

The Floating Times

VOL. XXVII No. 2

The Floating Homes Association Newsletter

March/April 2010



Photo by Emily Riddell

FHA Members enjoying dinner and conversation at the S.F. Bay Model.

Floating Homes Association Annual Party.

A Wonderful Evening of Business, Dinner, Door Prizes and Conversation

By Ann Duvall

President Stan Barbarich called the meeting to order and introduced all board members to a rousing applause thanking them for endless hours of volunteerism.

Ray Dunaway talked about emergency preparedness (see CERT update) and Larry Clinton reported on the fabulous Humming Toadfish Band that won the overall best entry in the Sausalito July 4th Parade. Thanks were given to Ted and Linda Sempliner and Linda and Gordon Meyer for organizing and Gordon for writing his ode to the Toadfish which was read to all.

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Dedicated Volunteers Come through Again

By Stan Barbarich

As this issue goes to print, I am happy to be able to let you know that JoAnn and Ray Dunaway have volunteered to chair this year's Floating Homes Tour. They are working on dates and are gathering together folks to head the various committees, and all of that information will be announced soon.

As I noted at the Annual Meeting, some people held the opinion that, in order to attract chairpersons for this year's tour, it was necessary to offer to pay them (the board had authorized a \$2000 honorarium). Not everyone agrees with that view, and, in fact, Ray and JoAnn have declined this offer, because, as they said, "this is a labor of love for us."

As you should know, Ray is the Supervisor of our CERT Division and has been doing an outstanding job at it, to the extent that the rest of Marin looks to us as a model of how it should be done. But, resting on those laurels is not interesting to him, so he and his lovely bride will be even busier, for the next 7

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Water you doing here?

By the Dinghy Dame

Now and Then you meet someone you wish to spend the rest of your life with. Such is the case with Bill and Felicity Kirsch. Married 40 years ago, they began their life together at Gate 5 and plan to live out their lives on Commodore, where they reside today.

As most of you know, Liberty Ships were built at Gate 5 during WWII. With too many workers and too little housing, small shanties sprang up along the waterfront. When the war effort ceased, those derelict homes remained. By the late 40's and early 50's, Donlon Arques, who owned much of that waterfront (and is said to have had a healthy disrespect for authority) also brought in potato barges and ferries which he gutted for rent-free living space. His boatyard became a haven for artists, bon-vivants and rapsallions, and it set up the infrastructure for a burgeoning community. The schooner Lassen served as a gathering spot for the art colony for many years. Juanita Mussen lived in the Charles Van Damme above her resuaurant, Juanita's Ark. Flamboyant Jean Yanko Varda, reknowned collagist, shared the 1870's ferry Vallejo with Zen philosopher Alan Watts. Dancing girls, swirling fabrics, good food and wine abounded, and patchouli hung in the air. Life was good. Varda owned a sailboat named the Sakri and could be seen sailing with the likes of Allen Ginsberg, Sargent Johnson, and Bill and Felicity Kirsch.

Bill arrived first. He hails from Ohio, got his B.A. in Architecture from the University of Cincinnati, and was returning from a military stint in the Pacific when he discovered Gate 5 in 1958 and built himself a floating art studio. With free rents, this funky community considered their flotilla of abandoned boats an art form and anarchy was the rule. Bill likens it to a real Dog Patch. Bill Kirsch was one of the founders of the Sausalito Art Festival during the 60's when he designed, organized and coordinated the festival with artists Al Garvey and Michael Bry in '65 and '66. Bill had won first prize in the festival in '60, '61 and '62 when it was run by the Chamber of Commerce.

By 1965, he had married, had four children, and had moved the family to San Rafael; but he missed the community and returned alone in 1967. That Summer of Love brought with it a booster shot of drugs, sex, and rock'n roll, and folks were taking trips without leaving home.

Felicity has her B.A. in Psychology and her M.A. in Somatic Psych. and Education from Antioch University. In 1969, having tired of New York City, she set out in a caravan bound for Sausalito. Her friends lived at Gate 6

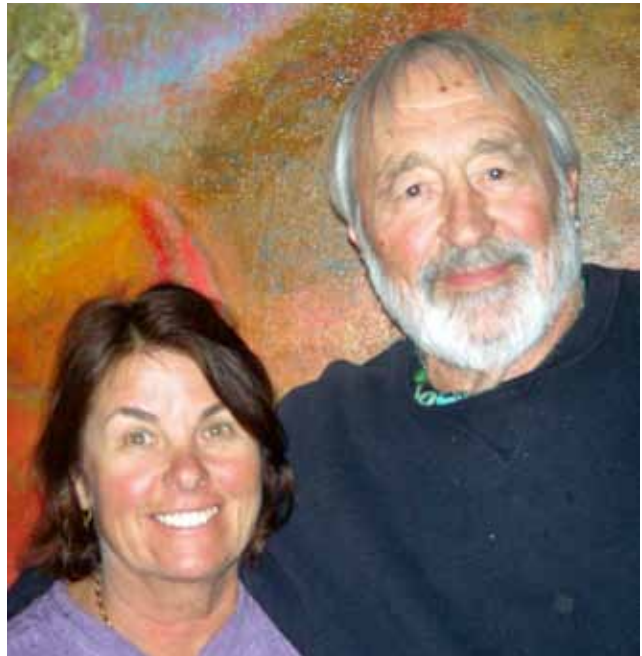


Photo: Dinghy Dame

Bill and Felicity Kirsch

and she was ready for a change. Little did she know just how big a change it would be. She settled in and soon became one of the first waitresses at The Trident. She was enchanted with a friend's home in Muir Beach and learned that Bill was the architect. Not long after that she met him in the No Name Bar. He invited her to join him on one of Varda's infamous sails which lasted 4 days in the sloughs, and he says, "the rest is history."

Felicity joined Bill on The Omphale and they built a larger addition onto the space where he lived, using all recycled materials. She said, "There we were, with Zen over here and a bacchanal over there." They had a flower and vegetable garden, chickens, ducks and turkeys on the land that is now the parking lot. They married in their studio and had a big party. She wore a deerskin dress complete with arm fringes and wore a headband. Says she..."We thought we were Indians." They also owned 200 acres in Mendocino named Wild Horse Ranch, where they restored an 1886 log cabin. During their ten years at Gate 5 they had a child of their own, two of his teens came back, and the area flooded, so they left their beloved waterfront, making the transition from "free-wheeling to responsible," says Felicity, and moved to Mill Valley for 10 years. They then moved to Pt. Reyes where they ran The Carriage House Bed and Breakfast for 20 years. Bill had become an award winning architect and Felicity worked for 15 years as a Clinical Psychologist in a doctor's office. He was well known for being one of the first environmental architects to use old barn wood, old stained glass, etc. for his projects. He won the Sunset Architecture Western Home Award. He has designed over 400 structures, including art galleries, custom and market homes, ranches, restaurants, bed and breakfasts, and floating homes. His

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Jean Varda: Life as Art

by Larry Clinton, President, Sausalito Historical Society

Jean Varda, Sausalito's iconic waterfront Bohemian, was a well-established artist long before he came to town. In the early 20th Century, he was considered a child prodigy in Europe. After moving to Paris, the young painter was a companion of Picasso and Braque. In 1939 he visited Big Sur and decided to move there, making friends with Henry Miller and Anais Nin.

By the time he discovered Sausalito in 1947, Varda was primarily producing very colorful collages made from found textiles and other materials. But perhaps his most inspired creation was his own lifestyle. One columnist wrote that Varda's affirmation of life led him "away from the museums, away from ART as a specialization and toward art as a way of life."

Varda's fanciful collages inspired similar flights of fancy from critics and friends. The Los Angeles Free Press commented, "through color, texture, and the 1,000 senses of the artist, Jean Varda reproduces a vibrant sense of life... His birds, fish, women and cities are an affirmation, a celebration. And yet at moments he also communicates an awareness of the deep seriousness of beauty – it restores – and the observer becomes a widow who finally puts a rose in her black hair."

In "To Paint is to Love Again" Henry Miller wrote: "To enter a gallery in which Varda's collages are exhibited is an event in one's own life... No painter, however riotous his palette, can ever obtain the results which Varda does by putting together pieces of paper, cloth or whatever material he chooses to use... With all his strength, his wit, his courage, he has fought against muddiness. For him, Satan is pure black. The lesser devils are browns and grays. His god, I am tempted to say, is gold... it is not Byzantine gold, though Varda is certainly Byzantine, if he is anything, no it is the gold of the alchemists, a product of the most subtle powers of transmutations."

The same foraging skills that inspired his artwork led Varda to discover an old ferryboat at Arques shipyard. He and a partner offered the owners \$500 down for the Vallejo and agreed to payments of \$60 a month. Then they purchased a strip of land and underwater lot at Gate 5, and arranged to have the ferry towed there, where it can still be seen from the side street now called Varda Landing Road. They remodeled the Vallejo using building materials that were readily available in the Marinship. There was a waterfront tradition that no one paid their bills and Varda was recognized as an instigator of that custom.

Varda held a housewarming party in March 1950 on the Vallejo, which was attended by friends and artists from throughout the Bay Area, according to the Sausalito News. Soon "Uncle Yanko" became as well known for his parties as his art.

In 1961, Zen philosopher Alan Watts and his wife began sharing the Vallejo with Varda – and soon the old ferry became the epicenter of the waterfront counter-culture, or what has been called the Sausalito Bargeoisie.

In a tribute published shortly after Varda's death in January, 1971, author and Varda confidant Herbert Gold recalled that when it came to parties, "Any excuse would do, so long as it was a day devoted to dancing and music." Gold added: "If Varda came, it was a party, and the masques, rituals, dances, performances, puppet shows, plays always made it a celebration of this intensely benign old presence... Girls, flutes, guitars, wine, fun, laughter, food, textures, surprises, colors, delights; that's what a world

should be. And painting. And above all, the sun. Who wouldn't adore a man who lives for such good sense?"

Jean Varda is featured in The Sausalito Historical Society's new exhibit "Artistic Sausalito," along with original works by other artists from the 1940s and '50s who gave Sausalito its reputation as an art colony, including Enid Foster, Peggy Tolk-Watkins, Walter Kuhlman, Ruth Alexander, Val Bleeker, Ed and Loyola Fourtane, Nan Fowler and Ted Christensen.



Photo courtesy of Sausalito Historical Society
Varda channeling Poseidon aboard the Vallejo.



Photo by Ric Miller
Artist Jim Woessner on the Issaquah/Liberty lagoon.

Artists of Issaquah art show slated for April 24, 2010.
(See announcement on page 4)

Supervisor McGlashan

Editors Note: This is the first in a series of regular columns by Marin County Supervisor Charles McGlashan. He has kindly and enthusiastically agreed to provide us a bi-monthly update on issues of concern to FHA members.

Clarification: Assemblyman Huffman does NOT support a peripheral canal.

By Supervisor Charles McGlashan

I'm thrilled that Floating Times has allowed me to write a column for upcoming newsletters. This will allow me to keep you all up to date on various issues that affect our waterfront community, even between my visits to the annual Bash!

I look forward to a regular entry beginning with your next issue. Meantime, I want to correct something from the annual meeting in February. I was asked a question about the Delta and last year's state water legislation and the person asking the question stated his assumption that our Assemblymember, Jared Huffman, supports a peripheral canal. I realize that in responding to the question I may have given the impression that his description of Assemblymember Huffman's position was correct. I've had a chance to look into this and talk with Assemblymember Huffman, and I can assure you that Jared does not support the peripheral canal, nor does the legislation he helped pass last year authorize or fund a peripheral canal.

I was pleased to learn that the legislation explicitly precludes public funding of any new Delta conveyance facilities, and it redirects the Governor's current Delta planning process (which had been focused solely on a large peripheral canal) by requiring that other conveyance alternatives be studied. It also establishes some important new protections for the Delta ecosystem and codifies – for the first time -- a state policy of reducing dependence on Delta water exports. I agree with Assemblymember Huffman that these are major improvements over the status quo. Hopefully this new framework will enable us to better protect the Delta and its fisheries. Assemblymember Huffman has provided a wealth of materials on last year's water legislation on his website: http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a06/water_package.aspx, or you can contact his staff at 415-479-4920 for more information.

I'll be back in the next issue of the Floating Times with more local information and updates.

Charles McGlashan
Supervisor, County of Marin
Chair, Marin Energy Authority
Chair, Richardson's Bay Regional Agency



Art Floats again on Issaquah

by Richard Mickley

Eleven Issaquah homes will be art galleries for a day on Saturday, April 24, 2010 from 11am to 5pm. This colorful and popular event is the eighth annual Artists of Issaquah Show. The exhibition has truly become a tradition, contributing to the reputation of the Sausalito waterfront as a vibrant and artistic focal point of the Bay Area. Guests will view and purchase a variety of outstanding art while aboard these floating "galleries".

More than twenty resident artists from Issaquah Dock and other nearby docks will offer at attractive prices: paintings, photographs, sculpture, jewelry, mixed media art and turned exotic wood bowls.

Please come and see what your creative neighbors are doing.

For more information visit:

www.artistsofissaquah.com



Dinghy Dame

(continued from page 2)

projects have been published in more than 30 books, magazines, newspapers and featured in two films.

In 2001, with their families grown and their love of the Sausalito waterfront ever beckoning them, they returned. A partner in their B&B sold them his home on Commodore which had been sunk for 4 years. It was a mess with the hull full of thousands of pounds of papers. Rebuilding was a labor of love, and you should see it now.

Bill and Felicity have lived there full time since 2007 and they plan to die there. They have created a lovely haven on the water. It is peaceful; decorated masterfully with his art and her sense of tranquility. The sign at the only entrance says "Hippies use back door..no exceptions." Their astro-turf lawn is bedecked with lovely Cymbidium orchids and primroses. Bill has his floating studio/office in the Canal and Felicity has her office upstairs at Commodore where she practices Clinical Hypnotherapy. If you need to lose weight, stop smoking, or to develop the inner calmness you need in life, you can reach her at FelicityKirsch.com.

Although Bill the architect is retired, he will still do an occasional consult. His passion has always been art. He works in oil, watercolor, conte and charcoal, ink and pencil. You can view and purchase his work, or even send a free e-card by visiting kirschart.com. Soon he will be doing greeting cards. Bill's art is fantasy figurative, whimsical, sports related, and more. He and Felicity are active in the FHA, with Felicity serving as dock rep. and Bill as an alternate. She recently created the Floating Homes Business Directory and it's free. Sign up by getting a form from your dock rep, contact her directly at her web site, or e-mail her at bill@kirschart.com.

When I left their home to row back to mine, Felicity asked if I had seen AVATAR. I replied that I had, and she said.."We are the blue people."

That about says it all.

Dock Talk

Library Funds Measure on June Ballot

By Suki Sennett

Due to declining revenue and state budget cuts, Marin County Free Library's budget is short more than one million dollars per year. The Board of Supervisors has placed a local funding measure in the form of a \$49 parcel tax for five years (with an exemption for senior citizens) on the June 8, 2010 ballot. The Marin County Free Library serves the unincorporated areas of Marin County and the City of Novato and the towns of Fairfax and Corte Madera. The floating homes community is within the unincorporated area of the County, and is served by the Marin City Library branch. The Marin City branch has close ties to our community. Mickey Allison and Bill Crandall of Issaquah Dock and Main Dock resident Suki Sennett serve on the board of the Friends of the Marin City Library. Bill Crandall was appointed by Supervisor McGlashan to represent District 3 on the County Library Commission.

If the measure does not pass, there will be deep cuts in library hours, collections and services. Every penny raised by this measure will be controlled locally and will go to our local libraries and cannot be taken by the state.

For more information visit www.marinlibrary.org.



Bill Duvall is Member of the Year

by Stan Barbarich

In recognition of the outstanding work that Bill Duvall has done for the organization, including the laborious process of designing a new member database and as the Editor of the Floating Times, Bill was named Member of the Year by FHA president Stan Barbarich and was presented with a framed photo of the community taken by Ric Miller.

The need for a revised database had been known and discussed for a number of years, in order to give the dock representatives and the Membership Chairs an up-to-the-minute reference to our membership rolls, and to allow them to remind folks to renew their memberships, without unnecessarily contacting those who already had done so. The new database has served this purpose well.

Bill has also brought new technology to the Floating Times and made it accessible online. This saves the FHA Treasury hundreds of dollars per month in printing and mailing costs, and allows each issue to be sized just right, depending upon material available that month. No small benefit is the ability to produce the FT in living color, making the faces of happy floating homes residents even brighter than before.

We hope you will join in congratulating Bill on this well-deserved honor.



FHA Annual Meeting and Party

(continued from page 1)

Stan then announced almost all permits are in place for the Harbor reconfiguration. There is a 50-50 chance construction will start this year. We are assured that we will be notified in advance of construction impacts.

Administrative Coordinator Lewis Shireman presented the financial report and, thanks to the FHA Tour last year, the organization is once more in the black.

Supervisor Charles McGlashan was introduced by Barbarich, and spoke on a number of subjects.

The financial situation is grim. Budget cuts by the State and County will result in a 20% cut in each county department. As a result, everything is slowing down. The June ballot will have a measure to fund the county Libraries. There will be service reductions in public transportation, and in-home support services will be eliminated. There will be around 100 layoffs for the county this year.

Energy – Marin Clean Energy Program, is supported by Supervisor McGlashan. He recommends giving it a try. It is only \$5 to leave after the initial 90 days. He also noted that PG&E is spending massively on Proposition 16, which would block the program.

Mooring field – It has hit a log jam with BCDC. They have said no, and it cannot be pursued without their support. This idea has hit a brick wall.

Once again Malia arrived with fabulous door prizes and with the help of Ashley Brown's elegant picking of the numbers, many people went home with exceptional goodies.

The meeting adjourned and the party began. Ted Sempliner and his crew served delicious soups, salads and desserts, and conviviality reigned.

Thanks from Claudia Duncan and Ann Duvall to a host of volunteers for a great event.

Thanks to our FHA Party Raffle Donors

Amy's Place	\$25 Gift Certificate
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Bayside Café	\$20 Gift Certificates (2)
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CERT News

Maintain CERT Qualification – Or Start from Scratch

by Ray Dunaway

On 20 February 2010 there was an advanced Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training at Tam Valley Community Center. This training session was well attended by CERTs from Division 3B, which encompasses the floating homes and the Sausalito waterfront. The session covered search and rescue, triage, first aid and operation of the equipment and facilities in the Emergency Response Trailer. The attached photograph shows Larry Clinton and Tony Williams from Division 3B with the Disaster Services trailer.

The next training session is tentatively scheduled for the middle of April 2010 at the Marin City fire station. This training will cover the incident command system and how to establish an incident command post. This is the second of six advanced training sessions for Division 3B CERT personnel in 2010. Notices will be sent as soon as the date is firmed up. In the meantime all Division 3B personnel are encouraged to take ICS 100 and 200 courses online. The online address is HYPERLINK "<http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is100a.asp>" <http://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/is100a.asp>. If you have any questions or concerns about taking this online class please contact me at HYPERLINK "<mailto:rdunaw@attglobal.net>" rdunaw@attglobal.net or 415-332-5548. I have contacted or left messages for all the CERT members in Division 3B. If you have not responded to the message please do so because if I have not received a positive affirmation that you wish to continue in the CERT program you will be dropped from the roster on 1 April 2010. Please contact me at the address above with any questions or concerns.

One of the advanced trainings this year will be to assist with the Floating Homes Tour to practice radio communications and crowd control skills. We will be supporting other community events throughout the year which will count toward the advanced training credits required to maintain your CERT qualification.

If you are interested in joining the CERT community, there will be basic CERT training courses on May 1 & 8, August 7 & 8, or November 13 & 14. The cost is \$35 per person, but the FHA will reimburse the fee IF an FHA member successfully completes the two-day course.

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Date set for 2010 Floating Homes Tour

By Ray and JoAnn Dunaway

This year marks a special anniversary, and we plan to make it every bit as special as previous Tours have been. Highlighting the distinctive quality of life on Richardson Bay and the eclectic neighborhoods that we all love, the Tour will be recruiting volunteers for publicity, docents, traffic control, set-up and clean-up crews, and many other positions. Watch this space for specific requests for particular jobs over the next months.

For more information, or to volunteer to work on the tour, please contact the tour directors, Ray & JoAnn Dunaway at joanndunaway@e-msii.com

**25th Annual Sausalito Floating Homes Tour
Saturday, September 25, 2010 11 am – 4 pm**

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President's Message (continued from page 1)

months or so. Please add your thanks to mine for their offer to do this important work for the community.

And, as I also announced at the meeting, a new project has arisen that is of extreme importance to everyone in our community. There is an opportunity, at long last, to explore the possibility of modifying the legal definition of our homes from "chattel property" to "real property." Everyone knows how hard it is to find lenders and insurance carriers who are willing to work with us. It may be possible that, if we were officially defined as real residences and if those of us living here would stop referring to our homes as "houseboats" (you do know that, unless your house has an engine, "houseboat" is legally incorrect, right?), we might be able to attract more banks and insurance carriers to serve our needs.

But (and this is a big one), even though Assemblyman Jared Huffman is willing to introduce the necessary legislation this year, and even though Rich Benson in the Assessor's Office has already been discussing this with us, and even though Charles McGlashan has signed on to work with us, we don't yet know enough about all the ramifications of such a change. So, we need a few folks with Real Estate and Finance experience to get together to make sure that we would be doing the right thing by asking our elected officials to move ahead on this matter. Please contact me asap, if you are willing to devote a bit of time in the next few weeks to help with this. This alignment of political planets, wherein all our elected officials are ready, willing and eager to help with a major problem of ours does not come around very often, and we need to be able to take advantage of this fantastic opportunity!

In closing, I am extremely grateful to Ann Duvall, Claudia Duncan and Ted Sempliner for doing such a magnificent job in organizing and producing our Annual Meeting and Member Party. By all accounts, it was a big success, and a highlight of the year.

Dedicated volunteers come through, yet again!

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	Bonnie Hunter	302-5649	bonnieskip.hunter@comcast.net
Tour Directors	Ray & JoAnn Dunaway		joannrdunaway@e-msii.com
Webmaster	Ric Miller	331-6116	rick@floatinghome.com
Classified Ads	Bonnie Hunter	302-5649	bonnieskip.hunter@comcast.net

SERVICES

Emergency Line when using cell phones	472-0911
RBRAHarbor Administrator	Bill Price 289-4143
	Cell 971-3919 bprice@co.marlin.ca.us
San Francisco Baykeeper Hot Line	1-800-533-7229 (KEEP BAY)
Marin County Fire Dept. Non-emergency	446-4463
Marin County Sheriff Non-emergency	332-5422
Harbor Equity Group (HEG)	Pam Bousquet 331-3614
	pamafloat@earthlink.net
WPH Residents (HEG) Liaison	Ric Miller 331-6116
	ric@floatinghome.com
Kappas Residents (KHA) Liaison	Ron Moreland 332-2429
	ron@morelandonline.com

DOCK REPS and ALTERNATES

ADock	Laurel Polarek	339-8964
Alternate	Lazlo Toth	332-9429
Commodore	Felicity Kirsch	888-3919
Alternate	Bill Kirsch	888-3919
Co-op	Michael Labate	331-5081
East Kappas	Carole Angermeir	332-0682
		carole@crossculturaljourneys.com
Alternate	Rose-Meri Muldoon	331-5348
Gate 6 1/2	Larry Clinton	332-6196
Alternate	Roy Grekin	332-6861
Issaquah	Joan Sheehan	332-5523
Alternate	Rachelle Dorris	272-1543
Liberty	David West	331-8188
Alternate	Kristen Golden-Testa	505-1332
		ktesta@childrenspartnership.org
Alternate	Marti Roush	332-4398
Main Dock	Tony Williams	332-6296
Alternate	Peter Huson	332-6240
Alternate	Janet Thuesen	332-6591
South Forty	Dana King	332-2909
Alternate	Susan Neri	332-8482
West Kappas	Court Mast	331-1953
		court@mastphotography.com
Alternate	Maggie Knibbs	887-9351
Yellow Ferry	Craig Meyer	380-8510
Alternate	Debra Levy	332-1803
Alternate	Jill Stephens	289-0410
		jillstephens@gmail.com

GOVERNMENT

District 3 Supervisor	Charles McGlashan	499-7331
Assemblymember	Jared Huffman	479-4920
San Francisco	BCDC	352-3600
FEMA	800-462-9029	
Army Corps of Engineers	332-0334	
Sausalito Post Office	332-0258	