

VILLA VOICES

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Villa Marin Home Owners Association | 100 Thorndale Dr., San Rafael, CA 94903



Pegasus: Building an Airplane at San Marin High School



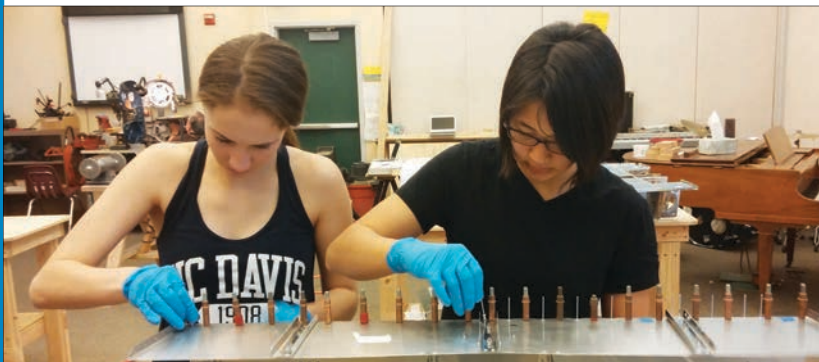
The first question people ask when they learn Villa Marin newcomer Dave McConnell is teaching high school students to build an airplane: “Is it a real airplane and will it fly?” “Yes, it will fly” because Dave and other Marin County Airport (Gnoss Field) pilots donate many hours of instruction for this amazing airplane building program they named Pegasus.

Retired from a career with the telephone company, Dave is also a licensed aircraft mechanic, pilot, aircraft builder, and one-time instructor at Gnoss Field. Recently, he proposed the Pegasus project to a STEM technology program at San Marin High School (SMHS) as high school students need real-world experiences with hands-on projects to prepare them for technical careers. Project-

based learning is one of the most effective methods of teaching.

The STEM program at SMHS is a four-year specialty for students who have an interest in science and technology. In 9th through 11th grades they learn basic engineering, physics, chemistry, biology, and mechanical skills. In the 12th grade they select a significant project, find an expert mentor to help them, and go through basic feasibility and design steps to realize their project. Airplane building is one project, but is unique in that it must be done right. Dave and the other dozen or so pilots helping on this project have each built at least one airplane. The emphasis of the Pegasus project is to enable the students to assume responsibility for the outcome. The role of the adult mentors is to ensure that the resulting airplane will be safe and of high quality construction. This year 21 students, of whom eight are female, are working with the Pegasus project.

The Gnoss Field community has undertaken the financing of this project. The genius is that, once this first airplane is built, it can be sold to pay for the next one. So, eventually, Pegasus will be self-perpetuating.



WELCOME TO NEW RESIDENTS

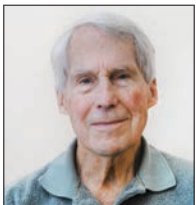


Elisabeth Stromberg-Baker

Born in Sweden, Elisabeth Stromberg-Baker came for a visit to the Bay area when she was 26 and decided to live here and enjoy the sunshine. Later her sister moved here, and ultimately her mother came to join them. Her mom loved Tiburon which she saw as like the French riviera, so they bought a duplex. But with 25 stairs to climb, recently Elisabeth decided to sell and move here. She had first explored Villa Marin for her mother, but her mother preferred to live at home.

For a time Elisabeth founded and managed a successful Swedish bakery called "Swedenhouse" on Main street in Tiburon, but when her first husband Deane Baker became ill she sold it to be able to care for him. After he died, she decided to enroll at San Francisco State and got a B.A. in Spanish culture and history. She then taught Spanish in an afternoon academy for the Tiburon School District and was a teacher at a preschool in Tiburon.

She loves golf and met her second husband Richard Mazza on the golf course. He recently became ill and died in April 2016. She moved here with a feisty Burmese cat named Mozart. Elisabeth loves yoga and reading. A lover of the outdoors, she is restoring the balcony of her first floor condo.



DeWitt Bowman

Born in Los Angeles but raised in Madison, Wisconsin, DeWitt Bowman (he prefers being called "De") forged a career path that utilized his strategic economic skills and allowed him to stick close to the great outdoors.

He built his own boat at age 15 and never gave up his love of riding the waves.

After his freshman year at Princeton, he transferred to the University of Wisconsin - Madison. Then he served as a fighter pilot in the U.S. Air Force for four years at the onset of the Korean War. After college graduation, he embarked on his career in banking and specialized in trust investments: first in Wisconsin, later in California. He fondly remembers his cross-country Pullman train rides starting out with windswept snow scenes in Wisconsin and ending up with the splendor of waking in the morning to the sight of bright orange groves in California.

Later he became the Chief Investment Officer of the California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) until his retirement in 1996. He had the pleasure of commuting by ferry to work in San Francisco. He had easy access to indulge his love for sailing on the Bay and owned a two-seater airplane that he and his late wife (who passed away in 2011) used for short trips.

Now he takes pleasure in scaling the heights on foot near the home that he owns at The Sea Ranch. He thoroughly enjoyed a large family life in Marin County (6 children from his wife's first marriage, 2 children from his earlier marriage). Still active professionally in retirement, he oversees a variety of investment services and is looking forward to a new chapter in his life at Villa Marin.

Welcoming Committee

By Sally Williams

The Welcoming Committee is the heart and soul of Villa Marin. We move to Villa Marin from many places for many reasons. We have had long



Committee In Action: *Pat Dawson, sponsor, Sally Williams, chair & Esther Woll, neighbor greet Jan West, new resident.*

and interesting lives and are confident and used to making major decisions. However, making the decision to come to a retirement community is monumental. While the decision is a good one, the actual move is daunting.

The Welcoming Committee shows its strength by a focus on softening the first days and weeks by helping to deal with the vagaries of moving. The committee is twelve strong. As each new resident moves to Villa Marin, one of us becomes their sponsor. Sponsors are responsible for making contact with our newcomers before they move when possible and for meeting them on moving day for a brief time. We make sure telephone numbers are exchanged. We also deliver plastic dishes for take-out meals so newcomers can have dinner without having to interrupt the unpacking for too long! Sponsors are there to help minimize any move-in problems -- from being overwhelmed by the unpacking to where to put the empty boxes. We offer other tips on how to find the post office, the code for the swimming pool, and how to get the wifi to work!

Every Wednesday we host a table at dinner especially for newcomers which they can attend throughout the first year. Also, in those first days and weeks, we try to make sure our new residents are accompanied to lunch

or dinner when possible. We urge other residents to reach out a hand of friendship to new residents. Our goal is to make sure new residents quickly feel at home and become an integral part of our community. There is so much to enjoy once the boxes are unpacked and the wifi works!

THE BIRTHDAY COMMITTEE



Birthdays are celebrated at Villa Marin with panache. For three years Annegrethe Kisling has headed up the Birthday Committee and created the table decorations. The care and flare with which she and her committee arrange the details are remarkable. Preceded by a get-together, the dinner is a festive event. Colors and seasonal decorations for the table are designed by Annegrethe and Doris Walsh. Bill and Cece Silver buy, store, and serve the drinks. Diane Ackerman arranges appetizers and the menu. The beautiful invitations and place cards are bought or designed by Sandy McEowen. Helen Revel, the RSVP liaison, keeps track of the honorees and their guests. The special dinner is served monthly to 25 to 40 people on second Tuesdays.



DOUG KAPLAN:
New Social Services Director

Douglas Kaplan, the new Social Services Director, well-qualified with his background, personality and experience, received his sociology degree from Colby College and worked for awhile as a private investigator. His technology expertise was honed at IBM and at WebMD. At San Francisco State he studied recreation

administration and gerontology and received an M.S. degree in Recreation Administration with an emphasis on gerontology. He worked part-time at Heritage on the Marina in San Francisco as the Director of Social Services and Activities for nearly nine years. As Villa Marin Social Services Director he assists residents in maintaining or improving their ability to manage their everyday physical, mental and psychosocial needs.

As Villa Marin Social Services Director Doug sees people as multifaceted individuals with unique needs. He is called upon to help with grief and loss, arrange for counseling, resolve differences between residents, and assist staff in the care planning process. He is also responsible for monitoring staff-patient interactions. He plays the guitar and the Irish flute. He lives in Corte Madera with his wife and his thirteen year-old son. He has a good sense of humor and a calming presence. Both qualities serve him well as director of social services.

Trip to Venice via OLLI Class

If a trip to Venice is on your bucket list, OLLI is offering a pathway with their class "The Golden Age of Venice" to be offered Wednesdays, January 10th to February 28th at Villa Marin. Sunnie Evers, Ph.D., will present her expertise on painting, sculpture, and architecture in the 15th and 16th century Venice when artists such as Bellini, Carpaccio, Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese created an image of Venice as an ideal state. She earned her doctorate at UC Berkeley with a focus on the art history of the Italian Renaissance. She also leads tours to Venice. Sign up online at www.dominican.edu/olli or mail in a registration form. Call 415-458-3763.

Book Discussion Group

Sue Blair and Kat Braeman are organizing a new group to select and discuss books. The first gathering will be at 4 pm on Tuesday, January 23rd in the Card Room. One book being considered is the biography of a famous woman with Marin roots: **Polar Adventures of a Rich American Dame: A Life of Louise Arner Boyd** by Joanna Kafarowski. All are welcome. The group will decide by consensus what to read each month.



Play Readers to Showcase Talents February 23rd

Talented director Robyn Grahm of Ross Valley Players (RVP) is beginning rehearsals for a night of theatre on February 23rd. Residents will showcase their talents in a variety of scenes with the theme of "Life & Romance" from kindergarten and beyond. After a college major at UC Santa Cruz in marine biology and service in the Peace Corps, Robyn reconnected with her childhood roots where she acted in the *Music Man*. She had a role in RVP's *39 Steps* and just completed a Shakespeare tour in *Romeo & Juliet*.



Ann Madsen, Sal Polarek, Joan Hedrick, Helen Revel beam over the completion of their teapot puzzle.

Christine Atwood, Artist

January's featured artist will be Christine Atwood. The expression of color and form has fascinated Christine throughout her life. She expresses this interest in large oil, acrylic and watercolor paintings of landscapes and figures where she captures the light and colors in natural settings. She studied general art at London Polytechnic (now Westminster University), then design at Central St. Martins College, London. She worked in the design field for 30 years in L.A. and S.F. She has taken workshops with famous artists--Rex Brandt, Millard Sheets, Robert E. Wood, Chester Arnold and Dale Laitinen -- and entered juried shows. Her mother gave her a Winsor & Newton watercolor set when she was seven years old. Her paintings are in private collections in England, USA, and Malaysia



Christine Atwood readies work for her January show.

Candidates for Villa Marin Board

Five impressive candidates are running for four seats on the Villa Marin Board. The election will be held on January 9, 2018. The candidates were selected by the nominating committee appointed by the Board and chaired by Marilyn Knecht.



Dick Atwood is running to become a Board member because he and Christine want the many great things about Villa Marin to continue. His business life included plant manager and vice president of a chemical company and later a specialty paper mill, and owner with Christine of a manufacturing company in Richmond. Thus he has experience in management, personnel, procedures, maintenance, and safety. His volunteer work in Marin includes president Mill Valley Tennis Club, president Board of Trustees Community Church of Mill Valley, six years president The Friends of The Redwoods (raises money for The Redwoods Retirement Center), four years president The Redwoods Foundation (raises money to help residents running out of money), five years member the Redwoods Board of Directors. Dick is a good listener who would invite residents to put forth concerns and improvement ideas. He works to bring good solutions to problems, but with an eye to efficiency, cost control and fairness.



Kirk Beales has served on the Board for the past two years and is running for re-election. Joan and he have been at Villa Marin for almost three years and moved here from Tiburon. His working career was as an engineer with Chevron, where he spent the later years in project cost management. After retiring he served for ten years on the Tiburon Design Review Board. Both his work experience and his time on Design Review help him as a Director here at Villa Marin.



Barbara Heller has lived in San Rafael for over 40 years. She and her dog Lucas have lived at Villa Marin since 2014. Before moving to Villa Marin, she was elected to the San Rafael City Council for 20 years before retiring in 2013. She is running for her 2nd term on the Villa Marin Board of Directors and has served as President and Vice President of the Board. She plans to continue working towards improvements in the dining room and health center and keep expenses under control. Barbara observes, "I do not take lightly the decisions made by the Board. I know that they directly impact the lives of everyone at Villa Marin. I value highly all the wonderful friendships I have here."



Jerry South is standing for re-election to ensure that several of the changes the Board of Directors have initiated in the past two years are completed. As a self-governed homeowners condo association, the board is responsible for establishing policies and overseeing management. As Treasurer his monthly responsibilities include review of bank statement reconciliation, reserve account balancing and financial statement review. At least annually he reviews the report of the investment firm that manages the 401(k) employee's account. His personal focus will be on creation of a data retrieval system for maintenance records of the common area and condo units, and adequacy of the property reserve fund. We live in an aging building complex whose history

must be documented and readily available for making decisions that affect the future and the value of our individual properties. His qualifications include practicing law, attending the advanced management program at the Harvard Business School, serving as president of a Bank of America real estate financial and investment company and, most recently, as president of the United States Bocce Federation, a non profit organization.



Bob Spofford's background combines electrical engineering/computers and marketing. His interests as a Board member bridge all three. One focus area would be exploring a more strategic approach to how we market Villa Marin. Big changes impact the retirement community market -- older age at entry, fewer second occupants, new for-profit competitors targeting the emerging wave of retired baby boomers. We need to examine our marketing (and maybe our "product" too) to clearly define our advantages vs. our competitors in delivering what these new customers want.

A second focus will be information technology: We will be upgrading our IT systems in the next few years, and Bob could provide valuable liaison between the Board, our IT staff and our outside contractors working in this area. One specific would be to add analysis of trends to the our monthly financial reports. A few graphs would be immensely useful in identifying problems as they emerge and tracking how well we are solving them.