

NEWS FROM MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

To preserve, protect and enhance the natural assets of Marin in a changing environment.

Sept - Oct 2023

Shining a light on MCL's 2023 Awardees for Environmental Achievement

Last April, MCL celebrated the accomplishments of seven unique awardees for their leadership in environmental protection. We recognize these individuals, organizations, businesses, and/or agency employees for their actions leading to the preservation and protection of Marin's environment, sustaining it for future generations.

This year's awardees have shown vision, perseverance, patience, commitment, wit, and humility. Their actions are described within. We honor their achievements. **See pages 6 through 10!**

Do you know someone who is working to protect the environment?

This year, MCL is opening up the award nominations to our MCL community!

A panel of MCL board directors will choose 2024's awardees from the submitted nominations. Awardees selected will be honored at MCL's Annual Meeting in April 2024.

To submit a nomination, please call (415) 485-6257 or email the office (mcl@marinconservationleague.org) for a nomination packet.

Nominations are due **November 10**.

Thank you for your participation!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's message	p 2
Building electrification decision ...	p 4
Green Home Tour	p 5
Environmental Awardees.....	p 6
New MCL Board Members	p 11
Urban Forest talk.....	p 12

Measure A



Student group exploring the top of Ring Mountain

Courtesy Parks Community Grantees

Lesser-known treasures of parks, open space, and sustainable agriculture

By Nona Dennis, with Kevin Wright and Sonya Hammons

This is the season Marin County Parks (MCP) looks forward to every year: Northern spotted owlets have fledged (restrictions lifted July 31), and autumn rains are still a few months away. Plans have been thoroughly studied, many of them for years, CEQA documents signed off and permits obtained, and work crews are in the field as construction moves forward full tilt. It's also an active season for the public as visitors catch the remaining days of summer temperatures to enjoy their parks and open spaces. Much of this activity was enabled by Measure A, the quarter-cent sales tax to support parks, open space, and sustainable agriculture that voters originally passed in 2012 and re-approved in 2022. The tax generates approximately \$16 million per year total, a vital supplement to the County's otherwise limited public funds.

Behind the scenes, undeterred by breeding owls, other activities go on year-round, depending on the weather. One MCP program made possible by Measure A, but little known to the general public because of its modest fiscal impact, targets a public who otherwise might not venture into Marin parks and open spaces—for example, newly-arrived kids in Marin who have not yet made connections with their peers or the elderly, living alone or in assisted-living, isolated from transportation, inhibited by language barriers or lack of cultural connections, fearful of prejudice, or simply unfamiliar with the terrain of "open space." The Breathe/Respira program is a treasure waiting for them!

Breathe/Respira¹ Community Grant Program

Research is overwhelming that peoples' health and well-being improve when they are

cont. p. 2



President's Message

See and be curious

As the mists of a river create the "optical magic" of rainbows dancing in the drizzle, be in awe and also be curious—why are a rainbow's colors always in the same order? Why are rainbows refracted from each of many droplets of water?

As a desert sunset descends over you in the quiet and vastness of what von Humboldt called the "sea of sands", ask yourself what lives here? How can they survive?

Early in the morning, as leaves "unfold to greet the morning sun" be mesmerized and also ask why do they unfurl, and how do they do that?

Plunging into the mystery of nature, helps us recover from "the stormy waves of life". We focus on beauty and on the sublime. Nature affects our mood. A blue, sunny day's energy feels so different from a grey, raining day of reflection. Seeing the vivid color of a western blue bird or bright goldfinch can begin your day with a smile and a looking-forward. Noticing a prolonged disappearance of a familiar species can be cause for concern. The joy or the sadness can be met with complacency or it can inspire you to action. MCL's 2023 awardees have chosen action!

Inspired by the words of Alexander von Humboldt

Nature's inspiration is varied for each of us. How does nature speak to you? For Jerry Riessen, it inspired a long and dogged pursuit of preservation for the rare and beautiful habitat on Tiburon Ridge; for Tom Lai, recently retired Marin County Community Development Director, it was public service to accomplish improvements through local government, such as protection of riparian streamside habitats; Bartlett Tree Service found it in taking a science-based sustainable approach to caring for trees; MCL Secretary Larry Minikes chooses advocacy; Carlos Porrata, in sharing his knowledge of nature with the public, and educating young people.

College student Reva Siu is not immobilized by the climate emergency. She sees it as a call to action and will pursue a career in sustainable urban planning.

I'll leave you with the words of Judy Schriebman, "I hope everyone can figure out how to ... treasure and love each lovely and unlovely thing that crawls and creeps and swims and climbs and grows and flowers and smiles and growls on the face of the earth so that this place can become the paradise as well as the training ground it was designed to be."

What touches your heart? Be curious! See. listen. Ask how and why. Then become inspired to step into action to preserve Marin's natural places.

Jerry Terri

Lesser-known treasures: Measure A from page 1

able to get outdoors, but not everyone can take advantage of Marin's abundant "outdoors" without significant help. **The Breathe/Respira Community Grant Program** was created following the original passage of Measure A in 2012 in order to reach out and enable those most in need of support to get outdoors. Leaning on a foundation of research and data, Breathe/Respira grants were able to remove barriers for residents across the county. Thus, with a total annual allocation of around \$200,000, it became the first of its kind to support outdoor access in the county.

Many Breathe/Respira grants awarded over the past nine years have focused on older adults. Visitor data from the county's open space preserves show that Marin's adults ages 70 and older, while a growing demographic group, are among the least represented visitors in parks. Sadly, many older adults living in care and assisted-living facilities do not have access to regular transportation to visit parks. Grants to Mercy Housing, Love Is the Answer,

Marin Conservation League, Vivalon, Marin Asian Advocacy Project, Age Friendly Sausalito, and others solved that problem by providing transportation for organized group outings to parks. These trips are a highlight of the year for many, and an opportunity to build social connection with friends and community members.

Experienced in the connection between their services and the health and well-being benefits of the outdoors, social service organizations like Marin Community Clinics and the Marin City Health and Wellness Center can measure the benefits of improving access for patients beyond the four walls of their clinics from sponsored park outings with grant funds. Data collected in Marin City following park outings have shown meaningful improvements in mental health, blood pressure, and obesity.

My favorite part of the Leap Field trip was doing the scavenger hunt. I also had fun when we played volleyball with a big bouncy ball. I'm happy I went to the field trip. I had lots of fun.
Evelyn Lopez

Over the years, grants have responded to community needs in the moment. During the COVID-19 pandemic many partners reported a mental health crisis among young people. Grants provided to Wise Choices for Girls, Opening the World, Youth Leadership Institute, Multicultural Center of Marin, Bay Area Community Resources and others have created meaningful connections to the outdoors. In a recent survey of 356 Marin youth, 95% reported feeling better after going outdoors.

Lesser-known treasures: Measure A from page 2



Courtesy Parks Community Grantees

Bay Area Community Resources after school group meeting a ranger at Stafford Lake

Over the last ten years, the vast majority of program participants have reported returning to the parks they were introduced to over and over, bringing friends and family with them. Grants have helped thousands of Marin residents find meaningful connections to the outdoors, resulting in an ongoing relationship with those places. Several grant recipients work on a regular basis with newcomers, residents who recently immigrated to Marin. They have added park outings to their legal, housing, after school, and other services. Outings introduce these residents to local parks for the first time and support feelings of safety and familiarity. On one outing, a grandmother to a family visiting Santa Venetia for the first time was overjoyed to find a plant she recognized from her home in Central America and shared a story about playing outdoors as a child.

Grants have had a rippling impact. Grantees, inspired by the success of their outdoor trips, have partnered with Marin County Parks to remove some of the most significant barriers to the outdoors for all Marin residents. Park entry fees were eliminated last year, and free access to group sites for local organizations was expanded in the regional parks. Marin Transit developed a webpage showing public transit routes to parks. Grantees network to explore grants and co-plan park outings to build social connection across the county.

Kevin Wright, MCP Government and External Relations Manager and founder of Breathe/Respira, will continue to head the program into its next nine years. Applications for grants open around January of each year; grants range up to a maximum of \$8,000. For more information about this program, including past grant awards, and application criteria, visit the Marin County Parks

[Community Grant Program webpage.](#)



Courtesy Parks Community Grantees

Love Is The Answer intergenerational outing at the Duck Pond (Lagoon Park)

Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems in Marin

In March 2022, as the June election approached, voters familiar with the enormous environmental and public benefits Measure A had made possible in nine years were not at all assured that the popular measure would comfortably renew. Public attitudes had changed with events since the original approval in 2012 and priorities had shifted. Wildfire was on everyone's mind; Marin's agriculture was not. There

was, in fact, a negative perception circulating toward including private agricultural lands as beneficiaries of a public program. One solution was to highlight the connections between "public good", social equity and conserving agricultural land that could come from linking sustainable agriculture, local food systems, and communities in both east and west Marin.

Thus, the revised Measure A on the 2022 ballot offered more diverse means to support sustainable agriculture and local food systems than its predecessor. While the total 20% of Measure A funds allocated to support agriculture-related programs (the rest includes Marin County Parks 65%; and cities, towns, and applicable districts 15%) remained unchanged, it was diversified into three kinds of agriculture and food-related programs: 1) matching funds for agricultural conservation easements, 2) Resource Conservation District carbon farming, stewardship, and other restoration projects, and 3) a new **Food, Agriculture, and Resilient Ecosystems (FARE)** grant program to support community food systems and community gardens and other small-scale agriculture throughout Marin.

The past year has been devoted to fully exploring what FARE would include, and how it would be managed. Using roughly a third of the agriculture funds (or 6% of the total Measure A funds), the program is expected to offer approximately \$800,000 in grants annually to invest throughout Marin communities. To design the new program, Marin Parks collaborated with partners and community and other interested groups for over a year to listen to their suggestions. Many common themes emerged from these discussions, such as requests to emphasize equity as a central element of the program's design, invest in projects that advance community-led planning processes, focus on filling gaps in the funding landscape, and remain flexible to adapt to changing community needs.

As a consequence, FARE will support a diverse range of topics to strengthen local food systems, including community gardens, food micro-businesses, farming opportunities for underserved communities, habitat restoration, and more. This

Building electrification remains crucial following the Ninth Circuit's decision in California Restaurant Association v. Berkeley

By Will Carroll

Natural gas use in Marin's building sector accounts for over a quarter of the County's total greenhouse gas emissions on an annual basis. In seeking to reduce emissions in this critical sector, dozens of local jurisdictions throughout California have enacted ordinances banning natural gas connections in newly constructed buildings. During the past year Marin County along with four of its cities and towns have adopted such laws. Unfortunately, the validity of these laws was recently thrown into doubt due to an April 2023 decision by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals striking down the City of Berkeley's ban on natural gas piping in new building construction.

That decision has been challenged by Berkeley and remains subject to further review by the Ninth Circuit, and potentially the U.S. Supreme Court. The outcome of that process could take many months. In the meantime, local officials are assessing how the Ninth Circuit's decision could impact state and local restrictions on fossil fuel use in buildings, and more broadly, how building electrification initiatives should proceed notwithstanding that decision.

The Ninth Circuit's decision

Berkeley passed its ordinance banning natural gas piping in new buildings in 2019, as part of the Health and Safety section of its Municipal Code. That same year, the California Restaurant Association (CRA) sued Berkeley in federal court, arguing that the ordinance was preempted by the federal Energy Policy and Conservation Act (EPCA) and therefore unenforceable. Enacted in 1975, EPCA governs energy efficiency and energy use standards for most major household appliances and other covered products. In order to maintain uniformity, EPCA expressly preempts states and local jurisdictions from setting their own energy use or efficiency regulations for covered products. The federal district court dismissed CRA's lawsuit, concluding that EPCA preemption did not apply. CRA appealed.

In *CRA v Berkeley*, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit reversed the district court, reasoning that because EPCA preempts state and local governments from regulating "the quantity" of natural gas used by an appliance at the point of use, an ordinance that bans the use of natural gas effectively requires a "quantity" (zero) and is therefore preempted. Under this decision, Berkeley's ban and similar bans by other jurisdictions are now unenforceable. As discussed below, bans that are enacted as "reach codes" or are otherwise part of a building code may avoid preemption – if they qualify for EPCA's narrow building code exception. Notwithstanding that exception, the panel's decision will, unless modified or overturned, nullify many natural gas bans throughout California and in each of the other eight states comprising the Ninth Circuit.

Further proceedings

In May 2023 Berkeley filed a petition for rehearing en banc, seeking review of the three-judge panel's decision by an "en banc panel" consisting of 11 randomly selected Ninth Circuit judges. In order to reach the

en banc panel, a majority of the Ninth Circuit's 27 judges must first vote in favor of proceeding with en banc review. Alternatively, the original three-judge panel could simply agree to rehear the case, although there is little likelihood that will occur.

Unfortunately, it remains far from clear whether *CRA v Berkeley* will reach the en banc panel. The standards for qualifying for en banc review are demanding, and only a small fraction of cases qualify. Even so, many observers have noted what they believe to be serious flaws in the three-judge panel's decision that would help to justify review. In addition to Berkeley's petition for rehearing, no less than eight amici curiae, or "friends of the court" (including the United States and the state of California) have filed separate briefs detailing those flaws and urging the Ninth Circuit to undertake en banc review.

If there is a vote authorizing en banc review, the three-judge panel's decision will no longer have any effect. Rather, the en banc panel will conduct further proceedings and render a new decision. This would all take time. The entire process could take less than six months or could extend to well over a year. Furthermore, there remains the possibility (albeit remote) that the case could be submitted and accepted for review by the U.S. Supreme Court if Berkeley's pending petition is denied by the Ninth Circuit.

Navigating around *CRA v Berkeley*

Even if the three-judge panel's decision in *CRA v Berkeley* stands, advocates of building electrification need not be deterred. There are a multitude of promising electrification strategies that remain unimpeded by the decision.

First and foremost, state and local governments remain free to incentivize electrification through rebates, tax credits, financing, permitting reform and other measures designed to make the transition away from fossil fuel use in buildings cheaper and easier. Such programs are becoming an increasingly widespread and robust means of accelerating building electrification. There is nothing in *CRA v Berkeley* that prohibits or impedes these and other strategies aimed at incentivizing the voluntary shift away from fossil fuel use in buildings. Such measures, which have long been a focus of state and local officials, will assume even greater importance if the three-judge panel's decision stands.

Second, jurisdictions can take advantage of the so-called "building code exception," which is part of EPCA. Under this exception, a state or local building code provision regulating covered appliances will avoid EPCA preemption if it meets each of the seven requirements set out

cont. next page



Image: City of Bozeman, MT

Building electrification

in the statute. The requirements are detailed and technical, and jurisdictions pursuing this strategy should take care in ensuring that all requirements are met. While the building code exception would not apply to an outright ban of natural gas infrastructure similar to Berkeley's ordinance, it does allow jurisdictions to set energy consumption or conservation goals for buildings and identify alternative pathways, including electrification, to achieve those goals.

Third, there is a sound argument that EPCA preemption does not prevent state and local authorities from regulating (and banning) gas appliances through exercising their power to regulate air quality. The relevant provisions of EPCA address energy and efficiency standards, not air emissions standards. One air quality regulator, the California Air Resources Board (CARB), has recently adopted rules that will require all newly purchased space and water heater appliances to be zero emission by 2030. These rules are incorporated into CARB's State Implementation Plan (SIP), which is required under a federal statute (the Clean Air Act) and reviewed and approved by a federal agency (the Environmental Protection Agency). This "federalization" of CARB air emissions rules could further undermine any argument they are subject to EPCA preemption. Separately, regional regulations recently adopted by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) will ban the sale or installation of water heaters that emit nitrous oxide (NOx) in 2027 and, two years later, will do the same for NOx emitting furnaces. Because

Even if the decision in *CRA v. Berkeley* stands, advocates of building electrification need not be deterred.

gas water and space heaters emit NOx, the BAAQMD rules amount to an effective ban on the future sale or installation of these appliances. These air emissions standards are not immune from challenge by those seeking broad application of EPCA preemption. It will be up to courts in future cases to determine whether Congress intended EPCA to cut such a wide swath, invalidating potentially life-preserving air quality standards in the name of ostensibly maintaining the uniformity of appliance energy efficiency standards.

In sum, the legal battle over Berkeley's ordinance is not over and may yet vindicate Berkeley's view, shared by the district court, the federal government, and the state of California, to say nothing of a multitude of law professors and environmental groups, that EPCA does not preempt the city's ban on natural gas infrastructure in newly constructed buildings. But win or lose, Berkeley and jurisdictions throughout California have ample means available to continue and expand their efforts to slash greenhouse gas emissions from the building sector and in so doing advance their progress toward a carbon neutral future. 🌱

Will Carroll is an attorney who has handled various appeals before the Ninth Circuit and other appellate courts. He is a member of MCL's Climate Action Working Group.

2023 MARIN GREEN HOME TOUR THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 6PM



VIRTUAL AND FREE!

Registration is open now >>

MarinGreenHomeTour.org

This event is a project of Sustainable Marin.

MCL Sponsored Event

How are Marin neighbors adapting their homes to combat climate change, improve air quality, generate clean energy, and move towards a safer, healthier, greener, more resilient future?

This year's Marin Green Home Tour features video tours of 6 Marin homes, followed by live Q&As with the homeowners. Experts will be in the Zoom chat ready to answer all your questions.

This year's all-new lineup will show features like solar, storage batteries, heat pumps, induction stoves and cooktops, passive solar, an electric fireplace, grey-water systems, rainwater harvesting, water monitors, native and edible gardening, even sheep as lawnmowers!

Learn the most up-to-date information about local, state, and federal funding sources and resources to help you get started greening your own home.

**CARLOS PORRATA**

During his three decades-long career with State Parks, and through his enduring stewardship and passion for the open spaces of West Marin, **CARLOS PORRATA** has inspired many others to care about the natural world.

Carlos was born and raised in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He moved to the East Coast of the US for six years, earning a Master of Education from Trenton State College and working in the field of education before moving to California with his family. Once in California, Carlos joined State Parks as a Park Ranger (1976). His first assignment was in Samuel P. Taylor, but then he moved to Tomales Bay State Park where he worked for the next 25 years, until he retired. As a ranger, he stewarded the land. He has said it became more than a career, more a way of life, learning about and sharing the natural and cultural history of the parks with the public.

Carlos is deeply respected by all who know him. He helped start the Marin State Parks Association. He served on the prestigious Marin Community Foundation Board. He's also served on the boards of several other organizations including the Tomales Bay Watershed Council, Shoreline Unified School District and the Point Reyes National Seashore Association, among many others. He has advocated locally on issues impacting the well-being of the people of West Marin and the protection of the wildlife he has spent decades observing.

Soon after retirement, Carlos taught himself wildlife and nature photography. He embarked on this occupation inspired by his experience as a

ranger, his intimate knowledge of West Marin and its communities, the beauty of the landscapes, and the behaviors of resident and migrating species. Carlos has developed a beautiful collection of photos and has showcased his work in group and solo shows throughout Marin. Many of his images have appeared in local and national publications, regularly in the Point Reyes Light, and in organizational publications across the Bay Area, and in State and National Parks.

Carlos remains actively involved in environmental and educational issues, in workforce housing, and social justice issues affecting underserved communities in West Marin and throughout the County. Carlos can be seen at times on trails or along the roadsides capturing crystal-clear shots of wildlife in their natural settings. Hours spent in nature give him a great deal of pleasure.

As residents of West Marin for the past 41 years, both Carlos and his wife Rebecca, have received many awards honoring them for their lifelong service and leadership in the community and beyond. MCL is pleased now to be among those providing recognition.



The **Ted Wellman Water Award** is presented to an individual or organization who maintains Ted Wellman's high standards for protecting and preserving water resources in Marin and the state.

JUDY SCHRIEBMAN's mantra was "Water connects us all." Many knew her to be a tireless advocate and educator for the care and conservation of Marin's biodiversity, riparian areas, and waterways.

Judy liked nothing better than gathering like-minded people to accomplish great things, especially when it benefitted a watershed. She volunteered for and led numerous nonprofit boards and organizations. She was both a founding member of Gallinas Watershed Council (GWC) and co-founder of Watershed Alliance of Marin—no small feat. She also served as Chair of the Marin Chapter of the Sierra Club, among other affiliations.

Judy regularly documented trash in creeks, gave presentations, led yearly litter cleanups with GWC,

and organized volunteers in kayaks during high tides to access hard-to-reach litter in the Gallinas Marsh. She also co-led tours including "Bike the Watershed" and kayaking the creek to raise awareness of local watershed issues, and she involved students from Lucas Valley Elementary and the Marin School of Environmental Leadership (MSEL) in creek cleanups and restoration projects.

She had a proven track record in making sure that habitat and watersheds were given voice in local decision making—writing letters, speaking at the podium, and gathering others to do the same. Unabashed in making use of all tools in the toolbox, Judy once appeared before San Rafael City Council in a large paper maché Clapper Rail costume, imitating the endangered species' calls, to

next page

**JUDY SCHRIEBMAN**

The **MCL Volunteer Award** honors an MCL volunteer who has generously shared time and talent to help MCL realize its mission.

For **LARRY MINIKES**, volunteering is a full-time occupation! Attend a MCL picnic, and he will be flipping burgers on the barbeque; come to the Annual Dinner or Holiday Open House and he will be serving up wine and beer; take a hike on Mt. Tam and chances are you will find him pulling broom. Attend MCL committee meetings, and the likelihood is that he will be there, often volunteering to co-host. Or tune into a Marin Water (MMWD) Board meeting or Watershed Committee meeting, and he will be there, prepared to address the Board on either water supply issues or matters needing attention on the watershed – he knows almost every road and trail from frequent workouts on his bike, and years of hiking the trails. For MCL's purposes, he also has his ear to the ground, chatting it up with rangers on a regular basis.

Larry's love affair with Mt. Tam began decades ago, as he hiked almost every day on the mountain, switching to mountain bike as one knee began to fail. He joined the Bay Area Trails Preservation Council (1992) and served as president from 1997 to 2002. He joined the Tamalpais Conservation Club (TCC) board around the same time (1993), and served as its corresponding

secretary and, for six non-consecutive years, its president. As he began to observe growing recreational use and misuse on the watershed, in 1999/2000 he founded the MMWD Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee (WCAC). The committee met for two years to develop a 50-year watershed protection plan, now board Policy No. 7, Mt. Tamalpais Watershed Management. To honor the TCC centennial in 2012, Larry championed the publication of Barry Spitz' informative history "To Save a Mountain—The 100-Year Battle for Mt. Tamalpais." While still in TCC, in 2014 Larry successfully launched Mt. Tam Jam, the first music festival in 46 years in the Mountain Theater, to raise funds for Mt. Tam State Park. Larry also recently served on the MMWD Citizen Advisory Panel on Infrastructure (2019-20).

Larry's service to the MCL, as a nine-year Board member and past Secretary, has also taken him beyond water and into the realm of wildfire. He serves on the Citizens' Advisory Committee of the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority, the steering committees of the Ecologically Sound Practices collaborative and the recently formed Marin Biomass Project.



LARRY MINIKES

In his "other" life, Larry has been involved in developing consumer electronics health and wellness products as A/V Stim, LLC, for several decades. He and his wife Debra, partners for over 40 years, have two lovely grown daughters. Debra calls Mt. Tam "Larry's other wife." He is either on the mountain or in some other open space several times each week. These days it might even be a kayak, as he explores wildlife along the shallow shores of the Bay.

JUDY SCHRIEBMAN

draw attention to what was at stake from proposed development in the marsh. She was good at organizing citizen action and inspirational in raising the general public's awareness of watershed value and vulnerabilities due to human impacts.

Through her participation in the annual Bioneers Conference, Judy developed the vision of a vegetated floating island for the Marin Civic Center Lagoon. With GWC, Judy garnered County government support and tested early prototypes in her swimming pool. For more than six years the plant roots from iterations of vegetated floating islands have absorbed lagoon nutrient and other pollution due to runoff from surrounding grassy areas and parking lots.

In 2007, Judy was elected to the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District board where she served three terms, one term as president. There she became a progressive force in improving water quality through wastewater treatment at the District.

Judy was instrumental in getting watershed protection included in San Rafael's 2040 General Plan by combing through iterative drafts and suggesting new language and edits. And she avidly joined others in influencing the County's passage of the Stream Conservation Area Ordinance.

Judy was on the forefront of working on revisions to the County's tree ordinance and worked with others in San Rafael to do the same. Seeing native trees removed and replaced with non-native saplings inspired her to put together subject matter experts and community activists to help.

She had a lifetime of positive impact on the county, the city of San Rafael, her neighborhood, and the watersheds of Miller Creek, Gallinas Creek and McInnis Marsh, protecting and stewarding them, including and most importantly, the portion of tributary to Gallinas Creek which flows through her backyard.

Judy grew up in Marin. She graduated with a degree in Zoology from UC Berkeley and was certified in Classical Homeopathy and Clinical Hypnotherapy. It was a shock to many when Judy passed away from breast cancer last November.

According to Jeff, Judy's husband who accepted MCL's award on her behalf, Judy's favorite quote is from the 20th century writer John Augustus Shedd, "A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for." Judy could not sit by while things needed fixing. She was passionate in her reverence for the natural environment, and for water, and never one to falter in acting on her convictions.

Note: Judy's narrative was compiled from the many letters of support she received for her nomination for a Lifetime Achievement Heart of Marin Award, including one signed by outgoing Supervisor Damon Connolly and incoming Supervisor Mary Sackett, as well as from the words of her husband, Jeff.

The **Youth Award for Environmental Leadership** recognizes a Marin high school or college student who has made significant contributions to the community by seeking innovative solutions to environmental problems and issues.

College of Marin (COM) student, **REVA SIU**, says she began her journey toward environmental advocacy in 2018 when the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report warned of a 12-year time limit to turn the tide against climate change. As a child of Chinese-Tahitian parents, she became terrified that her family's home island of Tahiti in French Polynesia would sink over the course of her lifetime. And having grown up in the Philippines, she witnessed the point when super typhoons, a once-in-a-decade phenomenon, became an annual occurrence.

In high school, Reva joined the Environmental Club where she focused on environmental justice in the Filipino community. Taking advantage of online opportunities, Reva began taking classes from College of Marin (COM) in 2021 and she joined COM's Environmental Action Club. Eventually she moved from the Philippines to pursue an Environmental Studies major in the US. Reva became president of the EAC at COM in 2022, working to connect students with environmental activism at school as well as in the community through regular cleanups of local waterways, beach and creekside cleanups, marsh planting, recycling, and food waste awareness campaigns.

In December 2021, Reva graduated from Resilient Neighborhoods' climate resiliency program then helped write fundraising letters for the organization. From April 2022 to January 2023, she was a volunteer for the Gallinas Watershed Council.



REVA SIU

Reva hopes to transfer to UC Davis or the University of San Francisco to pursue a concentration in sustainable urban planning. "My ultimate goal," she said, "is to make cities more sustainable and equitable." Upon learning the news of being chosen for MCL's award, Reva said she was deeply honored. "There's a lot of anxiety in this field about not doing enough about climate change," she said, "so it's a big comfort to know that people not only see my attempts to create change but believe in my ability to do even more."

Reva has set her sights on three long-term environmental goals: to work in urban sustainability with an emphasis on traditional ecological knowledge, so she may apply a more global and equitable view toward land conservation policies and programs; to support coral conservation projects in the Philippines and Tahiti as the two countries struggle with overfishing and marine life die-off; and lastly, to publish a fictional young adult series that focuses on environmental justice! This past summer, Reva began a Community College Conservation Internship with Point Blue's STRAW (Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed).

During MCL's Awardee recognition, Reva said, "I'm very grateful for this support and I look forward to keeping the fight against climate change and for environmental justice very much alive."

The **John M McPhail, Jr. Green Business Award** is awarded to a Marin enterprise that exemplifies environmental sensitivity in business and which has supported and improved communication between the business and environmental communities.

BARTLETT TREE EXPERTS was originally founded in 1907 by Francis A. Bartlett. F.A. Bartlett was committed to providing scientifically-based landscape management based on world-class research, ergo the Expert in the name. That tradition has carried through to today. The company specializes in preventive health care for trees and shrubs, maintaining good health, longevity, beauty, and safety.

Bartlett's services include pruning, insect and disease management, fertilization, soil care, and removal. Arborists evaluate plant health, safety, and appearance through systematic inspection; then make scientific diagnoses of plant problems; assess future plant requirements; and provide a wide range of remedial treatments.

As a result of their commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility, Bartlett is transitioning, wherever possible, to beneficial

BARTLETT TREE EXPERTS



insect releases to reduce pesticide use. The company has long taken an IPM approach to pest and disease management and was one of the first to implement IPM alternative products and meth-

ods. Bartlett utilizes biochar to promote soil health and sequester carbon, and provides wood chip mulch to the community. Bartlett is also knowledgeable in Firewise community practices.

next page

MCL's **Special Award for Environmental Achievement**. Annually, Marin Conservation League bestows six awards for outstanding environmental achievement. On rare occasions, MCL also selects an individual or organization whose leadership and accomplishments fall outside MCL's traditional award categories for environmental achievement.

In April, **TOM LAI** retired as Marin County's Community Development Agency (CDA) Director, ending a thirty-year career with the County, which he calls "his one and only professional home". Tom joined the Agency in 1992 as a planner. He moved through the ranks becoming Senior then Principal Planner, Deputy Director, then after eleven years as Assistant Director, Tom ultimately took the top job in April 2021.

On April 25, 2023, Marin's Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution commending Tom for his outstanding leadership and his commitment to public service, for transforming CDA's approach to customer service, for always putting the interests of the public first, and for his deep conviction and commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging at the County.

When Tom joined the county, he was the only person of color in the professional and technical ranks of the CDA. Tom is proud of the role he's had as part of the original design team for the Institute for Leadership Studies at Dominican University; as one of the first cultural competency

BARTLETT TREE EXPERTS

Bartlett has made a conscious effort to reduce their carbon footprint by shifting to battery-powered equipment; is working to transition their fleet to electric and hybrid, and will soon be adding a battery-powered chip truck to trial it for the company. Bartlett Tree Expert's local office is in San Rafael and is managed by **ADAM CLARKE**, a board-certified master arborist who holds a Bachelor of Science in Arboriculture, is a certified tree care specialist and has had advanced IPM training.

During his acceptance of the MCL Green Business award on behalf of Bartlett, Adam stated, "We are proud to be a Marin Conservation League business member. We look forward to continuing to serve our community with science-based sustainable tree care."

trainers and facilitators for Health and Human Services; as an early participant in the national network Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE); and as cofounder of Marin Asian-American Public Local Employees (MAPLE).

When he was ten, Tom's family immigrated to the US from China, bringing with them only what would fit in their luggage. His parents were seeking a better life and better educational opportunities for Tom and his sister. Tom went on to graduate from UC Berkeley with a bachelor's degree in architecture and a master's degree in city planning. He credits his parents with instilling in him the values he lives by: "Work Hard. Stay Humble. Be Kind."

Tom credits former Supervisor Gary Giacomini with helping him learn unique approaches to planning from a ranching perspective in West Marin and two former CDA Directors with particularly influencing his career. Alex Hinds gave him the opportunity to work on and implement the 2007 Countywide Plan—one of the first General Plans to integrate sustainability throughout all its Elements. Tom called Alex "a visionary who showed me what it takes to take risks." His second mentor was the CDA Director he succeeded, Brian Crawford, whom Tom said "has one of the highest levels of emotional intelligence" of anyone he knows. Throughout his career, Tom learned how to advance with grace under pressure, focus on continuous improvement, and create a well-managed and fiscally sound agency.

When Tom took over as Director, his priorities included advancing the County's goals of addressing both climate change and affordable housing. Tom is credited with substantially increasing the County's affordable housing supply and promoting housing equity as he oversaw his department's work on the 2023-2031 Housing Element.



TOM LAI

Tom also successfully navigated many years (and many lawsuits) toward achieving the County's adoption of the Stream Conservation Area Ordinance, the adopted development code amendments that now carry out policies for the protection and restoration of streams near properties in the San Geronimo Valley.

Tom has been a friend of MCL's for many years—always open and available to answer questions, to meet with MCL directors, and to attend MCL committee meetings to educate attendees on county plans and policies that impact the environment. He has been MCL's go-to person for accurate, complete information on local concerns and for his careful and thoughtful advice.

His expertise and breadth of knowledge, his skills in listening, his problem-solving attitude, and his patient explanations have made him popular not only with the public but also with staff and colleagues. Tom's leadership and mentorship focused on investing in his staff. He championed them as one of the County's most important resources.

Tom led by example and instilled in others that leadership happens at all levels and that everyone has something to contribute. He has been called the epitome of a "good guy." Tom's response to the accolade, and all the heart-felt praise and well-wishes during the County's commendation: "This really has been a great journey."

MCL's 2023 Environmental Achievement Award Winners

JERRY RIESSEN would probably be the first to say that “it takes a village to save open space,” and that village truly would be the towns of Tiburon and Belvedere. Jerry had not yet arrived in Tiburon (1970) when local hero Beverly Bastian established the Belvedere-Tiburon Landmarks Society in 1959 in a campaign to bestow Old St. Hilary’s Church with permanent landmark status. She also led the campaign to acquire the land immediately surrounding the church, already known by botanists for its serpentine-dominated andscape and rare plant species.

Jerry just happened to choose to live within full view of Old St. Hilary’s below, as well as the several hundred acres of open land above the church harboring rare plants and threatened by creeping urban development. His backyard abutted private land above, extending over Tiburon Ridge, a favorite hiking destination for many over the years. One journalist wrote, on being led up to the ridge by Jerry: from that land you could “see five counties, three bridges, two bays” – almost a 360-degree sweep of the Bay Region, with Angel Island in the foreground.

The specter of development on these lands may be what prompted Jerry in 1988 to become engaged in the lengthy campaign to save Tiburon open space. He has been carrying the banner ever since. First it was formation of the Last Chance Committee (LCC), which raised the funds with two local bond issues to buy several properties and create the 122-acre Old St Hilary’s Preserve in 1993 and 1997. That story itself is a saga for the annals of Marin’s conservation history!

MCL’s **Marin Green Award for Environmental Leadership** recognizes an individual or organization for outstanding contributions toward preserving and protecting the natural assets of Marin County.

The remaining piece that would assure full preservation of the land, from the church to Tiburon Ridge, was the 110-acre “Martha Property” – the crown jewel! In recent decades, gaining that last remaining large undeveloped parcel has been the focus of LCC, now Tiburon Open Space (TOS). After almost 50 years of county planning, environmental review, and endless negotiation in the courts in an uphill battle to develop this very complicated piece of property, the landowners, the Reed family, vastly reduced the price and last year signed a purchase option with Trust for Public Land, which finally launched fund-raising to purchase and preserve all of Martha.

TOS led the successful local bond issue, Measure M, to a 79 percent YES vote in November 2022. That funding plus substantial funding from Marin County and Tiburon puts the funding at 65 percent done. TPL is leading the effort to secure state and foundation funding, and TOS is helping with local major donors to close the \$5-10 million gap. As President of Tiburon Open Space, and before that LCC, Jerry knows that the hard work is not over, and he won’t rest until it is. The rewards for having access to this land for the public and the benefits to the environment, however, are incalculable!

Jerry attributes this almost-success to the dedicated cohorts of LCC and TOS and to the people of Belvedere and Tiburon, who more than once

have voted with their pocketbooks to say they want these lands to be managed as open space in their backyard and are willing to pay for it.

Jerry grew up in Evanston, Ill, obtained a master’s degree in astrophysics from University of Michigan and a BS in physics from Northwestern University. He built and ran energy-efficient power plants for four State of California facilities, including the power plant for the University of California, Berkeley. Still active professionally at the age of 78, he is president of a Berkeley biotechnology startup, TildenBio. If it does take “Rocket science” to save the land for open space, Jerry is certainly well-qualified. We’d prefer to say it takes persistence and a huge heart!

Note: In addition to working with the Trust for Public Land, the Tiburon Open Space Committee is still gratefully accepting [donations](#) to its Fund at Marin Community Foundation to close the remaining funding gap. For information, contact [Jerry Riessen](#).



TIBURON OPEN SPACE and JERRY RIESSEN

Jocelyn Knight Photo/jocelynnknight.com



Measure A from page 3

broad range of topics expands opportunities for Measure A funds to invest in sustainable agriculture and food systems throughout Marin County, in both urban and rural communities. It should also deepen our appreciation for Marin's unique agricultural heritage.

New to MCP, Sonya Hammons, a native of Sausalito, brings both geography and fiber art to the department. Her real "calling," however, is to work at the "intersection of ecology, agriculture, health, and environmental justice." She is excited to head the new program and reports that a survey to gauge interest in the program has brought in over 60 responses in just a few weeks, demonstrating that communities eagerly await this opportunity to support linkages between communities, food systems, and sustainable agriculture. The grant application period is expected to be open from mid-October to early December 2023.

To take the survey, register for grant information sessions, or sign up on FARE's email list, visit [FARE's website](#). The survey closes October 10, 2023



¹. *Breathe/Respira means that parks are as vital to our wellness as the air we breathe . . . The Spanish translation of "breathe" underscores the importance of making parks available to all, regardless of language or cultural background.*

NEW MCL BOARD MEMBERS



Jane Medley

As a child in Berkeley, Jane was introduced to reptiles and insect collecting, which planted the seeds for her lifelong interest in animals. Later her family moved to San Rafael where she continued to explore the out-of-doors.

After graduating from UC Berkeley, Jane worked for the National Park Service in Yosemite. Later she moved with her husband and sons to the small mountain town of Oakhurst, where she worked as a Reading Specialist. Following retirement, Jane returned to her roots in San Rafael. She recently served on the Marin Audubon Society's Board organizing field trips and programs. Jane now participates in the Marin County Breeding Bird Atlas project. She is an aspiring botanist and volunteers with Marin Chapter of the California Native Plant Society.

As a new MCL board member, Jane says, "I plan to continue participating in MCL's Parks and Open Space Committee. I also look forward to learning in greater detail about each of MCL's issue committees and to participating in the development of strategies for dealing with environmental challenges in Marin. I learned how nonprofits promote membership and support parks through my husband's work with the Yosemite Association and am interested in participating in MCL's Membership, Outreach, and Communications Committee that deals with similar issues."



Aviva Rossi

Dr. Aviva Rossi is an ecologist with over 25 years of work experience in wildlife ecology, vegetation management, policy/permitting/planning, and habitat restoration. She has worked within non-profit organizations, government, private companies, and academia. Her general research interests include biogeography, natural history, mammalogy, climate change, conservation, and land regeneration.

Dr. Rossi's recent projects have quantified the natural history of small mammals, including the niche space, resource selection, and modeled distributions to better understand how species are likely to respond to climate change. Her current work is focused on tracking changes to soil and wildlife biodiversity trends during regenerative agriculture transitions.

Dr. Rossi originally grew up in Sonoma County, primarily Sebastopol and Occidental. She moved to Marin over 20 years ago, when she started an internship at the Point Reyes Bird Observatory (before it was Point Blue) and stayed for another internship at Marin Water. Dr. Rossi stayed "to raise her family in this wonderful area." She says, "I am delighted and honored to be on the Board of MCL. The legacy of effective conservation efforts by MCL is evident across the vast landscape of protected areas in this county. Those natural areas brought me here to work in conservation in the first place and kept me here dedicated to conservation and restoration of these ecosystems. Continuing the legacy of MCL assures future generations will get an even better version of what has been saved by those before us."



**CALIFORNIA
COASTAL
CLEANUP
DAY**

Sat. Sept 23, 9 am - noon

Many cleanup sites are still looking for volunteers. Go to coastalcleanupday.org to find a location near you.

MCL sponsored sites:

NOVATO CREEK/WARNER CREEK at Scottsdale Pond on Redwood Blvd. near Rowland.

Contact [Susan Stompe](#)

SAUSALITO WATERFRONT at the Bay Model North.

Contact [Vicki Nichols](#)

MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

Terri Thomas, Sausalito, President
Linda Novy, Fairfax, 1st Vice President
Pam Reaves, San Rafael, 2nd Vice President
Larry Minikes, San Rafael, Secretary
Richard Jensen, Corte Madera, Treasurer

Directors

Belle Cole, San Rafael
Kenneth Drexler, Fairfax
Roger Harris, Corte Madera
Nancy Hughes, Novato
Paul Jensen, San Rafael
Larry Kennings, Mill Valley
Georgia McIntosh, Mill Valley
Jane Medley, San Rafael
Bob Miller, San Rafael
Kate Powers, San Rafael
Aviva Rossi, Fairfax
Jeff Stump, Inverness
Mike Swezy, Fairfax
Greg Zitney, Novato

Board of Directors meetings are held at 6PM on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

ISSUE COMMITTEE MEETING SCHEDULE

(subject to change—check website)

Land Use, Transportation and Water

1st Wed. of the month, 10 AM–12 noon

Parks and Open Space

2nd Thurs. of the month, 3–5 PM

Climate Action Working Group

3rd Wed. of the month, 10 AM–12 noon

Agricultural Land Use

Meets quarterly, 4th Fri. of the month,
9:30–11:30 AM

North Marin Unit

Check website for times

Staff

Martha Richter Smith, San Anselmo
Office Administrator

Editor: Kate Powers

Design & Production: Kiki La Porta

Contact Information

175 N. Redwood Dr., Ste. 135
San Rafael CA 94903 | 415.485.6257
marinconservationleague.org
mcl@marinconservationleague.org

Marin Conservation League was founded in 1934 to preserve, protect and enhance Marin County's natural assets. MCL is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. All contributions and memberships are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

*Printed in Marin on recycled paper with soy ink
Please share and recycle.*



NEWS FROM MARIN CONSERVATION LEAGUE

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

PERMIT NO. 120
SANTA ROSA, CA

175 N. Redwood Dr
San Rafael, CA 94903

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

MCL's Business-Environment Breakfast

Tools for Understanding California's Urban Forest



Fri., Sept. 22, 2023

7:30 - 9 am

McInnis Park Club Restaurant

*Register today!
Time is running out,
you won't want to miss this.*

Dr. Matt Ritter
Professor, Author,
Botanist

mcl@marinconservationleague.org
415-485-6257

Thank you to our Breakfast sponsors!

Dr. Ritter's presentation will be a photographic exposé of the lives and stories of some of the fascinating trees that define our cities.

He's the author of several books, including the funniest and best-selling guide to California's urban forest, *A Californian's Guide to the Trees Among Us*.

