

## VOLUNTEER NOTES

### We Remember

MarinShares volunteer **Rich McGrath**, an Air Force veteran who kept the flags flying outside the Marin Veterans Auditorium on the Civic Center campus, died peacefully at home in September. He was 78.

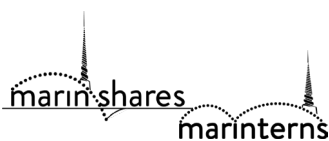
Rich began the flag role in 2011. With respect for fellow veterans and the nation, he raised and lowered the eight flags on Avenue of the Flags daily, including weekends. His efforts were featured in the *Marin IJ* and our volunteer newsletter.

A consummate contributor, he also volunteered as a building maintenance aide with the Department of Cultural Services, a steward with Marin County Parks, and a Search and Rescue team member with the Sheriff's Office. In October, District 1 Supervisor **Mary Sackett** acknowledged Rich's positive impacts and adjourned a Board of Supervisors meeting in his memory.

Following Rich's example, a family member will continue the flag-raising role.

### Holidays

County offices will be closed on New Year's Day, Monday, January 1, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Monday, January 15.



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## Probation Interns Gain Experience, Plan Their Careers

By Max Gehm

Marinterns **Wendy Gramajo** and **Meredith Hagler** began interning with the Marin Probation Department last August. They are learning to write violations, compile basic notes for jail and office visits, conduct regular chemical testing on defendants, read defendants' background reports, and determine the best manner to assist clients.

"I had a completely different view of what a probation officer was, but this internship has given me a new perspective," said Wendy, who plans a career in probation services. "The resources are available if the clients want to change—our job is to motivate them to do so.

"Going on a ride-along with one of the officers and seeing how many treatment centers are available was pretty eye-opening," she added. The county offers employment opportunities, AA meetings, detox centers, and



PHOTO BY BILL JOHNSTON JR.

Marinterns Wendy Gramajo and Meredith Hagler at the Marin Civic Center near the Probation Department office.

rehabilitation centers for Probation Department clients living with drug and alcohol issues.

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## Volunteers' Gardening Videos Attract 240,000 YouTube Views

By Marjorie Grannan

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." William Shakespeare's gentle words appear at the end of the Marin Master Gardeners' video introduction to *Earth-Friendly Gardening*.

A modern spin on the message might be that knowledgeable gardening brings communities together to help save the planet. With their video productions attracting viewers from around the globe, Marin Master Gardeners can make that claim.

The UC Cooperative Extension Marin Master Gardeners have always worked

creatively to bring science- and research-based information to the community through their help desk, public seminars, *Marin IJ* articles, and other means.

Now, they're posting videos to YouTube.

A video team was formed in October 2019 with three inaugural volunteers to bring information on home horticulture, pest management, and sustainable landscape practices to Marin residents.

The pandemic stepped up the pace as members realized in-person learning would be significantly reduced, if not

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## Volunteers' Gardening Videos Attract 240,000 YouTube Views

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eliminated, during the shutdown that began in March 2020.

Since then, the team—today comprised of 14 Master Gardener volunteers—has produced 27 professional-quality videos that have garnered more than 240,000 views in the United States and around the world.

“This is much broader than our own backyards,” says project leader **Kristine Handwerk**. “We showcase research-based, earth-friendly gardening strategies for a climate-resilient California. These practices include fire-safe, water-wise landscaping, and sustainable gardening. Our focus is on short videos that get people interested. Our team members are people who want to volunteer and give back to the community.”

The team's productions encourage viewers to look for solutions to common garden problems.

The videos also refer viewers to Marin Master Gardeners' encyclopedic [website](#) to further their knowledge.

Kristine, who brings her professional knowledge as a sound engineer to the team, said, “We have people acting as scriptwriters, cinematographers, video editors, producers, directors, production sound engineers, production assistants, and data asset managers on the team. A few have professional backgrounds, but most are volunteers eager to learn on the job. We have utilized training

programs at Community Media Center of Marin and have brought in professionals to give workshops. We use free locations and recruit other UC Marin Master Gardeners as our talent. Several of the cinematographers use smartphones for camera work. We're all learning as we go.”

In addition to the educational videos, the team has produced and annually updates attention-grabbing 30-second promotional videos to publicize Marin Master Gardeners' three plant sales (pollinator, tomato, and succulent). These are posted to online media such as Facebook, NextDoor, Instagram, the Master Gardeners website, the *Marin IJ*, and the Master Gardeners quarterly newsletter.

UC Cooperative Extension Marin County Director **David Lewis** is the staff supervisor for all Master Gardener volunteers. “The sheer number and high quality of educational videos our team has produced is phenomenal,” David said. “However, what moves me most about these videos is the inviting and



*MarinShares volunteers in the Marin Master Gardeners program create an informative “Becoming Beneficials” video for home gardeners. Director Jan Millsapps, left, observes while Pam Wright operates the camera. Jenny Chan leans behind the camera while Lucy Dilworth, right, sits in for the on-screen talent, Michelle Bryant. Master Gardeners videos are posted on YouTube.*

motivational spirit they communicate. There are times gardening and plant care can be intimidating or overwhelming. These videos remove those obstacles to learning through their engaging and plainspoken approach to the information. If you ever wanted to learn more about gardening in Marin and be motivated to turn soil, watch these videos.”

The Master Gardeners program operates under the aegis of the county, and its volunteers are part of the county's central volunteer program, MarinShares: Marin County Volunteers. ■



*The Marin Master Gardeners video team welcomed several new volunteers, caught up on team news, and posed for a group photo at a meeting earlier this year. Top row, L-R: Barbara Robertson, Jenny Chan, Lori Dang, Kris Wiskes, Jan Millsapps, Lucy Dilworth, Dana Tamura, Linda Stiles. Bottom row, L-R: Jean Von Berg, Pam Wright, Linda Danielson, Peggy Chipkin, Sara O'Keefe. Not pictured: Curtis Aikens, Mary McCue, Lori Schneeman, Pam Noensie.*

PHOTOS BY LINDA STILES



# Love of the Arts Inspires Marin Civic Center Tour Docent

By Boone Dickins

As a tour docent for the architecturally significant Marin County Civic Center, MarinShares volunteer **Jonathan Bernstein** applies his love for the arts to volunteering. He has been a docent since 2019 and enjoys the subject of the tours as much as giving them.

“I’ve always had a passion for architecture and particularly the work of Frank Lloyd Wright,” said Jonathan. “For me, the docent role is akin to being a good actor, interacting with an audience. I leverage my passion for Wright’s work in the same way an actor might prepare for a play.”

Before volunteering with Marin County, Jonathan worked with several arts organizations in San Francisco. That’s where he met **Libby Garrison**, marketing manager for the Marin County Cultural Services Department. (Libby supervises the team of docents who conduct weekly public tours of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Civic Center.) After moving to Marin and because of his interest in Wright’s work, Jonathan joined the docent team.

While leading visitors on walking tours of the Civic Center Administrative



PHOTO BY JONATHAN BERNSTEIN

Tour docent Jonathan Bernstein gets ready to drive to the Civic Center; canine pal is Osito.

Building and parts of the Hall of Justice, Jonathan shares his acute knowledge of the building’s history and inspirations. The role requires him to be as informative and accommodating as possible.

Libby, his staff supervisor, has witnessed Jonathan’s passion for the assignment. “Jonathan is a wonderful docent for our Frank Lloyd Wright program and truly shares his passion for architecture and our beloved building with visitors from far and wide,” she said. “Jonathan’s knowledge and respect for Wright’s architectural concepts and the history of how the Civic Center came to be here in Marin are to be admired.”

Jonathan graduated from Saint John’s University in New York and practiced public accounting for many years. In his free time, he enjoys the arts, including architecture, trips to fine art museums, and symphonies.

He also is a member of the Marin Civic Center Conservancy, which serves to maintain the Civic Center as a national and state historic landmark. Conservancy members meet monthly and advise the Board of Supervisors about restoration and maintenance projects that would affect the appearance of the historic buildings and landscaped grounds.

Jonathan hopes to continue serving as a docent for years.

“Docents strive to inspire, enthuse, and inform our participants about the fascinating, colorful history of the building in an informative and enthusiastic manner,” said Jonathan. “I feel it’s my responsibility to keep learning and growing my knowledge base about Wright and our amazing Civic Center.” ■

Do you appreciate world-class architecture? Would you enjoy leading tours? Email Coordinator of Volunteers [Anne Starr](#) or click [here](#) for details.

## Who's New & Welcome!

**Sharva Banker** (Novato), Student Service Volunteer, South Novato Library

**Denise Bashline** (Novato), Office Aide, Marin Law Library

**Nancy Branigan** (Ross), Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

**Louis Choy** (Berkeley), GrizzlyCorps Intern, Marin County Fire

**Steve Disenhof** (Mill Valley), Volunteer Photographer, Human Resources

**Hayden Donehower** (Corte Madera), Homework Helper Intern, Corte Madera Library

**Stephen Downs** (San Francisco), Certified Law Student, District Attorney’s Office

**Kara Halvorsen** (Sausalito), Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

**Candace Karren** (Rohnert Park), Intern, Probation Department

**Anna Kondolf** (Fairfax), Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Parks

**Evan Lichtblau** (Mill Valley), Consumer Protection Student Writer, District Attorney’s Office

**Deborah Lyons** (Kentfield), Workplace Coach, Community Development Agency

**Ella Picketts** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador, Registrar of Voters/Elections (Elections)

**Sophia Rubel** (Greenbrae), Homework Helper Intern, Civic Center Library

**Alexandra Sumski** (Kentfield), Homework Helper Intern, Civic Center Library

**Emerson Swift** (Mill Valley), Student Elections Ambassador, Elections

**Terri Tired** (Novato) Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

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

## Probation Interns Gain Experience, Plan Their Careers

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Wendy shadows Deputy Probation Officer **Jose Barajas**, who is part of the General Supervision Unit. Jose has Spanish- and English-speaking clients.

Meanwhile, Meredith shadows Probation Supervisor for Safety **Lulu Duran**, who deals with high-risk clients. Meredith splits her internship time between the High Risk Unit and the Pretrial Unit.

Deputy Probation Officer **Gina Muzio** supervises Wendy and Meredith, in addition to her regular full-time duties. The students “are good hard workers who genuinely want to learn,” Gina said.

Wendy and Meredith have sat in on court hearings, officers’ office visits, and jail interviews with officers. They have also toured some of the county’s resources, including juvenile offices.

The program has provided a solid introduction to the entirety of the Probation Department.



Wendy Gramajo

Meredith Hagler

PHOTOS BY BILL JOHNSTON JR.

Wendy grew up in Marin County and attended San Rafael High School. She has a teenage daughter and works full time at Marin Specialty Surgery Center as a medical receptionist. Wendy expects to graduate from Sonoma State University next May with a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice. She plans a career in probation services.

Meredith grew up in Tracy and came to Marin to join the Dominican University women’s soccer team. She majors in psychology at Dominican.

Meredith shared, “What’s really interesting to me is the amount of psychology involved with being a probation officer. The Probation Department has a really well-thought-out balance between social work and law enforcement.”

The two students are “juggling school, work, their personal lives—Meredith plays soccer and Wendy has her daughter,” Gina said. “Anyone who does an internship nowadays deserves kudos. The majority of internships are unpaid, which shows that next level of commitment.”

Interns receive rigorous orientation and training that mimic the processes full-time probation officers experience. This provides an inside view of the field and informs career decisions.

Supporting internships also energizes county employees, according to Gina. “Seeing a new person, in this case an intern, come in with all this drive, all this excitement—it gets you excited again.” ■

## Volunteers Support Arts & Crafts Event

PHOTO BY ANGELINA MARTIN



Vendors smile during the Marin County Employee Arts & Crafts Fair held at the Civic Center cafeteria in late November. The annual pop-up event showcases the hidden talents of staff who create art and make music in their free time. MarinShares and Marinterns participants play a role. MarinShares event volunteers **Karen Ferris**, **Marie Fitzgerald**, **Deborah Fox**, **Veronica Morino**, and **John Pierremont** helped with registration and day-of support. Volunteer designer **Annet Katan** created the event flyer and poster. Marintern **Aarya Chowdhry** prepared and maintained the detailed event schedule. Meanwhile, the County Crows employee band, Ukulele Friends Ohana, and student singers from Marin School of the Arts and San Jose Middle School in Novato provided entertainment. The fair was founded by employees in 2000 and staff participate on their own time.



# Happy Anniversary

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

## 42 YEARS

**Rich Carbine** (San Rafael), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, Marin County Fire Department (Fire)

## 30 YEARS

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

## 21 YEARS

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

## 18 YEARS

**David Albert** (Tiburon), **Sudy Schneider** (Tiburon), Environmental Stewards, Parks

## 17 YEARS

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

## 15 YEARS

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

## 14 YEARS

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

## 13 YEARS

**Geoffrey Dugmore** (Petaluma), Chaplain, Marin County Sheriff's Office (MCSO)

**Kathryn Mitchell-Ball** (San Rafael), Patrol Volunteer, Parks

## 11 YEARS

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

## 10 YEARS

**Kurt Ellison** (San Rafael), Environmental Steward, Parks

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

## 9 YEARS

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

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

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

## 8 YEARS

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

**Mark Seely** (Sausalito), Veterans Benefits Coach, Civic Center Library

## 7 YEARS

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

## 5 YEARS

**Beverly Birnbaum** (Novato), **Mark Birnbaum** (Novato), Environmental Stewards, Parks

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

## 3 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), **Rosaire Macho**

(Mill Valley), **Skye McCormick** (Mill Valley), **Nancy Omahen** (Sausalito), **Monica Payne** (Petaluma), **Vincent Reed** (Novato), **Holly Smith** (San Rafael), **Richard West** (Mill Valley), Marin Medical Reserve Corps Volunteers, HHS

## 2 YEARS

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

**Jesus Chavez** (San Pablo), **Jesus Flores** (San Rafael), **Esperanza Tene** (Concord), FIRE Foundry Interns, Fire

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

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

## 1 YEAR

**Omar Bueno Arroyo** (Santa Rosa), **Breiner Calderon** (San Rafael), **Alfredo Campos** (El Sobrante), **Lupe Duran** (Santa Rosa), **Sophia Gougomis** (San Rafael), **Brooke McIntire** (Mill Valley), **Taino Morris** (Tiburon), **Diego Sanchez** (San Rafael), **Rafael Sanchez** (San Rafael), **Elliott Thurlow** (Novato), FIRE Foundry Interns, Fire

**Gina Dudley** (San Rafael), Pre-Law Intern, Public Defender's Office

**Diana Lopez** (San Rafael), Congregate Meal Volunteer, HHS

**James Pearson** (Greenbrae), Marin Medical Reserve Corps Volunteer, HHS

**Stuart Pratt** (San Anselmo), Student Elections Ambassador Intern, Elections/Registrar of Voters

**Sophie Shehi** (San Rafael), Veterans Offices Administrative Support Aide, HHS

