

## VOLUNTEER NOTES

### Where Are They Now?

Former Marintern **Joseph Attwell** is on the professional staff of the Merced County District Attorney's Office, where he handles misdemeanors and the occasional felony jury trial. After an internship with the Marin County District Attorney's Office, he passed the California State Bar in November 2019 and was hired by the County of Merced. Joseph is steadily climbing the ranks and currently is a Level III deputy district attorney.

### We Remember

MarinShares volunteer **Roberta 'Bobbie' Kettler** died in October at the age of 90. She had two volunteer roles here. Shortly after retiring from a career in teaching, Bobbie signed up in 2006 to tutor Marin Juvenile Hall students. She also served as a Marin Civic Center tour docent, sharing her knowledge of architecture with hundreds of visitors and new employees. For her outstanding contributions in both roles, the Board of Supervisors recognized Bobbie as the county's 2010–2011 Volunteer of the Year.

## Volunteer's Expertise Boosts Newsletter Design

By Marjorie Grannan

MarinShares volunteer **Eleanor Lau**'s professional skills shape the MarinfoNOW newsletter that readers see every month. Her aspirations from her youth in rural Hawaii had swung in several directions before she settled into the publishing field.

"I was one of six children raised on a small sugar plantation on the island of Hawaii 75 years ago," Eleanor recalls. "My grandparents had emigrated from Japan around the turn of the century. I grew up climbing mango trees, playing in gulches, and reading everything our small library had to offer. We were poor, but it was a carefree and wonderful childhood." Eleanor's father, a mechanic, supplemented the family's income by night fishing for tuna and taking his catch to market to sell before work.

Eleanor graduated from the University of Hawaii with a psychology degree and no idea where she wanted to apply herself. Then, "I saw this ad for a typesetter that said:



PHOTO BY CLIFF LAU

Eleanor Lau

Will train. I applied, was hired, and my career course was set. It was a young company, a new field, lots to learn, and a lot of fun."

Then her husband's career path took them to New York, which she initially

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## Volunteer Delivers for Fire Department

By Scott Harrop

Every other Thursday, MarinShares volunteer **John Polman** makes the rounds of Marin County Fire Department's (MCFD) stations, delivering mail and needed supplies.

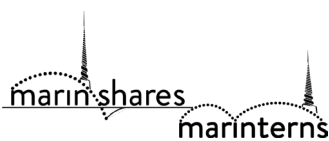
He picks up a loaded truck at headquarters in Woodacre. First stop is the paramedic unit in Ross, then "The Forge" at Joseph Court in San Rafael (home of the workforce-development Fire Foundry program), followed by the Marin City and Throckmorton stations. Then it's on to the Stinson Beach medic unit, the MCFD crew space in the National Park Service area of Bear Valley, and the Point Reyes, Tomales, and Hicks Valley stations.

John usually skips lunch, returning home eight or nine hours after his 9 a.m. start. The length of a shift "depends how much time I spend hanging out with the guys," he says.

His volunteer efforts help keep MCFD engines, stations, and paramedic units stocked with all sorts of supplies, including office and household items.

John was born in Holland. At a young age, he moved with his family to Salt Lake City, then to San Francisco, where he completed elementary school, Herbert Hoover Middle School, and Polytechnic High School. He moved to Marin in 1963 and, except for two years of crash rescue in the Army, has lived

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here ever since. His Army training at Fort Ord, Camp Roberts, and Fort Hunter Liggett included fire training. He narrowly avoided being assigned to Vietnam, because his tour only had eight months to run, and assignments to Nam were normally 12 months.

Home from duty, he dated a girl whose father was a captain at the Marin City fire station. He asked John if he'd like to be a seasonal "helper," which turned into a full-time job.

In those days there were several one-man fire stations all over the county, John said. So when a big storm in the early 1970s caused mudslides and bridge closures, it was up to him to respond when a house on Waldo Court in Marin City slid off its foundation. The owner stood in the garden, shell-shocked. "My wife's inside," he said.



PHOTO BY DONNA POLMAN

Volunteer John Polman delivers mail and supplies to Fire Department staff.

John crawled in through the mud to find the wife lying chest-deep in mud, partially under a sliding glass door. He administered oxygen, and when a couple of Sheriff's deputies showed up, they helped extricate her on a gurney. After recovering, she always greeted John with a hug when they happened to meet in the community.

He also enjoyed teaching driver training at the old Hamilton Field runways for the Sheriff's Department.

John retired in 2002, after 36 years with the department. Volunteering allows him to stay in touch with fellow firefighters.

Marin County Fire Battalion Chief **Graham Groneman** has known John for 20 years. "John was an engineer when I joined. He was one of the guys you'd enjoy being around."

The chief mused about volunteering later in life.

"Retiring can be abrupt. Firemen create bonds that are unique. You spend a third of your life with these guys. It's important to keep retirees engaged with their fire service family."

It's also important to the department to retain all that institutional knowledge. As Chief Groneman says, "John knows the county and the department. And he's an original fixture in the story of Marin Fire." ■

## Intern Learns While Leading

By Clariss Ajanel

PHOTO BY SARANI PURI



Sarani Puri

Marintern **Sarani Puri**, a Redwood High School junior, is learning about planning, organizing, and leadership in two County of Marin

internships. Sarani volunteers at the Corte Madera Library as a Homework Helper team leader and at the Board of Supervisors on the social media team.

In her Homework Helper role, Sarani has expanded the reach and increased the efficiency of the free homework program hosted by the Marin County

Free Library. She and her team of fellow interns at the Corte Madera branch have the goal of creating a scalable model that could be implemented at libraries across Marin.

"I feel education is a right, and having the support system necessary to succeed in school is crucial," Sarani said. The internship "gives me a platform to impact the community in a meaningful way. This project means a lot to me, as I've seen how frustrating school can be for English learners and families unable to afford tutoring."

Before her library internship, Sarani had been offering free tutoring with her family. She began the library project last February, with the help of Librarian **Sarah Butts**, her staff supervisor.

"Sarani is such an impressive person," Sarah said. "She came to me when she was a sophomore with this idea that was well considered and aligned with the library's goals. It's pretty remarkable when someone that age has that type of perspective."

"Once the program took shape and we got it started, it became clear that Sarani was fully committed to making it a stable, meaningful experience for the kids involved," Sarah added.

Meanwhile, in March Sarani began a second county internship with the Board of Supervisors, where she is on the county's Instagram team. She initiated Volunteer Recognition Monday posts on the [county Instagram account](#).

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## Intern Learns While Leading

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In addition, Sarani serves the community in other ways. She is president of the Redwood High School Charitable Investing Club, which focuses on raising money and lending it to low-income entrepreneurs. She is treasurer of the Redwood Women of Color Club, a member of Redwood Leadership and the high school's swim team, and a peer tutor.

Sarani also enjoys traveling. Her favorite trip was through Asia, visiting India, Hong Kong, Seoul, and Singapore. Her favorite local destination is Mendocino.

Asked about her future, she said, "My plans are to attend college and major

in business or economics. This will provide me with the skills and experience necessary to scale my community development efforts.

My hope is to help create a more equitable society, with equal opportunity for all." ■



PHOTO BY GRETA MARTI

Homework Helper Sarani Puri assists a younger student.

## Happy Anniversary

We congratulate these volunteers who celebrate their anniversaries this month and thank them for their ongoing involvement.

### 41 YEARS

**Rich Carbine** (San Rafael), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office (MCSO)

### 29 YEARS

**Steven Post** (San Francisco), Fire Lookout, Marin County Fire

### 20 YEARS

**Faith Brown** (Tiburon), Steward, Marin County Parks

### 17 YEARS

**David Albert** (Tiburon), **Sudy Schneider** (Tiburon), Stewards, Marin County Parks

### 16 YEARS

**David Barker** (Tiburon), **Mick Seaman** (Belvedere), Stewards, Marin County Parks

### 14 YEARS

**Diane Ayers** (San Rafael), **Lucille Edwards** (Novato), **Sunny Johnson** (Larkspur), **Judy Palesky** (Novato), Marin Medical Reserve Corps (MMRC) Volunteers, Health & Human Services (HHS)

### 13 YEARS

**Galen Leeds** (Tomales), Volunteer Firefighter, Marin County Fire

### 12 YEARS

**Geoffrey Dugmore** (Petaluma), Chaplain, MCSO  
**Kathryn Mitchell-Ball** (San Rafael), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

### 10 YEARS

**Diana Johnson** (Fairfax), Aide, Fairfax Library

### 9 YEARS

**Kurt Ellison** (San Rafael), Steward, Marin County Parks

**Zach Hamill** (Fulton), Air Patrol Volunteer, MCSO

### 8 YEARS

**Jeff Davidson** (Novato), Incident Management Team Volunteer, Marin County Fire

**Ray De Leon** (Greenbrae), Ombudsman, HHS

**Robert Ireson** (Greenbrae), RACES/ACS Volunteer, MCSO

**Ruth Nash** (Larkspur), Parks Environmental Steward, Marin County Parks

### 7 YEARS

**Jody Berman** (Novato), Spanish Tutor, Novato Library

**Donna Lew** (Henderson, NV), **Robert Simon** (Henderson, NV), Wildlife Picture Index Project Volunteers, Marin County Parks

### 6 YEARS

**Veronica Morino** (San Rafael), Event Aide, Human Resources

### 4 YEARS

**Mark Birnbaum** (Novato), **Beverly Birnbaum** (Novato), Stewards, Marin County Parks

**Charles Fracchia** (San Francisco), Financial Abuse Specialist Team Volunteer, HHS

**Nancy Mackle** (San Anselmo), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

### 3 YEARS

**Terri Smith** (Kentfield), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

### 2 YEARS

**Ieda Andrade** (Novato), **Andy Ashtiani** (Tiburon), **Kay Astroth** (San Rafael), **Erin Badala** (San Anselmo), **Louise Barton** (Mill Valley), **Elisabeth Claiborne** (San Rafael), **Susan Denny** (Mill Valley), **Troy Evans** (Mill Valley), **Suzanne Grant** (San Rafael), **Kathryn Hill** (San Rafael), **Pam Hirsch** (Mill Valley), **Lenora Kwok** (Tiburon), **Gary Levin** (Novato), **Joy Lewis** (Kentfield), **Skye McCormick** (Mill Valley), **Rosaire Macho** (Mill Valley), **Nancy Omahen** (Sausalito), **Monica Payne** (Petaluma), **James Pearson** (Greenbrae), **Vincent Reed** (Novato), **Holly Smith** (San Rafael), **Richard West** (Mill Valley), MMRC Volunteers, HHS

### 1 YEAR

**Beryl Bourke** (Novato), **Marion Hickman** (Novato), Marin Center Ushers, Cultural Services

**Nadia Ferrari** (San Rafael), Children & Family Services Online Resource Guide Assistant, HHS

**Curtiss Kim** (San Anselmo), Radio Communications Volunteer, Department of Public Works

**Veronica Morino** (San Rafael), Administrative Aide, Human Resources

**Jocelyn Moss** (San Rafael), California Room Docent, Civic Center Library

**Blanca Solano** (Novato), Spanish Tutor, Novato Library

## Volunteer's Expertise Boosts Newsletter Design

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hated. Soon, though, she landed a job at an art studio. “I had a great boss, fun coworkers, and major clients like Avon, HBO, Lever Bros, Proctor & Gamble, and Pfizer.” She grew to love New York.

Fifteen years later, Eleanor's family moved to the Bay Area. While she missed New York, Eleanor loved walking the trails, going to the farmers market, gardening, and discovering what the Bay Area had to offer.

“The field of typesetting was moving forward,” Eleanor said. “When I started in the sixties, it was the end of hot type and the start of phototypesetting, which segued into digital typesetting. Then Apple launched desktop publishing in 1985, and a whole new world opened up.”

After retiring in 2013, Eleanor thought it would be fun to volunteer as an usher at the Marin Center theaters. “Waiting for my interview with volunteer coordinator **Anne Starr**, I noticed the volunteer newsletter and thought, ‘Hmm, this could use a redesign.’” Anne was thrilled that Eleanor wanted to share her

typography and design skills. “And here I am, two newsletter design revisions later, doing the MarinfoNOW newsletter,” Eleanor said.



“I enjoy doing the newsletter and reading about the different volunteers and interns. Sometimes we think the world is going to pot, and then you read what these young people are doing and realize there's hope for the future. And hopefully young people will read about volunteers in the newsletter and think, ‘Hey, those old dudes are still major contributors to our world!’”

“When you click on MarinfoNOW, Eleanor's design draws you in,” said Anne. “As a typography expert, her attention to detail is phenomenal. For example, she makes tiny yet important adjustments to letters, lines, and punctuation that result in a cleaner, easier-to-read publication.”

“With every design challenge, Internships Coordinator **Joy Fossett** and I consult Eleanor. She is patient, asks great questions, offers creative solutions—and we love her sense of humor. As a bonus, she is an excellent proofreader. She supports the efforts of the whole editorial team, and we feel blessed that she shares her time and talent.”

“And I love working with Anne Starr and Joy Fossett,” said Eleanor. “They are both professional, smart, interesting and fun people to talk to. The saying ‘It takes a village’ is true for our newsletter. We have a great staff of writers, editors, photographers, proofreaders, and a cartoonist.” ■

## Mentors Sought for Local Youth

The Marin 4-H program is accepting applications from adults interested in encouraging and supporting youth in fun and diverse activities. The Marin Farm Advisor's Office hosts the local program, and staff members say that the power of 4-H is in its adult volunteers. Subject areas range from the arts to zoology (see [4-H project areas](#)). Pictured here are two of many local examples: raising rabbits and creating crafts. Since the 1920s, the Marin County 4-H program has helped young people develop into competent, confident individuals who contribute to our community. Read more in the [UC 4-H Family Handbook](#). Prospective volunteers may contact a Marin County 4-H program coordinator at [marin4h@ucanr.edu](mailto:marin4h@ucanr.edu) or (415) 473-4206, and complete an online [interest survey](#). (Note: A component of the adult volunteer appointment process is completing a Livescan fingerprint criminal records check with the California Department of Justice.)



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FARM ADVISOR'S OFFICE





## Volunteers Support Arts & Crafts Fair

Volunteers were essential to the 20th Employee Arts & Crafts Fair's success. Guitarist **Bené da Silva** volunteered his musical skills, appreciated by visitors and vendors alike. Talented staff members offering handcrafted items and original art included first-time vendor **Sara Everett-Boyer** (below, holding child's dress) and returning vendor **Sarah Cain**, pictured at lower left. Behind Sarah is a portion of the festive décor—garlands, bows, and twinkle lights—designed and installed at the Civic Center café by MarinShares volunteer **Gerrie Kunin**. Event volunteer **Marie Fitzgerald** managed vendor registration and volunteer designer **Annet Katan** created the fair poster. Meanwhile, the HR & Friends bake table set a new sales record, raising more than \$1,000 for local causes. The fair, held November 30 and December 1, resumed after a two-year pandemic pause.



PHOTOS BY ANNE STARR

## Who's New & Welcome!

**Nancy Castor** (San Rafael), California Room Archivist, Civic Center Library

**Rebecca 'Becky' Dahlstrom** (Novato), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Isabella DeRuvo** (Novato), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Rebecca Gary** (Cotati), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Lynette Greenlief** (San Anselmo), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Sarah Hellman** (Novato), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Lenny Hellman** (Novato), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Daisy Kessler** (Fairfax), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Beverly McClendon** (Novato), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Brooke McIntire** (Mill Valley), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Kieran McKeogh** (San Rafael), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Kimberly Mitchell** (Hacienda Heights), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Alexander Nunez** (San Francisco), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Gustavo Rea** (Santa Rosa), Fire Foundry Intern, Marin County Fire

**Margie Schwartz** (San Anselmo), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Sydney Tirschwell** (Greenbrae), Pre-Law Intern, Public Defender's Office

**Daniel James Viray** (Brentwood), Nursing Student in West Marin, Health & Human Services Department



## Farewell to Champion of Interns and Volunteers

Attorney **Pedro Oliveros**, a long-time supervisor of interns and volunteers, recently retired from the Marin County Public Defender's Office. During his 34-year county career, he mentored hundreds of students in legal internships and hosted numerous volunteers, all while rising to the post of chief deputy public defender. Most students went on to legal careers, including two who are judges. In recognition of his support and advocacy, the Board of Supervisors commended Pedro as the 2015–2016 Supervisor of Volunteers of the Year. Currently, Deputy Public Defenders **Tamara York** and **LaDell Dangerfield** coordinate the department's college-level and high school internships. Students of any age interested in exploring public sector legal careers may contact Marinterns Coordinator [Joy Fossett](#).



2023  
Happy New Year!



CARTOON BY JOHN DONAGHUE