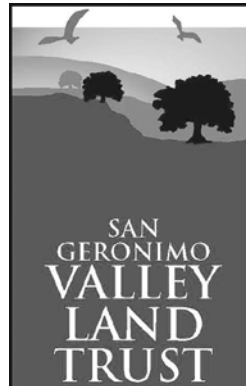
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Nobel Prize Winner

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# A Nuestros Lectores en Español:

¡Bienvenidos!

Esperamos que esta guía les ayude a encontrar los servicios y información que necesitan.

Pero no todas las organizaciones aquí enlistadas contestarán su llamada en español. Indicamos con un asterisco (\*) cuando los servicios se ofrecen en español. Algunas organizaciones tienen personal que habla español sólo por unas horas. Se indica esto con dos asteriscos (\*\*).

## San Geronimo Valley Community Center

415-488-8888 x 254\*\*

El Centro ofrece muchas programmas para todos personas.

### Los Programas Comunitarios del Centro Juvenil:

Los programas del Centro Juvenil atienden a más de 300 niños adolescentes cada año. El Centro ofrece una programación innovadora, diversión sana y programas de mentorar. El objetivo de los programas de Centros Comunitarios de la Juventud es proporcionar un ambiente donde los jóvenes aprenden las habilidades que necesitan para hacer diferencias positivas en sus propias vidas y el mundo que les rodea.

### Zoila's Childcare (cuidado de los niños)

Ofrece un lugar seguro y divertido para los niños de kínder al 3º después de la escuela en Lagunitas.

### The Loft

El Loft es un centro juvenil con el valle en mente. El Loft está abierto de Lunes a viernes después de la escuela en los días de clases normales hasta las 5:30PM en días de escuela regulares.

### VAST (Tutoría después de la escuela)

Este es un programa que ofrece ayuda a los estudiantes con sus estudios. Los tutores coordinan con los maestros de estudiantes para darles la ayuda específica que necesitan. Lunes a Jueves después de la escuela en la Escuela de Lagunitas.

### Summer Bridge (Puente de Verano)

El Centro ofrecen un programa gratis para los niños que entran kínder en otoño. Este programa es 5 semanas y es para niños en los escuelas Lagunitas y Nicasio.

Después de la Escuela de Enriquecimiento  
Cada semestre, el Centro ofrece una variedad de clases divertidas y enriquecedoras.

### Los Programas Comunitarios del Centro Servicios Humanos

#### Food Bank (Banco de comida gratis)

Ofrece alimentos sanos y información sobre la salud. La Food Bank está abierta Lunes desde 9:00AM-5:00PM y Jueves desde 1:00-5:00.

#### Senior Lunch (Almuerzo para mayores)

Lunes y jueves a mediodía ofrecen almuerzo y comunidad para personas mayores de años got. La comida es orgánica y cuesta \$3.

#### Health Fairs (Ferias de la salud)

En el autummo hay una ferias de la salud. Hay información y servicios, por ejemplo, vacuna contra la gripe, remedios homeopáticos y controles de la presión sanguínea. Todo esta gratis y aceptar Kaiser tambien.

### Información Médica

#### Coastal Health Alliance

Point Reyes Medical Clinic:	415-663-8666*
3 Sixth Street, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956	
Bolinas Family Practice:	415-868-0124*
88 Mesa Road, Bolinas, CA 94924	
Stinson Beach Medical Center:	415-868-9656*
3419 State Route 1, Stinson Beach, CA 94970	

[www.coastalhealth.net/](http://www.coastalhealth.net/)

Servicios de salud para todos los niveles de ingresos en cualquiera de nuestras tres clínicas en Point Reyes, Bolinas y Stinson Beach. Haga una cita o venga en persona.

### Prevención de suicidios

**Si siente que quiere suicidarse o si alguien amenaza o hace referencia a suicidarse**, hay ayuda disponible. Llame al **911 AHORA MISMO** o contacte a los servicios de emergencia siquiátrica del condado (Marin County Psychiatric Emergency Services) al 415-499-6666. Es la llamada que puede salvar una vida.

### West Marin Senior Services (Servicios para personas mayores)

415-663-8148

Ayuda a personas mayores en nuestra comunidad ofreciéndoles servicios en su casa, ayudándoles a vivir y con servicios comunitarios.



(West Marin Senior Services)

tarios, información y recomendaciones a programas de alimentos, asistencia financiera, consejos de seguro de salud, agencias de casas de salud y más.

## Preparación para Desastres

### Después de un terremoto:

- Manténgase alejado de ventanas, chimeneas y tragaluces.
- Quédese donde esté, ya sea en su casa o en el trabajo.
- Inspeccione todas las tuberías de gas, los cables eléctricos y los tubos de agua.
- Asegure o remueva los objetos flojos o apilados en repisas.
- Tenga un botiquín de emergencia de primeros auxilios a la mano en todo momento.

### Suministros básicos para desastres que hay que tener a la mano (Renuévelos regularmente)

- Suministros de comida que no se descomponga para cinco días
- Suministros de agua para cinco días (1 galón de agua por persona, por día)
- Un botiquín de purificación de agua (o una botellita de blanqueador)
- Un radio o tele portátil de baterías
- Una linterna, baterías de repuesto, velas, cerillos en un recipiente a prueba de agua
- Un botiquín de primeros auxilios y su manual
- Artículos de sanidad e higiene
- Un silbato
- Ropa extra (chaqueta/abrigo, pantalón largo, camiseta de manga larga, zapatos fuertes, gorra, guantes, bufanda)
- Una bolsa de dormir o cobija caliente (por persona)
- Un impermeable
- Una estufa de campamento con combustible extra
- Utensilios para cocinar y comer (abrelatas, cubiertos, platos y tazas de plástico)
- Papel aluminio resistente
- Fotocopias de tarjetas de crédito e identidad
- Un juego extra de llaves de casa y carro
- Dinero en efectivo, algunas monedas
- Artículos para necesidades especiales (medicinas recetadas, anteojos, solución para lentes de contacto, baterías de adminículos para los oídos)
- Artículos para bebé (fórmula, pañales, biberones, chupones)
- Alimento y correas para perros y otros animales
- Medicina

## Emergencias médicas: Llamar al 911

### Síntomas de un ataque al corazón

- Malestar en el pecho que dura varios minutos o que se va y vuelve.
- Dolor o malestar en brazos, espalda, cuello quijada o estómago.
- Falta de respiración.
- Sudor frío, náuseas o ligero dolor de cabeza.

### Síntomas de derrame cerebral

- Entumecimiento repentino o debilidad en cara, brazos o piernas.
- Confusión repentina, problemas para hablar o entender.
- Problemas repentinos para ver con uno o ambos ojos.
- Problemas repentinos para caminar, con mareos y pérdida del equilibrio.
- Repentino y severo dolor de cabeza sin razón conocida.

**Refugios de emergencia designados: Woodacre Improvement Club (Woodacre); San Geronimo Presbyterian Church (San Geronimo); and St. Cecilia's Church (Lagunitas).**

## Conoce sus Derechos Constitucionales

([www.afsc.org/susderechos/conozca-sus-derechos](http://www.afsc.org/susderechos/conozca-sus-derechos))

### Tiene el derecho a guardar silencio.

No tiene que contestar preguntas, pero hay un riesgo si no da su nombre verdadero--les puede parecer sospechoso.

### No tiene que revelar su situación migratoria a los agentes del gobierno...

...pero tampoco debe mentir. Tiene derecho a guardar silencio. Mentir se castiga, guardar silencio ¡es un derecho!

### Puede negarse a firmar cualquier documento.

Aunque no tenga abogado, no tiene obligación de firmar nada. Si tiene abogado, puede pedir que esté presente cuando le interroguen. Tiene derecho a entender lo que va a firmar.

- Siempre sea cortés y manténgase tranquilo.
- Nunca mienta o dé información falsa a un agente de Inmigración ni a la policía; no lleve consigo identificaciones falsas ni de su país.
- No revele a los agentes del gobierno su situación migratoria, en donde nació, o como entró al país.
- Mantenga el nombre y número de teléfono de un abogado de inmigración que aceptará sus llamadas.



(Conoce sus Derechos Constitucionales)

Apréndalo de memoria.

- Muéstrelas la tarjeta adjunta “Conozca sus derechos.”
- Haga un plan de preparación familiar en caso de emergencia.

**Si ha sido maltratado, tiene derecho a quejarse. Recuerde que conocer sus derechos y ejercerlos no significa que agentes de ICE o la policía los respetarán; pero podrá defenderse en corte.**

*Esta información no se debe considerar como un consejo legal sino informativo. Debe hablar con un abogado de inmigración o personal acreditado por la BIA (Junta de Apelaciones de Inmigración) acerca de su caso en particular.*

## Escuelas Públicas

Distrito Escolar de Lagunitas:	415-488-4118
Dirección de la Escuela de Lagunitas:	415-488-9437
Dirección de la Escuela de San Gerónimo:	415-488-9421
Distrito Escolar de Nicasio:	415-662-2184
Sir Francis Drake High School:	415-453-8770

**Al servicio del valle de San Gerónimo, el Distrito Escolar de Lagunitas (Lagunitas School District) tiene dos programas distintos para niños de kínder al 5º o 6º grado.** Las familias pueden escoger entre:

**El Programa Montessori** (en la parte baja de la escuela, o *Lower Campus* o la Escuela de Lagunitas) donde se enseña a los alumnos a verse como ciudadanos del mundo y a aprender cómo todos los seres vivientes se relacionan entre

sí. Una de las metas es que los niños desarrollen de por vida un sentido de responsabilidad para con ellos y con el planeta en que vivimos.

**La Clase Abierta o *Open Classroom*** (en la parte alta de la escuela o *Upper Campus* o la Escuela de San Gerónimo), donde el aprendizaje se basa en la acción. El desarrollo social, físico, emocional, artístico y académico es valorado por igual. Se invita a los padres a venir y participar y ayudar en las clases.

**Los niños del valle de San Gerónimo del 6º al 8º grado asisten a:**

**La Escuela media de Lagunitas** (en el *Lower Campus*). Los alumnos toman clases con varios maestros sobre lenguaje, arte, matemáticas, educación física, ciencias y estudios sociales.

**Los niños del valle de Nicasio del kínder al 8º grado asisten a:**

**La escuela del Distrito de Nicasio** (en Nicasio). Esta escuela ofrece un programa educativo de grados múltiples que se enfoca en el desarrollo intelectual, social y emocional de cada estudiante.

**Los jóvenes de Nicasio y San Gerónimo del 9º al 12º grado asisten a:**

**La escuela preparatoria Sir Francis Drake High School** (en San Anselmo). Esta escuela *high school* tiene muchos y muy buenos programas y es reconocida nacionalmente como una escuela sobresaliente.



*Revivir la Cultura baileadores, Mexican Arts Festival 2012*



## Check out the *Community Guide Online*!

We hope to include everything you see here and more! We envision the *Community Guide Online* to be a dynamic and evolving online publication, with additions and updates. Among the features will be expanded versions of some articles and additional articles, and more stories, profiles and photos. See below for information regarding space advertising, and Business and Artists Listings. Access the *Community Guide Online* through the San Geronimo Valley Community Center's website [sgvcc.org](http://sgvcc.org).

### Build the *Community Guide Online*!

#### **Valley & Nicasio Artists and Businesses: List your goods and services for free!**

Please note: Listings limited to individuals who live or work in Nicasio or the Valley and businesses based in Nicasio or Valley. Send notices up to 125 characters (spaces included) to [communityguideonline@sgvcc.org](mailto:communityguideonline@sgvcc.org).

Sample listings include:

*Barbara Swift Brauer, 415-488-4605, bsbrauer@sonic.net – Writer, editor, consultant. Manuscript development & critique.*

*R.T. Wilson Plumbing, 415-488-4867, Cell: 415-609-5903, rtwilsonplumbing@yahoo.com, locally owned and operated. Lic. #723535*

**Display Advertising:** For rates and specifications, contact [lippee@sgvcc.org](mailto:lippee@sgvcc.org).

**We welcome your Valley and Nicasio stories and photos!** (Please note, we are unable to publish copyrighted material without permission of the copyright holder.) Send submissions to [communityguideonline@sgvcc.org](mailto:communityguideonline@sgvcc.org).

We look forward to hearing from you!

## Something Missing? About Those Valley Phone Listings

We deeply regret that we can no longer provide Valley residential phone listings. The 488 prefix that once was our exclusive identity is being assigned outside of our area, and newcomers are getting numbers with different prefixes or bringing along old numbers from elsewhere. Many people have abandoned landlines altogether. This has made it impossible to gather a complete directory of Valley phone numbers.



*Lagunitas Lodge (built in 1916) circa 1926. The Lodge later was called Speck McAuliffe's and was known for its Irish coffee. The front portion of the building that housed the bar was destroyed in a fire in 1983. Some of the stone pillars remain in front of the Lagunitas Post Office. (Photo courtesy of Jim Staley collection)*



# SGVCC's 2016 Heart of the Valley Gala Honoring Retiring Supervisor Steve Kinsey

*All photos by Peter Pennypacker*



*Steve's parents, Bev and Roy Kinsey*



*SGVCC Staff members Julie Young, Poko Giacomini and Nicole Ramirez*



*Jean and Paul Berensmeier, and Andrew Giacomini*



*Steve Kinsey in conversation*



# San Geronimo Valley Community Center Donate Today!

Our San Geronimo Valley is a very special place. As a community, we are proud to truly care about the 4,000 people who live here and the thousands more who visit the Valley each year for cultural or recreational activities, or to hike on our beautiful trails and hillsides. The San Geronimo Valley Community Center is a vital part of this community, making its many contributions to the people who live, work and visit this amazing place.

**We need your support.** As a nonprofit organization, we rely on grants and donations to sustain all our programs. We have been very fortunate to receive grants from the County and private foundations who recognize the importance of what we do. But the most critical source of our funding is the exceptional generosity of our community in the form of direct donations that we receive from people like you. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation today with confidence, knowing that you are contributing to an effective, fiscally responsible organization that's making a real difference in our community.

## Ways to Give

- **Donate Today**
  - Donate safely and securely online at [www.sgvcc.org](http://www.sgvcc.org)
    - Make a one-time donation to our Annual Fund
    - Sign up to donate monthly. Your credit card is billed automatically every month and you can cancel at any time.
  - Donate by mail. Send a check made out to San Geronimo Valley Community Center to PO Box 194 San Geronimo, CA 94963
  - Donate your car, truck or boat
- **Become a Member of our Council of Major Donors**
  - By making a gift of \$750 or more, you join an incredible group of people that support the critical programs our Center offers
  - Council Members receive a monthly newsletter
  - Council Members are invited to our annual Council Dinner
- **Corporate Matching Gifts**
  - Maximize your donation through your company's matching gift program. Many companies encourage employees to donate to their favorite charities by matching their contributions, often dollar for dollar. Check with your employer to see if they offer this great benefit!
- **Join our Legacy Circle**
  - Consider making a planned gift to the San Geronimo Valley Community Center in your will or trust. Your gift will help sustain the Center, allowing our organization to grow and build on what we have created. By making a planned gift you are signifying that sustaining the San Geronimo Valley Community Center was a priority during your lifetime. There are plenty of advantages to making such a gift; tax savings are one benefit, but more than that, you can help support the future of an organization that is close to your heart and crucial to the place we call home. We hope you will consider planned giving's long-term approach to your support of the SGVCC and will talk with your loved ones about it.

