

# THE SEA RANCH Soundings



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## *Forestry Plans in Negotiation*

Hope for a satisfactory solution to forest clear-cutting at the edge of Sea Ranch was fanned by events following a meeting with the principals and Sea Ranch members on December 9, 1997. The last issue of SOUNDINGS detailed information on issues relevant to Gualala Redwoods' (GRI) plan to clear cut 257 acres of woodlands along the ridge above Highway One, adjacent to The Sea Ranch. Since that time, negotiations involving GRI, members of Sea Ranch Advocates for the Environment and the Association have commenced.

Nearly 1,000 people signed the petition protesting the plan (delivered to the California Department of Forestry, [CDF], early in Novem-

ber), and many sent letters to agencies and elected officials objecting to the plan. As a result, Supervisor Mike Reilly, Assemblywoman Virginia Strom-Martin, Senator Mike Thompson, and the Coastal Commission support Sea Ranchers in their effort to mitigate the plan from clear-cuts to selective harvesting. However, letters from their offices noted only the four parcels of land on the west side of the ridge and did not address acreage on the east side, also targeted by GRI for clear-cutting.

Sea Ranchers and other community members were given the opportunity to voice their concerns to GRI and the CDF at a public meeting at Del Mar Center on December 9, 1997. In attendance were over 200 Sea Ranch and surrounding community residents, plus representatives from the offices of Assemblywoman Virginia Strom-Martin and Senator Mike Thompson. A panel of representatives from CDF, GRI, and the Department of Fish and Game were there to hear comments and questions from the group (although they stated at the outset that it was not to be a "question & answer session" and they felt no obligation to respond). Representing CDF were Ron Pate and Jeanette Knutsen, previous review team chairs, and Dennis Hall, CDF review team chairperson; Richard

Moore represented the Department of Fish and Game; and John Williams, Manager of Logging Operations, and forester Frank Lewicki represented GRI.

Al Boeke, Sea Ranch resident and original planner, expressed concern about the Timber Harvest Plan (THP) approval process and future plans — whether continued clear-cutting would be even more visible. He pointed out the fact that the southern units were on the borders of our Commons. In his opinion the same protections should be applied for the Commons as for residential property since all Sea Ranchers own the Commons and they are as important to our lifestyle as our houses.

"We feel like we are being talked at and not listened to," said Boeke. "If we at times act like we're bristly, and I do and I am, it's because we have very little confidence in this process. What you're really doing in the four southerly spots (harvest Units 6-8) is coming right up to our rear fence and taking trees out. ... Just because there aren't houses there doesn't mean that ain't our place. That is our place."

Ken Spacek of Annapolis was concerned that clear-cutting was not an environmentally sound method for harvesting redwoods on the coast. "...the redwoods especially did not evolve in a clear-cut method ...

they didn't evolve for millions of years in this type of atmosphere. The ground, their shade is gone, the humus; the water runs off quicker; the air dries it out ... how do you justify clear-cut logging?"

Merry Winslow of Gualala, who reviews THPs on a regular basis in her work with the Gualala River Improvement Network, talked about recent increased harvesting in the Gualala River watershed and its detrimental effect on the environment. "It has become apparent to me that the [logging] industry is in a race against time trying to extract as much lumber from the forest as possible before the inevitable environmental protections become law," she said. "Our river is threatened beyond any scientific doubt. Species are disappearing as their habitat is reduced below thresholds of sustainability. Welcome aboard, Sea Ranch Advocates for the Environment. There is a battle going on to try to reverse these destructive practices. The entire watershed needs your help."

Sea Rancher Tom Sparks of the Toxics Assessment Group (an environmental research and consulting service) talked about the failure of the THP to conform to CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) because of its lack of any analysis of cumulative effects. He also questioned Williams' repeated assertions that clear-cutting will not harm the environment: "I'm not an expert in silviculture (timber harvesting), so I'll have to accept that clear-cutting is best for the forest, for habitat, for fisheries. I also believe that cigarettes don't cause cancer and that Chevron does pro-

tect the environment ahead of company profits."

There were many other speakers, since the meeting lasted from 4:30 until 7:00 p.m. As a result of issues raised, the CDF requested more information from GRI, the State Department of Transportation, and the National Marine Fisheries Service. CDF requested an extension of the public comment period (and a delay in the second review) in order to give them time to collect the information. GRI refused and did not provide the information requested. This forced CDF to hold the second review; consequently at the second review on December 21, the plan was recommended for denial due to lack of sufficient information.

The next day, GRI and CDF reached a compromise — GRI would agree to extend the public comment period and CDF agreed to rescind the recommendation for denial. The public comment period was once again extended, and another second review postponed indefinitely.

In the meantime, John Williams of GRI contacted the Sea Ranch Association Board to ask if the Board and the Sea Ranch Advocates would agree to meet and discuss the issues surrounding this THP. The first meeting took place on January 19, 1998. It was agreed at that time that public comment will be extended through the end of February (and reextended if necessary) while GRI, the Advocates, and the Board meet on a regular basis. As of this writing, the groups have met twice: Participants have established protocol for the meetings and begun wrestling with the issues. Marti

Campbell and Ann Harriman are representing TSRA Board of Directors, Kathleen Morgan and John McChesney are representing the Advocates, and John Williams and Frank Lewicki are representing GRI.

All participants are hopeful that some significant and mutually acceptable solution can be reached. In a January 28 letter to Marti Campbell, John Williams said, "I look forward to our continued work in mending our fences." When asked for comment, Marti Campbell said, "We are gratified that Gualala Redwoods has initiated these discussions with a view toward reaching a compromise acceptable to the Board of Directors and the Sea Ranch Advocates for the Environment, and we're hopeful that we'll see positive results." Kathleen Morgan said, "We are very excited about this opportunity to work toward a solution which will protect the Sea Ranch environment, not only for now but for the future."

### ***Lundell / McChesney - Sea Ranchers of Year***

Many observers of Sea Ranch politics might have found the selection of John McChesney and John Lundell Co-Sea Ranchers of the Year strange, if not ironic. If you think about it, though, it's perfect. Often at odds on the issues, John and John are surprisingly alike in several significant ways. Both have given long and effective service to The Sea Ranch, and both are strong personalities who have aroused passionate support and opposition.

Both men have focused their impressive abilities and experience on

the infrastructure that supports The Sea Ranch way of life. Both conceived and formulated new policies and fought numerous bureaucracies that were obstacles on the road to policy implementation. Patience, perseverance, a no-nonsense, rational approach to problem-solving, a passionate dedication to the Sea Ranch concept — their stories could be told in similar terms. And, in the words of Bill Darling, "designating them simultaneously (as Co-Sea Ranchers of the Year) demonstrates that there is no single path to serving Sea Ranch effectively."

### **John McChesney**

John and Corinne McChesney first heard about The Sea Ranch back in the '60s from a Vice President of the developer, OCI. Their children went to school together in Tiburon, and the VP would often mention the fledgling coastal community at school functions. "That foggy place?" John remembers thinking, "no way!" But they came up anyway, and fell in love. "The place just grabbed us," he says. The McChesneys bought their Sea Ranch lot on that first visit in 1968, and built their house in '72.

That was the year the Coastal Commission started and, although it was a wet winter, they hurried to get their foundation in before a moratorium. "The Commission was really feeling their oats," John said, "they really wanted to put it to us, and some of them even wanted us to take our foundation out!" But the house was completed that year and John and Corinne moved here full-time in 1977, after the children graduated from high school and

John had retired from his position as Vice President of Operations with Hills Brothers Coffee.

Although he had been on the Planning Commission in Tiburon, John had no plans to become involved in Sea Ranch politics. A neighbor talked him into participating in discussions about the Coastal Commission and the rest, as they say, is history. From 1978 until 1993, John was on the Board of Directors for a total of 11 years — more than any other Director. Five of those years he was chief officer of the Board, and he also served as Vice Chairman, Treasurer, and Director.

During his service, John plunged headlong into some of the most contentious issues facing the community. In 1980-81, he headed the team that negotiated the implementation of the Bane Bill and worked to minimize the degree of public intrusion into the community. It's important to remember that at that time, there were those who wanted almost unrestricted public access to The Sea Ranch.

From 1983-85, he served as Chairman of the Waste Water Task Force. The task force's efforts led to the formation of the On-Site Wastewater Disposal Zone, which is staffed by county personnel and managed by TSRA — it effectively integrates the global interest of the county with local management by the Association. In 1985, as Chairman of the Board, John directed a study which extensively researched government in small communities like Cloverdale, Cotati, and Healdsburg, and resulted in our present form of Community Manager-headed government. In 1992, he

served on the negotiating team that settled the nonwater issues of the lawsuit with Castle & Cooke, and formulated a procedure for resolving the water issues. At present, although he is no longer on the Board, John is on the steering committee of Sea Ranch Advocates for the Environment, and is participating in negotiations with Gualala Redwoods to evolve a mutually acceptable solution to their plan to clear-cut near Sea Ranch borders.

John describes his reaction to being designated Sea Rancher of the Year as "complete amazement. I thought I had too much 'baggage' to ever be named!" he says, referring to his sometimes unpopular stands on the issues. He says his overall philosophy embraces three tenets: good government, maintenance of privacy, and leaving the environment alone as much as possible. "We've inherited this beautiful jewel," he says, "and we've got to protect it. If people say we're being elitist, then you bet that's elitist!" Of his sometimes contentious relationship with Co-Sea Rancher of the Year John Lundell, he says, "The things we disagreed on, we disagreed on violently — but we could always work together."

### **John Lundell**

John and Coralyn Lundell first saw The Sea Ranch in 1979, but had been aware of the unique development from the beginning. An article in a 1964 San Francisco Chronicle led John to decide he wanted to visit the area someday. Finally, on a return trip down the coast from a weekend at the Benbow Inn in '79, the Lundells stopped to look around. "Michael Gates gave us the

grand tour," John recalls, "and I was impressed and intrigued, not only with the beauty of the place but with the top-notch people connected with OCI — Moore, Turnbull, Lyndon, Esherick, Halprin."

John and Coralyn began renting regularly the following year. They purchased their first lot on the meadow in '83, and a second lot on the hillside in '85. Although they have never built a home or lived here, John's dedication to preserving The Sea Ranch concept is equal to that of many full-time residents. "I'm very concerned about the turnover, that we have about 100 new people every year," he says, "and that means that in a decade we're changing almost half our membership. We have to do something about educating these people about the concept or it's going to fade away. The Association has to be proactive in promulgating that concept."

Before he retired, John spent 35 years in research and management at NASA. He and Coralyn, a Personal Color Designer, live in Saratoga. They have been married for 45 years and have three children. The Lundells own a home in another coastal community, Pajaro Dunes, south of Santa Cruz near Watsonville. Before becoming involved in Sea Ranch politics, John served on the homeowners' association board at Pajaro Dunes for over six years.

Shortly after they bought their Sea Ranch property, John decided to bring his considerable experience to bear on Sea Ranch issues. He approached then-Board Chair John McChesney and asked to join the

Planning Committee (at the time an ad hoc committee). McChesney asked if he would instead be part of the original Governance Task Force. He agreed, and after serving on the task force became a charter member of the Planning Committee when it became a standing committee. In 1989 he made his first successful run for the Board, subsequently waging two more successful campaigns and serving on the Board a total of seven years.

In his first year on the Board, John demonstrated his talent for negotiations on a task force that worked with SRVI during the lawsuit with Castle & Cooke. Agreements reached insured that the Association would have design control over the Lodge and the golf links, permanent access to Black and Bihler Points, and that the golf links would always remain a public course.

In 1993, as Chairman of the Board, John first tackled the issue with which he is most closely identified: water. Aside from determining who was responsible for developing a secondary water source (in the negotiations with Castle & Cooke), the question of how much water was needed remained unanswered. John performed the calculations that showed exactly how much water would be needed. He worked with the developer engineers to determine the process for storing water during dry periods. He helped convince many Sea Ranchers that ownership is the only sure measure of control, smoothing the way for purchase of the Water Company.

John says that his guiding principle is always to try to look 10 or 20 years down the road, and ask

how what we are doing today will affect what The Sea Ranch will be like in the future. He is surprised and pleased to be named Co-Sea Rancher of the Year. He acknowledges John McChesney's "significant contributions" and concurs that although their disagreements were many, they have been in substantial agreement on most of the major issues. "It's been a joy, a real pleasure to serve on the Board," he says. "It has been gratifying to be involved in so many major decisions, and I'm appreciative that the members gave me that opportunity."

### Soroptomists Tour & Taste

Homes by different architects and/or designers will be featured in the Soroptomists Architectural Home Tour through Sea Ranch and Gualala on Saturday, May 9, 1998, from 10:30 to 5:00.

These unique homes, represent a wide variety of architectural concepts that reflect living on the rugged Northern California Coast. At present, our plans include an earlier design of the late William Turnbull. His designs, inspired by weathered wooden barns, influenced design philosophy in our ecologically sensitive community. The tour is self-guided with a map of locations supplied with the tickets. Houses will be open on Saturday from 10:30 through 3:30, and the tour is followed by a wine tasting at 3:30 through 5:00 at the new Gualala Arts Center.

A final tour is planned for the Arts Center, a Paul Styskal Design which began construction in March 1996. This dynamic planning of

15,000 square feet, includes three floors. A 350-seat auditorium, large stage, with sliding barn doors; a permanent gallery and conference rooms are all part of the ground floor. The commercial kitchen, still in the planning stages, is also on this main floor. The upstairs mezzanine includes a control room, two classrooms, and another bathroom. The downstairs has a ceramics studio and additional classrooms with storage.

This is the 14th year that the service club, Soroptomist International of Mendocino Sonoma Coast, has sponsored this Architectural Home Tour and Wine Tasting benefit in support of its many community and youth projects.

Advance Tickets purchasers will save \$5.00 over the tour day cost of \$25.00 per person. Coveralls and Gualala Pharmacy will have advance tickets at a cost of \$20.00. Tickets may be purchased from any Soroptomist member.

On the day of the tour, tickets will be available at the Sea Ranch Lodge on Sea Ranch and at Don Berard Associates, 39175 Highway One, Gualala at a cost of \$25.00 per person.

For additional information contact the coordinating committee: Penny Dreyer, Ada Wristen, Jean Stalaker or Linda Bradbrook at Gualala Country Inn 1-800-564-4466 (This telephone number is for the convenience of out-of-town participants.)

### *Sheep / Burns for Commons?*

Burning or grazing? Members learned it is not an "either-or"

proposition at the December 13 Workshop as four outstanding experts led them through the pros and cons of prescribed burns and/or prescribed grazing as management tools to control the buildup of flammable vegetation on Sea Ranch's Commons.

Irv Merrill thanked the Board for getting the experts together to address a problem "that's been around since the 1960s. It's been one of the most informative sessions on this question.... Every year that we wait it gets more expensive and more and more complicated. I think the Board would not have gotten such learned specialists together unless they had some intention of doing something about it. I hope that in February or March we're not still talking about what kind of research project we'll discuss." The Workshop was organized by TSRA Environmental Planner Bill Wiemeyer and moderated by Board Chair Marti Campbell.

Ecology of Vegetation Management **Oren Pollak** is Regional Ecologist for The Nature Conservancy, California Regional Office, and has worked for them on land management issues for eight years. With advanced degrees in Ecology from U.C. Davis, he is an expert in the use of prescribed fire and grazing as management techniques to promote ecological benefits.

Pollak described fire as a periodic natural phenomenon in California, in fact many native plant species need fire to begin their life cycle. Without fire there is a steady encroachment of invasive plants like star thistle and medusa head, the

seeds of which are killed by fire. Photos of a plot before and after a prescribed burn showed the cover of exotic plants shifted from 80 percent to 20 percent of total cover. About four weeks after the burn, the plots were filling in with native perennial grasses. Late spring is a better time to burn rather than early fall, based on Pollak's experience in the Central Valley. He also believes there are some ecological benefits from sheep grazing. If we want biodiversity and/or reduction of fuel load, it is essential to determine what we are trying to achieve and to set goals.

### **Prescribed Burning**

**Louis Sciocchetti** is a Vegetation Management Program Coordinator for the State of California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), covering a six-county area. Prescribed burning is used under this program as a technique for a variety of resource management objectives. Sciocchetti has been a Registered Professional Forester for 20 years and has special expertise in Fire Behavior and Fuel Modeling.

Under the State's Vegetation Management Program, the state pays for public benefits and private owners pay private expenses. If TSRA enters into a contract with CDF, the Association would cover a portion of expenses such as providing personnel to watch the fire. There is a formal review process to define the landowner's objectives and their consistency with the goals of the CDF, e.g., fuel management. Public agencies are contacted with a description of the project for a 30-day comment period. CDF would col-

lect information such as archaeological records, prepare a program Environmental Impact Report to identify potential negative effects, and set up a "burn plan" or a prescription for the burn (e.g., time of year, type of vegetation, wind speed and direction, smoke management, etc.). Then a contract is signed by the landowner. Within a specified period of time, CDF identifies a "burning window" that fits their prescription, and does the burn. Under this program, once the contract is signed, the state assumes all liability for the burn and also does follow-up monitoring.

### Prescribed Grazing

**Diego Olagaray** is a partner in Olagaray Brothers Diversified Agriculture in Lodi, California. Olagaray Brothers is a second-generation family farming operation with over 35 years experience in the sheep industry in California and Nevada; as well as producing commodities as diverse as sheep, wheat, alfalfa, wine grapes, corn, and beans.

Diego proposes bringing 1,100 head of sheep to graze Sea Ranch meadows on a part-time basis. Generally, about 1,100 head of sheep are run in 10-acre blocks contained by three-strand electric fencing for temporary fences, using a 12-volt system. Grazing is controlled from one field to the next. Professional shepherds are with the sheep 24 hours a day. Dogs are used for herding, moving and transporting sheep and certain dogs for predator control. Sheep are grown primarily for meat—wool is secondary. The lambing season is fall to early winter and ewes lamb in alfalfa fields at Olagaray's Lodi

operation. The first part of March is generally shearing season. Once the lambs are marketed, the feed dries up. In order to have a commercial sheep operation here, the following issues must be worked out: elimination of thatch buildup; potential predators, e.g. mountain lions, coyotes; domestic dogs off leash; and human beings disturbing the herd.

### Vegetation Management

**Stephanie Larsen**, Sonoma County Advisor on Livestock and Range Management for University of California Cooperative Extension, is an expert in rangeland and natural resource management, especially related to livestock. Larsen is a member of the California Wool Growers Association and President of the Society for Range Management for California.

Larsen asked members, "What are your goals, and how do you measure the success of your goals?" Grazing is one tool for vegetation management. Some feel that grazing is not a good thing, but when grazing is timed and the sheep are moved around in what is called rotational grazing, it can benefit the vegetation. A shepherd on-site can assure that the sheep are moved around in a timely fashion. How does grazing domestic animals affect wildlife? Forage for wildlife is actually improved by going in early, having the sheep graze off the exotics, then moving the sheep off and letting wildflowers and natural vegetation move in. There is no nutrient value for sheep in old standing vegetation; a grazed plant produces more roots and a stronger, healthier plant. The sheep need vegetative

quality in order to stay healthy.

### Questions From Members

*What is the frequency of prescribed burns?* Pollak said he has worked on a five- to seven-year time frame in the Central Valley, but here it could be anywhere from three to 10 years. He recommended we leave that question open and do some sort of quantitative or qualitative measure and watch the response in the area. There are some situations where we might want to do two years of successive burning.

*Is it mutually exclusive to burn for biodiversity and for fuel management?* Sciocchetti said, "No, they are not mutually exclusive. What's happened at Sea Ranch is the natural coastal plain has been severely modified with plantings of trees, shrubs and nonnative species. To a large extent Bill and his crew have been trying to drag that back toward a more natural setting and in doing that they're reducing a lot of the fuel hazard problem that has built up." The prescriptive burning program would be primarily concerned with grassland, creating areas where the fuel load would be reduced considerably. In a wildland fire, it takes time to call in the air tankers, equipment, and personnel necessary to fight it. "These things buy us time, in addition to the ecological benefits that Oren is talking about."

*Does electric fencing keep out loose dogs?* Olagaray said no, some dogs are tall enough to leap over the fences. Although there are some areas large enough that sheep could graze without being contained by electric fencing, it would be impossible to stop loose dogs from attack-

ing. There is a gun law that allows them to shoot dogs that attack sheep, but, said Olagaray, "We don't want that either!"

*Would 1,100 head of sheep fit on a 10-acre plot?* Olagaray said yes, that is 550 head of ewe/lamb pairs. *Would the Common areas be fenced so that sheep wouldn't go on private lots?* Yes, that is the intention, to make it easier on the herder and on the public; however there is the potential for homeowners to request that sheep graze on their property. *And how long do they graze before they have to be moved off?* Larsen said the sheep would clear everything out in a couple of days.

*What are the impacts of a controlled burn on native wildlife?* It depends on the timing of the burn. In the spring, wildlife are nesting and particularly vulnerable to destruction so care must be taken in terms of exact species. Generally the Department of Fish and Game prefers to concentrate on late summer and late fall which is outside the nesting season. At Sea Ranch it might be early summer and late fall. For the most part, wildlife here are adapted to fire. For example, immediately following a burn, hawks swoop in and pick off surviving grasshoppers.

*How large an area would be burned, and what is the lead time?* Sciocchetti replied that 10 acres is the size, and, well in advance CDF tries to shoot for one or two days within a given week, giving a 48-hour notice for the burn itself. *How would we approach a trial burn or grazing, a "pilot program"?* The Nature Conservancy does a trial burn whenever they do a prescribed

burn. Pollak's advice would be to pick four or five Common areas and try a fall burn and a summer burn. He recommends a preburn survey of the composition of the vegetation and the wildlife activity, with sufficient accuracy that after the burn you can go back in and make some generalizations about the changes that have occurred. Have a structured program with goals that can be measured. Olagaray said on a large scale it would not be possible economically to do a trial of sheep-grazing but Larsen felt it could be a simple as putting in some test areas, then doing a few transects to determine what plants are growing there before grazing and after.

*What is the length of a typical grazing season?* Olagaray said it depends on when rains stop, but probably from the first of April to as late as November. A two- or three-month period is needed to make grazing economically viable. The nutritional value of the grasses here on the Ranch is critical, and once things start to dry out the nutritional value is lost. Larsen said in Sonoma County the young tender grasses that the sheep like typically start in February and March, but the strength of the grasses come in March and April and the grazing period is generally April to July. There is a lot of thatch in the Common area, so a preliminary burn must be done before grazing takes place.

*What are the water requirements of sheep?* Sheep consume a quarter- to a half-gallon per day, according to the weather, said Olagaray, and fire hydrants can serve drinking troughs.

*What are the economics of the pre-*

*scribed burn and grazing. Do the two balance out?* Bill Wiemeyer said costs to the Association for grazing are mostly water, some staff time to set up and survey the test plots, and security in the event of loose dogs or moving a herd across Highway One. Olagaray said he would have to be compensated for any sheep lost to dogs. In terms of prescribed burns, the costs would be minimal, just for the crew's time in setting up the burns. Sciocchetti agreed, saying, "The nature of these kinds of burns is that the fire moves quickly through the area and then is out. It's not the type of fire that's going to linger for days." Pollak said Nature Conservancy estimated prescribed burns at about \$10 to \$20 per acre, including capital costs, personnel, etc. Larsen said, "What we are talking about is not 'either-or,' I would hope that you would look at both."

*Do prescribed burns damage the soil as wildland fires do?* Grassland fires are moderate, thus temperature sensors at the surface of the soil don't get very hot because the duration of a grass fire is a matter of seconds until it passes over. Wildland fires are very hot and bake the soil primarily in chaparral where there is a high oil content to make the fire burn very hot. Soil may bake under brush piles on the Ranch because the fires are hot, and burn for a long time in one place.

*If the time to burn here is late summer or early fall, how long will it be before a burned meadow will be green?* Assuming we started to burn as soon as the grass is cured, possibly late June or early July, depending on the weather. It's going to

green up as soon as fall arrives and we start getting a little early morning moisture, certainly with the advent of rain. And by mid-fall there will be a substantial green cover. Bill Wiemeyer added in the early 1980s, there was a prescribed burn program that burned virtually from hedgerow to hedgerow and the aesthetic impacts were pretty dramatic. Now, he is discussing smaller burns of five to 10 acres to develop a mosaic of areas without vegetation, so that when you look out over a meadow you will not see the entire meadow burned but patches here and there without a large visual impact.

John McChesney called the burning of Commons in 1982 a "bloody disaster." It went on for many days and members were disturbed by the burning and the smoke, psychologically and physiologically. "What is happening here is preparing the members in a legitimate fashion for what they can expect and now they can be told of the positive aspects of the type of burning or the type of grazing that would happen. So I think this is a very important step forward." Sciochetti said smoke is certainly a negative aspect and the single factor preventing many prescribed burns. CDF is trying to mitigate smoke by going to a smaller-sized plot and having a very narrow prescription for wind direction on the day of the burn. On any given year they may not get the right conditions for a burn. Pollak's group averages about five cancellations on any given burn. Do the sheep like Douglas iris? Larsen said they'll eat it, but what will happen is it will come up twice as thick.

*In the aftermath of a burn do we have a problem with the invasion of thistles or any other exotic plants?*

It takes burns about three years in a row to eliminate star thistles. Watch the area of the Yardarm fire for a good example of what comes up. Pollak said there is no doubt that some nonnative species respond because fire has stimulated the germination of the seeds in the soil which for control purposes is a good thing, because now the plants are above ground and susceptible to another fire, grazing, or other management technique. Timing is critical. If you burn at a time when the thistle seeds are still in the stalk, you have a chance to kill all the seed but don't wait until all the seeds disperse and go into the soil. Wiemeyer has noticed on the Ranch that thistles grow where there is a really hot fire; in fact, "Thistles are about the only thing that does grow on the burn piles."

How long does it take sheep droppings to disintegrate, and do they increase flies? Larsen said flies like moisture, and sheep droppings dry out quickly because they are small. She doesn't see a problem with sheep manure. Olagaray said deer droppings or rabbit droppings are similar to sheep droppings. Would we be encouraging predators down from the hills on the land with sheep? Initially, Olagaray said, predators might come in, but they're pretty intelligent and once they get used to the electric fence, they don't stay around.

### ***Gualala Arts Challenge Grant***

In what promises to be one last major appeal to complete the new building, Gualala Arts announced a

new \$25,000 Challenge Grant sponsored by three Sea Ranch couples: Rex and Charlotte Burnett, Alan and Janet Coleman, and Fred and Barbara Ilfeld.

"This will be a '2 for 1' Challenge Grant. Thus, if we can raise \$50,000 in new money, we will earn the full \$25,000 Challenge — thereby reaching our goal of \$75,000 to essentially complete construction inside and outside the new building," explained Lee Rye, President of Gualala Arts. "For example, a \$1,000 donation will earn an additional \$500 from the Challenge Grant. We are appealing especially to those who have not yet supported the building fund — to consider doing so now."

Gualala Arts has come a long way to achieve the nearly finished, first-class arts and activity center on 11 acres of beautifully wooded land adjacent to the Gualala River. It took some 15 years of planning and fund-raising efforts, thousands of hours of volunteer labor, and hundreds of cash contributions.

"Moreover, throughout this undertaking Gualala Arts has incurred *no debt*," Rye emphasized. Bill Ackermann and Nick Makris, who have been on the job almost daily since groundbreaking, estimated the structure will be completed at a cost of less than \$60 per square foot. The dedicated effort of over 80 regular volunteers, many of whom are Sea Ranchers, volunteer labor, along with donations of materials, accounted for savings of at least \$350,000 to \$400,000 in construction costs to date.

The new Art Center "officially

opened" last August — just in time for Art-In-The-Redwoods. The structure was totally closed in, the offices relocated, and the rest rooms were open. Yet, because of all the beautifully displayed artwork, visitors may not have realized that more than half of the interior space of the building was yet to be completed.

While construction has continued (rain or shine), Gualala Arts has maintained continuity for a wide range of arts-related and community oriented programs. Faithful volunteers show up every day to hammer, saw, and drill, while meetings, lectures, classes, plays, musical programs, and business continue. All this has posed quite a challenge!

"As Gualala Arts approaches the final phases of this project, any kind of help is welcome and needed," Lee urges. "However, only through broad and ongoing financial support will we be able to complete the Art Center in the near future."

Newly elected President Lee Rye and past-President Alan Coleman thank members of The Sea Ranch community who have made cash donations or other contributions in the past. Thanks to literally hundreds of donations, the new Art Center is now about 90 percent complete. "We couldn't have come this far without you!"

"At the same time, we encourage everyone who reads this to consider a *new gift* for this 'one last push' to essentially complete the inside of the building." An additional gift at this time would help Gualala Arts meet the new \$50,000 Challenge Grant the Burnetts, Colemans, and

Ifelds have made possible.

New money will be used essentially to complete the interior areas of the building (auditorium flooring, stage dressing rooms and bathrooms, carpeting, lower-level classrooms, etc.); and will allow improvements to the entrance driveway and parking areas, including outside lighting and landscaping. Funding for a commercial kitchen is being handled separately.

Past or present givers of \$1,000 to \$9,999 will have their name on an Honor Roll plaque in the foyer of the building. Past or present givers of \$10,000 or more will have a specific area of the Arts Center named for that donor.

"The new Gualala Art Center promises to be "the jewel of the North Coast" — confirming how important it is to complete the building as soon as possible," Lee said. She also urges those who have not been by the building site recently to drop by for a visit.

Lee Rye and Alan Coleman stepped down as Co-Chairs of Fund-Raising since 1990. New Co-Chairs, Don and Doris Buck, will help bring the building campaign to conclusion this year. If you have any questions at all, please contact Gualala Arts at 884-1138.

**Restaurants**

Most Sea Ranchers know they can buy delicious prepared foods at **The Food Company** in Gualala. Owner Naomi Schwartz will also cater parties in your home or a hired hall.

When she closed for a well-deserved rest in January and part of February, I received calls from peo-

ple who wanted other sources for catering. So here they are.

**Laurie Pedelaborde**

P.O. Box 5022, Gualala, 95445  
(707) 884-9504

Laurie is a Specialty Food Manager and wild mushroom forager, teaches cooking classes, supplies food for functions at The Whale Watch Inn and for your private party in your home or a hired hall. She loves to do small weddings and large or small parties. A sampling of hors d'oeuvres she prepares might include: Wild Mushroom Quiche, Crab Cakes, one-bite Caesar Salad in Cheese Cups, Shrimps and Scallops marinated in Oriental Sauce and then wrapped in Snow Peas.

A dinner party menu might offer: Wild Mushroom Crepes, Mixed Green Salad with Oranges and Sun-Dried Tomatoes, Roasted Red Pepper Soup, Wild Rice Pilaf, Asparagus with Ginger and Blood Orange Sauce, Poached Salmon or Chicken Breasts stuffed with Spinach, Prosciutto, Cheese and Mushrooms. For vegetarians she makes a Vegetable Terrine. Dessert might be Chocolate Mousse with Raspberry Puree in Chocolate Shells, Orange Poppy Seed Cake filled with Lime, Lemon, and Blood Orange Curd, or Almond Cookie Shells filled with three kinds of Sorbet. Her schedule is flexible. She charges \$20.00 per hour for her labor plus the cost of materials used.

**Bev Gillie**

P.O. Box 193, Point Arena, 95468  
(707) 882-1635

Bev has catered many group parties

on the coast such as Rotary Club events, and is site manager for the Senior Center. She will do any size party in your home or hired hall. I know her American-style meat, chicken and potato menus; but she says she can do many themes such as Italian, Oriental, Mexican/Spanish dinners and/or hors d'oeuvres. For dinner, everything included, the price may range from \$12.50 per person to \$15.00 each, depending on cost of supplies for the menu you select.

I am told that Tim at **The Galley** at Arena Cove, (707) 882-2189 also does catering. The **Delicatessen Department at Surf Supermarket** will supply party trays for your gatherings and other items.

### Checkers Restaurant

In Santa Rosa many of my friends like Checkers on lower Fourth Street across the street from the Mexican Cantina. Hard to spot their sign if you are on foot, but it is nestled among other eateries that have sidewalk tables in good weather. Get a table that lets you look out the front windows at the slice of life passing on the sidewalk, not the monstrous abstract painting on one whole wall. They make a chunky, herby, satisfying Tomato Basil Soup served in two sizes, cup or bowl. The Thai Noodle Salad is excellent as is the Chinese Chicken Salad. The Turkey Cranberry Sandwich is made with house-roasted turkey, not prepackaged slices. They serve a moist, chewy Focaccio Bread, and everyone's favorite side dish is Garlic Mashed Potatoes.

### Egypt

In January I had a marvelous

16 days in Egypt where I felt safer than in San Francisco or Los Angeles. The precious tourist so essential to the Egyptian economy is now constantly guarded by men in black uniforms, Uzi automatic or rifles at the ready. Now is the perfect time to be there when only five percent of the usual number of tourists will be visiting the Temples, Tombs, Pyramids and other ancient sites with you. Through March the weather will be pleasant. January was like a sunny summer day in San Francisco. At night only a blazer or wool jacket was required. Do remember not to offend Muslim sensibilities by wearing shorts, bare arms or shoulders. You'll need a hat against the sun and sturdy walking shoes.

I highly recommend the beautiful new boat, *Kasr Ibrim*, on Lake Nasser above the Aswan Dam. Luxuriously decorated public rooms, a good-sized dance floor with disk jockey, excellent foods including wonderful freshly baked rolls and a tantalizing selection of desserts and pastries. Stay away from salads and raw vegetables, particularly tomatoes, to avoid "mummy tummy." You won't miss them because Egyptian-style cooked vegetables are varied, delicious, and artfully prepared. This boat also has the option of opening a door to a balcony off your cabin so that you can breathe fresh air.

In Aswan stay at the new **Basma Hotel** and in Cairo do stay at the **Cairo Marriott**, two towers built either side of a magnificent palace constructed for the opening of the Suez Canal and to house all the royals and dignitaries who came for

that historic event. The River Nile will be just across the street and a view of lighted minarets at night plus the marvelous sound of muezzins and their call to prayer five times a day.

### Sounding Off

*Editor:*

At the last board meeting, I called to the attention of the board that Sea Ranch Association members are being charged a county road impact fee in the range of \$4,000 in addition to the building permit fee. An additional charge of \$1,400 is being added to a building permit for the county parks.

Sea Ranch property owners pay for our own roads and provide our own recreation facilities. Only approximately 200 homes are permanent residents out of the 2400 homes sites of which approximately 850 are not even built. We access The Sea Ranch on State Highways and then use our own roads, making little or no use of Sonoma County roads and parks.

Calculating approximately \$5,400 per building permit to build out, Sea Ranch property owners will have paid over FOUR AND HALF MILLION DOLLARS in fees to the county from which we derive little or no benefit and for which we have already paid in assessments, in both our primary residences and The Sea Ranch.

I was told at the meeting that the Association has no power to exempt The Sea Ranch from these fees. It is my hope that we would make our political presence felt in Sonoma County Board of Supervisors meet-

ings when issues that effect us to the extent of FOUR AND HALF MILLION DOLLARS are being considered to see that our interest is being represented. I was told that our Fifth District representative suffices to act in behalf of our interest. This has not proven to be the case, given the inequity described above.

It would be well worth the expense of having a representative of The Sea Ranch at County Board of Supervisors meetings when our vital interests are at stake. Either the manager or his designee, or even our attorney should make our views heard. It is not too late to open up this issue on the County level with the goal of a revision in the ordinance exempting The Sea Ranch from such fees.

*Don Berard*

**1998 Design Awards**

The Sea Ranch Design Awards were a welcome feature in this year's Midwinter Meeting to bring members' attention to the qualities that make Sea Ranch great. As the award presenter said, "Design makes a point of participating with — and subordinating to — the landscape." The Design Committee's awards emphasized that point.

Members of The Sea Ranch Design Committee were introduced by Planning and Design Director Ted Smith, AIA: George Homesy, FAIA, Chair; Carson Bowler, Claude Stoller, FAIA, Russ Beatty, ASLA, and Tito Patri, FASLA. A good-natured group, the Committee added perceptive comments to the awards as they were presented. Homesy introduced Dan Gregory to present the awards. Gregory, a

Ph.D. and former professor of Architectural History, is an Editor of Sunset Magazine, directing its AIA Sunset Magazine Home Awards.

Gregory observed that Sunset has been following The Sea Ranch for 35 years because it has represented the highest standards of design in sympathy with its environment in the West and has promoted that standard to the rest of the country. "Sea Ranch is a remarkable landmark in terms of environmental design." He quoted Hippocrates: "First, do no harm." "That's what design in Sea Ranch is all about: taking stock of the landscape, recording the patterns that existed on the land, the weather, the history, and then setting new buildings lightly on the land," said Gregory. "The concept is assertive modesty in which the environment is the most important thing. This is, after all, Sea Ranch. In this country, it is rare to find places significant, separate and distinct in character and that is what you are helping to preserve and, in fact, to expand upon."

**Criteria for the awards were:**

- Does the project exemplify The Sea Ranch design philosophy of appropriateness to the environment?
- Is there a strong relationship to the context or the neighborhood? That context is growing, it's not just landscape anymore, it's context with other buildings.
- Is there a feeling of modesty or humility expressed?
- What is the relationship between indoor spaces and out-

door spaces, are they strongly defined and carefully thought out?

- Are the details successful?
- House need not succeed in all design criteria to be a success.
- Efficient site plan: minimal yard space/footprint; short driveway, hidden garage, clear entry sequence.
- Sensitive massing: proportion of height/spread, components reflect wind/solar context, components reflect slope, relationship to fencing and out buildings.
- Vegetation: transition to natural vegetation, tree protection, shrub/herbaceous transition to Commons.

The following are the homes and the Design Committee comments (in quotes) regarding award winners:

*1. Owners: William & Susan Flora, Architect: Malcolm Davis*

Comfortable scale for large house with major addition. Detailing is plain and simple, well-organized with clean lines and good use of outdoor space.

*2. Owners: Donlyn Lyndon and Alice Wingwall, Architects: Lyndon/Buchanan Associates*

Relationship to outdoors rock mound and landscape became a visible part of the design of the house. Created a unique, sunny, serene, wind-protected, comfortable outdoor space between studio and house, making an interesting complex of land use. "It is relatively unusual for somebody to accept such a feature as a rock as a major element

of the design. Most folks are so concerned with the view to the exclusion of almost everything else that this is a very interesting lesson and a very successful design."

3. *Owners: Charles and Jeanetta Miller, Designer: Charles Miller*

Whimsical character with playful outdoor space. Materials (board and batten) have weathered well; presents itself as an attractive retreat from out-side world. "Shows very nicely how a complex of a house can have both privacy as well as an impression in the rest of the neighborhood."

4. *Owner/Architect: Dimitri Veden-sky, AIA*

Small, simple, private getaway retreat, expressing the original intended use of Sea Ranch houses. Disarmingly simple front, almost plain and bare, the house opens up toward the landscape on the private side in a distinctive, partially playful way with exposed stairways and openings to the inside. "It occurred to us, with the passing of Dimitri, that his work also was something that should be recognized in and of itself. He hadn't received any major recognition, working with other architects such as Charles Moore and Joe Esherick and having influence on their work. Dimitri was a very elegant, articulate, and understated architect. His house is something of the spirit of the earlier forms on The Sea Ranch, very simple object with a pitched roof and on the facing side it was very quiet. He had visited the Orient and had many artifacts which may have influenced his design. A very quiet retreat open to the woods, a beautiful house. At

night when it is lit, it is wonderful." "I would characterize Dimitri's house as a demonstration of the economy of effort toward effect which is an Oriental notion."

5. *Owners: Philip H. Marsh/Merry E. Stiles/Michael H. Marsh, Architect: Michael H. Marsh*

Unassuming ensemble of rooms for a rural getaway (retreat). It is timeless in its presence and use of materials in The Sea Ranch vernacular. A modest, humble, "farmhouse" that sets a strong standard for design. "A wonderful example of restraint. With reference to a 'weekend retreat' — perhaps some of the older members will remember that was the whole idea of Sea Ranch originally. What we are seeing now is considerably different. We're seeing much, much larger houses but unfortunately the size of the lots hasn't expanded along with size of the houses, so it makes our task sometimes very difficult. We must try to rationalize that size with the concept of "living lightly on the land." "When this house was built, it looked like it had been there a long time."

6. *Owners: Eugene Eidenberg and Angenette Martin (deceased), Architects: Turnbull/Griffin/Haesloop*

Original house and sensitive additions create a simple, cohesive compound, unobtrusively rising out of meadow. Nicely landscaped, interior garden is defined by the additions. Excellent example of a compound with beautiful interior courtyard, small, sensitive nice scale.

"The original was so well-sited and so beautifully done that I was a little concerned about what an addition to

it might do, and I think the addition provided a new sensation." "It's a marvelous courtyard which is subdivided into smaller spaces. Its an excellent example not only of a compound that is very compact but almost a stockade of rich and interesting design. An excellent example of where the fencing is a part of the architecture and not just an addition to hide the propane tank . Something we constantly encourage."

7. *Owners: Anthony and Patricia Hawthorne, Designer: Dan Doyle*

Nicely scaled cluster with interesting details. It relates well to trees which are carefully placed. The "casita" is especially evocative, the way it is angled slightly to draw the eye into the parking area. Well-crafted and well-detailed, it creates the sense of a private compound. "What is interesting about this building is the sense of detail. Most of the details are conventional like the lattice but add to the scale and the design and are done in a very crisp way. It just seemed like a very pleasant place to live."

8. *Owners: Warren and Georgia Radford, Architect: Warren H. Radford, AIA*

Sensitive addition to an early Sea Ranch house. Creation of a compound that respects existing vegetation with a natural feel to the landscape, yet well-organized. "It was such a successful addition that one had the feeling that it was built at the same stage, part of an overall master plan." " The entrance and the whole sequence of how you go in, the layering of structure and landscape, particularly the driveway, was inviting and warm."

9. *Owners: Edward and Kathleen Anderson, Architects: Turnbull Griffin Haesloop*

Simple, elegant but humble house, reminiscent of New England or Scottish Coast; Meets the ground and relates to the out-of-doors with grace and elegance. Beautifully detailed and crafted. Integrates natural landscape — you approach it through the hedgerow. "Very nice example of sensitivity to the reality that for most of The Sea Ranch, the landscaping is already here. What these people have done is to define a courtyard that works beautifully with the house and is in itself a piece of art. It doesn't have the feeling that you need to landscape around the outside of it. Reflects a sensitivity and a willingness to be restrained in placing the elements on the land." (Gregory said the Committee had agreed that they didn't like to see the "parsley around the roast" approach to landscaping which wouldn't fit in at Sea Ranch.) "The house creates two really different environments in a very exciting way: the entry environment through the hedgerow and the open view to the sea on the other side."

10. *Owners: James and Beverly Sloane, Architect: Edward Taubold, AIA*

Understated, interesting assembly of simple forms which fits landscape without asserting itself. A collection of farm buildings utilizing indigenous materials. Recalls The Sea Ranch farm heritage. "One of the problems that we face, as The Sea Ranch gets built out, houses tend to get much bigger in relationship to the sites than they used to

be. It's unusual to find a house that covers so little of a large, elegant site as this one. It's a very modest house with relation to its site."

11. *Owners: Richard Erich and Linda Lieberman, Designers: Owners and Pacific Post & Beam*

The "Train House" — The form of the building strongly relates to its hedgerow. Plan and structure work well together. Unique method of post-and-beam construction is united with its plan. Nice use of finish materials. Simple forms are well related to one another. Roof and skylights are a strong part of a very linear design. "It's an updated version of the Binker Barns, a simple ranch structure." "If this building were out in the meadow, we probably would have looked at it differently. But it was sited up against the hedgerow, which is a very strong massive element, and because it was side-by-side and open to the hedgerow and very simply stated on the opposite side, it looked very appropriate."

12. *Owners: Frank and Lena Lazzarotto (both deceased), Architect: Roland Lazzarotto, AIA*

Meticulously detailed and crafted project: simple, barnlike shapes/forms that relate well to each other. Expresses dominant roof slope. Relates to and acknowledges both meadow and hedgerow.

13. *Owner: William P. Haufe, Architect: Carol Venolia*

Simple, small house with handsome massing that works well with its topography. It fits the landscape and is "nestled" into the slope. Well-oriented to sun with rear deck open

to south and west sun. "This house is a very good neighbor. It's one of a row of houses, and it meets the land in a very nice way but it also meets its neighbors in a very neighborly fashion." "The massing of the house is such that its roots run with the land and that sets it down very nicely."

14. *Developers: Sea Ranch Ventures, Inc., Architect: Fiona O'Neill*

Group of seven houses on individual lots showed modesty in scale and proportion. Used pop-outs, porches, and framing in innovative ways to distinguish each house one from the other, so that there was a common vocabulary but each house was visibly different. Playful variety in a related complex which is nicely sited and de-tailed. Captures the spirit of the larger Sea Ranch complex and translates into expandable smaller structures which make weekend retreats. "It lives 'large,' which is what design lets you do, giving the illusion of a larger space so that you don't necessarily have to have 11,000 square feet." "The houses are spaced separately and each one is nicely set on the land so that they grow out of the setting. There is a similarity and a harmony of materials but each one has its individual character." "I find it interesting that these were 'spec' houses and even though they are compared to the houses on the terraces, they are tiny by comparison, yet they have all sold, so that encourages me that there is still a market for the 'weekend retreat' concept."

15. *Owner: The Sea Ranch Association, Project: Restoration of the Knipp-Stengel Barn, Builder: The Barn Volunteers*

Through great team effort involving countless work hours, these dedicated volunteers have managed to stabilize and restore the historic Knipp-Stengel Barn to a useful condition for special community events. "It seems so critically important that icons like the barns, the sheep sheds, the grape-stake fences should be retained. They are all in a process of decay, like some of us, and they are such strong linkages to the cultural history and the 'ghosts' of this land that they're a totally integral part of working with the landscape. You're also working with a matrix, so to speak, that takes us individually from the present to as far back as the Pomo Indians. I congratulate those of you who had the energy and the strength to keep on with a project such as this, and I hope you take on other projects like this because future generations will thank you for doing it."

### *The Cat who Loves Jazz*

I have this cat....Actually I have several cats....Only one cat, however, loves Jazz!

This I discovered accidentally late last summer, although I have had the cat for eight years.

She was acquired in an all-too-common way. She was dumped out in front of the home of a friend in Gualala. In poor health and unable to take on the care of a cat, my friend was understandably distressed by the conflict between her desire to give the cat a home and her inability to do so.

Already having a multicat household, to me one more hardly mattered. At least that is what I was thinking as I blithely drove to

Gualala to pick up the cat.

The veterinarian checked her over and estimated her age: 4 to 5 years was the verdict, good health and already spayed. The latter information raised questions about why she was abandoned.

We were soon to find out. She had a rotten disposition.

Contemptuous. A lightning-fast right hook. Anyone who owns stock in Johnson and Johnson will appreciate this cat's contribution to the success of their bandages.

She is a rather pretty cat with the coloring, though not the conformation, of an Abyssinian. We named her Abyssinia, soon shortened to Abby. For eight years I have been trying to make friends with Abby, mopping up quarts of blood as I go. Even my daughter Kate, who is loved on sight by every animal, has lost her share of blood too.

If I were not such a coward about taking a one-way trip to the vet, Abby would have made that trip long ago. Except she fell into the habit of accompanying the dogs on their daily walks.

This turned her into a "character" cat and a real attention-getter. Most people who see her on the trail with the three dogs confine themselves to admiring remarks. Some, however, can't keep their hands off her in spite of warnings that she "is not always friendly." We hold our breath while she makes liars out of us by raising up on her back legs and rubbing her head against their hands affectionately. We never see affection. We don't even hear a polite "meow" request for milk or for

her food to be placed on the table (the other cats eat on the floor). All we get is a growl and a lashing of her tail.

Then late last summer I arranged myself comfortably on the loveseat to start mending a Stained Glass Window quilt made many years ago. I casually flipped on KWAN and discovered Fred Adler's delightful "Hot and Cool Jazz" program.

Imagine my concern — you might even say "terror" when Abby started joining me with a sudden leap to my lap, kneading the loveseat beside me, kneading my chest (hastily protected by the quilt), kneading the pillow behind my back while bumping her head against mine — a cat signal of affection to other cats and to people.

The quilt-mending ground to a halt except when Abby would, in her excitement, go sharpen her claws on the firewood (a potentially ominous act), or leap to the top of the radio speaker — to get closer to the music? When Abby's behavior became friendlier and friendlier, I finally risked petting her and she purred! The first time for me in eight years!

Abby and I both have a particular liking for saxophones, so Kate brought us a 3-CD set of saxophone Classics, Masters and Bebop. Abby gets quite excited by Bebop. She picks up the tempo of her kneading, really pumping away. For sweeter sounds she reclines with front paws straight-ahead, expanding and contracting her claws while her back legs are stretched to the side. Sometimes she sits up, only her ears rotating to concentrate on the sounds.

Abby's tastes diverge from mine in some ways. She is very fond of trumpets, with Dizzy Gillespie a top favorite. We both like Miles Davis, of course, but she likes Louis Armstrong more than I do.

In singers we both favor Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, and Ella Fitzgerald. But while I like Sarah Vaughn, Abby leaves the room when she comes on. I hypothesized that the vibrato and richness of Sarah Vaughn's voice may make Abby think she is singing classical music, for which she has no use and to which I have been subjecting her all these years. A few weeks ago, I started listening to Fred Adler's Vintage Music program on Sundays, but Abby did not join me. Until Fred played Dizzy Gillespie's A Night in Tunisia and here came Abby. She jumped up beside me and began pumping those legs, eyes half-closed in ecstasy. She stayed for the rest of the program, which consisted of jazz performers. This has been her pattern on Sundays since.

Don't think this doesn't make me feel like a wicked old stepmother. For eight years I have been subjecting Abby to sensory deprivation. She is now my best friend, sleeps on my bed sometimes, lets me pet her at will, asks with a sweet little meow for me to put on some Jazz CDs during the day (she hops up on the chair next to the CD player). She has only hit me once since we started our Jazz Odyssey, and that was when she was lying on the cabinet at the end of a Wednesday program and I had to reach under her to turn off the radio. Kate witnessed it and it was so clearly a message that

Abby wanted to hear more that we had to laugh while sopping up the blood with one more bandage.

### **Unit 34A Block Party**

Saturday, May 2, is the date for the second annual gathering of Unit 34-A home and lot owners, from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. at the Del Mar Center.

Reserve the date, and bring along a finger-food appetizer to share with 10 to 12 people. The host committee will provide all drinks and accessories. A \$5-per-lot donation will be collected at the door to cover the costs of mailing, drinks, and supplies. All Unit 34-A owners will receive a flyer in the mail soon. The party was lots of fun in 1997, and promises to be as good or better this year.

### **Rathmell Pens *Realms of Gold***

REALMS OF GOLD: The Colorful Writers of San Francisco 1850-1950, George Rathmell. (Berkeley: Creative Arts Book Co., 1998) 299 pages, 31 illustrations. Softbound, \$14.95.

All right, class, time for a pop quiz. What do the following writers have in common? Bret Harte, Prentice Mulford, Charles Warren Stoddard, Ina Coolbrith, Samuel L. Clemens, Ambrose Bierce, Joaquin Miller, John Muir, Robert Louis Stevenson, George Sterling, Jack London, Mary Austin, Gertrude Atherton, Robinson Jeffers, Frank Norris....?

Answer(s): They made great literary history in, and of, the city of San Francisco. Household names in American literature today, they populate in commanding profusion the pages of Sea Ranch author George

Rathmell's engrossing new book, *Realms of Gold*.

Five years in the writing, *Realms of Gold* comes at what could have been purely academic discourse from the perspective of a century's fascinating overview. The process reveals the astonishing cross-fertilization of talent and, indeed, lifestyles, that contributed to San Francisco's still-celebrated *joie de vivre*.

Rathmell has wedded history to biography with painstaking skill. A seamless narrative traces the fortunes of a great cast of characters, successive waves of famous writers who peopled San Francisco, from their Gold Rush beginnings to the end of their lives and, finally, the era that disappeared into the North Beach counterculture.

An interesting crash course in California history, the Introduction outlines the Mission, Mexican, Spanish, and Gold Rush periods to form a necessary prologue to the arrival of the young men and women who found their way to San Francisco during the Gold Rush era. Not all of them arrived as writers and poets. The establishment of newspapers and literary journals in the bustling town was to draw them to the profession. San Francisco, as the author concludes in his introduction, "... is a place where many of America's most talented and most colorful authors have drawn inspiration and established themselves, and in return they have enriched the area by their presence."

The founding literary group was headed by Bret Harte, who began as a typesetter for a weekly literary

journal called *The Golden Era* in the 1850s, but soon was writing a gossip column, "The Bohemian Feuilleton." He was their leader until departing for Boston to join the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1870. Second in this golden group was Prentice Mulford, whose humorous "Dogberry" sketches enlivened the journal's pages. Third to join was the shy and troubled young poet Charles Warren Stoddard, who initially published as "Pip Pepperpod," and finally, young Ina Coolbrith, whose first San Francisco editor was Joseph Duncan, father of the dancer Isadora Duncan. They called themselves "the Bohemians" after Harte's column. You would be correct to detect here the beginnings of today's Bohemian Club, whose amusing history is well chronicled in the book.

These founding four remained close friends, holding together throughout tumultuous marriages, affairs, travels, travails, professional challenges, and the coming and going of a number of publications in which their work and that of successive good friends, appeared. The *Californian*, *Outcroppings*, *Overland Monthly*, and the wildly satirical *Lark*, all played host to their prodigious talents.

Things got really exciting when the circle expanded. Sam Clemens, whose early roisterings as a California newspaper reporter of uncertain reliability were of historic proportions, joined them. There was the eccentric poet Joaquin Miller, an outrageous buffoon who sired a large family by a succession of teenage girls. Better remembered now for an East Bay park named for

him than for his poetry, Miller is only one of the literary figures — Coolbrith, London, Harte, Sterling, Stevenson, Atherton — memorialized in Bay Area place names.

Thanks to Rathmell's meticulous research and ability to find his way through their interpersonal relationships, we learn how the lives of these people were entwined. The path leads to a later wave of great names, Dashiell Hammett, John Steinbeck, William Saroyan, succeeded in postwar San Francisco by Kenneth Rexroth, Henry Miller, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, Wallace Stegner, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti.

The author's straightforward narrative contains bright moments like his account of George Sterling's bizarre suicide in a Bohemian Club room papered over with photos of his friends and himself. He was, Rathmell writes, "virtually living inside his own scrapbook."

Descriptions of vintage San Francisco, from the hilltops of the supportive socially elite to Jack London's corrupting drunken forays with Sterling and other friends into the sorry depths of the city's most degraded environs, give his characters a stage setting that transcends the merely biographical. Some of them possessed admirable traits; some did not. No matter how eccentric or excessive their habits, however, they were bound together by San Francisco and by their common determination to write well and to be published. The author takes the reader directly into the lives of these men and women. Let them tumble temporarily from their pedestals in the literary hall of fame; there is empathetic realism

here. We can always set them gently back into place, because they gave us so much.

This book will elicit a "I didn't know that!" every other page. Gertrude Atherton, not Jack London, was San Francisco's first novelist. Coolbrith was London's first mentor, and she was a confidant of a teenage Isadora Duncan bent on a dancing career. Critic Ambrose Bierce's rough mentoring turned a faltering George Sterling into San Francisco's favorite poet. The sickly Robert Louis Stevenson's unusual marriage to the much older Fanny Osbourne saved his life. After his death in 1894 Fanny took a succession of very young lovers and, apparently, made them very happy. Gelett Burgess, editor of the whimsical *Lark*, wrote and published in it his now immortal poem that begins "I never saw a purple cow...." Some of the writers were arrogantly confident, others unsure and bedeviled by personal demons that Rathmell exposes with compassionate honesty.

The author's use of dialogue, with all its ring of authenticity, was puzzling in a nonfiction narrative, until I learned that *Realms of Gold* started out as a novel. Five versions later, having turned it into a work of nonfiction, Rathmell decided to retain some of the fictional dialogue he had based on firsthand accounts, if not quotations, of conversations said to have taken place. The device seems to work, but might require a brief suspension of disbelief on the part of some readers. The book's beginnings also explain the novelistic passages, such as his account of the 1906 earthquake related from

the point of view of his writers. Many descriptive pages have the coloring of a novel, as well. One has only to consult Rathmell's extensive bibliography to recognize their authentic origins.

*Realms of Gold* is an excellent read, at once educational and entertaining. Like the novel it started out to be, the book contains the elements of a good yarn: unique characters, romance, pathos, scandal, and color. But these characters are real. They happened. Like most of us who like to read, I already knew something of California writers, but as it turns out, not nearly enough. I put down *Realms of Gold* enriched for having met them in their own world.

**Nature Walks for 1998**

**Sat., March 28, 1998, at 10:00 a.m. Marine Walk with Bea Brunn**

Meeting place will be announced in TSR Bulletin.

Bea Brunn has been a docent with the University of California Bodega Marine Lab for 14 years. For the last 11 years she has also been in charge of whale-watching for the California State Parks, every week from January to May. She helps out at the Visitors' Center in Salt Point during the summertime and has been a skin diver and scuba diver for 30 years. Her expertise is whales and marine animals and she will talk about whales, seals, sea lions, tidepool animals and abalone, etc.

Coordinator: Martha Wohlken

**Saturday, April 18, 1998 Visit The Birds with Evelyn Wadsworth and Rae Hudspeth**

Both are TSR residents who have participated in the recent coast bird count. You are urged to bring binoculars.

Coordinator: Jean Lackey, more details in *TSR Bulletin*.

**Saturday, May 16, 1998, at 9:00 a.m. Photographic safari with professional photographer Bill Perry**

Meet at The Sea Ranch Lodge parking lot, bring a camera.

The route of this safari is fixed, but the discussion isn't. Once everyone's interests, expertise, types of cameras, and individual personalities have been revealed, the information will flow appropriately. Bill Perry's knowledge includes such areas of traditional (nondigital) photography such as light, composition, color, style, technical theory, equipment, film semiotics, money, and mood swings in the photographer.

Bill Perry is a self-educated photographer from a family of artists. His degree is in International Relations, but he was handed a camera in the '60s for aerial reconnaissance work and has carried one ever since. He currently works as a fine art and stock photographer.

Coordinator: Martha Wohlken.

**Saturday, June 20, 1998, at 10:00 a.m. Art Dreyer will lead the first Nature Walk of the miniseries on Architecture.**

Meet at the Del Mar Center parking lot.

The focus will be the application of basic art concepts and principles to analyze and evaluate landscapes. It is intended to help viewers become

more aware of the reasons for our reactions to the designed habitat that is The Sea Ranch. Art will touch on one of many visual assessment systems in use today. It utilizes line, form, color, and texture to describe landscape character. It suggests that the degree of contrast and variety, and the sensitivity of the viewer can prioritize our concerns.

Art Dreyer has been a Sea Ranch owner for over 20 years and a full-time resident for the last four years. He has a B.S. in Landscape Architecture from Penn State and is licensed to practice landscape architecture in California, where he has worked for over 30 years for both the U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service.

Coordinator: Martha Wohlken

**Saturday, July 18, 1998 Architect Donlyn Lyndon will lead the second Nature Walk of the miniseries on Architecture.**

Meeting place to be announced.

Architect Donlyn Lyndon, Dean of the School of Architecture at Berkeley, and formerly a partner in the firm of Moore Lyndon Turnbull and Whittaker, will lead the walk. Details will appear in *TSR Bulletin*.

Coordinator: Karen Marshall

**Sat., August 29, 1998, at 10:00 a.m. Architect Warren Radford will lead the third and last Nature Walk of the miniseries on Architecture, The Built Landscape.**

Meeting place to be announced in the *TSR Bulletin*.

Architect Warren Radford, a long-time TSR resident, will lead in a re-

peat performance of his popular walk last year. The participants will consider an architectural critique of a group of homes as they relate to the landscape and to each other. They will make a loop within Unit 18, to include five individual houses and several groups of homes that received Sea Ranch Design Awards in 1986.

Warren practiced architecture in the San Francisco Bay area and received his master's degree in Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Coordinator: Jean Lackey.

**Sat., September 19, 1998, at 10:00 a.m. Walk along the San Andreas/Gualala River with geologist Thomas E. Cochrane.**

Meet at The Sea Ranch Association parking lot, walk down the county road to the South Fork of the Gualala River, and proceed south along the main stem and return. You may get your feet wet, depending on the flow level of the river.

Points of interest and stops will include: sag ponds created by the 1906 movement on the San Andreas Fault; gravel operations of Gualala Aggregates at the confluence of the Wheat field Fork and the South Fork; stream features near Twin Bridges — cut and fill, erosional and depositional features, etc.; stream environments, riffles and pools, channel morphology, fish habitats, etc.; remnants of an old logging railroad in the current streambed; large woody debris log-jam and relationship to formation of sandbars.

Tom Cochrane is a registered geol-

ogist in California with more than 30 years of experience in the profession. His primary interests are in the processes involving streams on the surface and below the surface. Throughout his career, he has periodically consulted on environmental matters. Recently he has been involved in the environmental process of developing the Sea Ranch Golf Links. Currently he is studying the coastal rivers in Sonoma and Mendocino Counties.

Coordinator: Karen Marshall

**Sat., October 10, 1998, at 10:00 a.m. Nature Walk and talk about the Animals of The Sea Ranch with Ranger Daniel F. Murley, of the Department of Parks & Recreation.**

He also writes a weekly column in the *Independent Coast Observer*.

Meeting place to be announced in *TSR Bulletin*.

Coordinator: Jean Lackey

**Saturday, November 21, 1998: final Nature Walk for the year, the Night Sky.**

Meet at the Del Mar Center parking lot at 5:30 p.m., so that we can arrive at our viewing spot on the Sounding cul-de-sac in Unit 35-C to observe the heavens by sunset (taking place at 4:57 p.m. that evening).

Steve McLaughlin, Editor and Publisher of the *Independent Coast Observer*, will lead a group with Jim DeWilder and Jerry Schifman. All of them will bring telescopes. Participants may want to bring binoculars and a flashlight.

Steve is the Moon Editor of the *In-*

*dependent Coast Observer* (as well as its owner and publisher), and he has written the "Information about Celestial Events" column in the *ICO Coast Log* page since 1971. His son Daniel is a member of the Young Astronomers of Sonoma County Astronomical Society; and was one of 10 students in the county awarded an astronomical telescope in the SCAS 1997 "Striking Sparks" Essay Contest. Daniel will bring his telescope too.

Jerry Shifman's background is in science and engineering. He retired in 1995. He was always fascinated by celestial objects since childhood and became interested in astronomy while attending college, because his dorm room was just a few hundred feet from the campus observatory where they had a 1211 reflector in a rotating dome building. But it wasn't until he moved to TSR that he was able to look at black night skies, because he always lived in cities after he finished college. He has worked on relearning his observing skills here and always finds magical qualities in the heavens. This observation has profoundly changed the way in which he views the world.

Coordinator: Karen Marshall

During the months of December and January there will be no scheduled activity presented by the subcommittee.

### ***Piano Players Perform***

Excerpts from Schumann's *Scenes from Childhood*, Ravel's *Mother Goose Suite*, and Scott Joplin's *Maple Leaf Rag* will be played by the Piano Group on Saturday, March 21, at 3:00 in the afternoon.

The benefit concert in support of the music program at Horicon School will take place in the Del Mar Center on The Sea Ranch.

The Piano Group was born about 10 years ago when Joanne Hafner discovered someone else who had a piano. She suggested that the two of them might enjoy getting together, by way of mutual support, as they sought to recover their modest skills on the piano. Those skills may have been developed under duress when they were children, but are now remembered and recovered as a musical joy.

From this casual beginning, the Group has grown over the years until it now includes more than 20 members. The group meets once a month, taking turns at hosting the meetings, usually in members' homes but sometimes at the Art Center or the Del Mar Center.

At the beginning of each session, members draw lots to determine the order of performance, except that the host always gets to perform first. The rest pray for a low number, but inevitably some unlucky persons draw number 17 or 18, and then have to sweat it out while the early birds, one after another, are heaving audible sighs of relief as their ordeal is ended. All are expected to play *something*, however short or long (and this can range from a one-page Chopin Prelude to a complete Beethoven Sonata, though a single movement is more common). It is understood that playing may be (will be?) marred by missed notes and other miscellaneous blunders — in short, that performances must be considered as "works in progress." Indeed, mem-

bers can become so effusive in explaining why their performance will be flawed, that fines were once considered to discourage these long apologies in advance.

After everyone has played there is a collective sigh of relief, and everyone hastens to their host's refreshments, and to conversation, much of which is devoted to explanations of why performances didn't go better — "I've been ill — no time to practice!" or unexpected guests — "I couldn't practice while they were around." And it is marvelous how one or two always drift back to the piano, with nerves now relaxed, to demonstrate that he or she really can play the passage bungled just a few moments ago.

Speaking seriously, and for myself — though I suspect others share these feelings — I am enormously grateful for what the Piano Group has done to enrich my life at The Sea Ranch. Without the pressure and encouragement of these monthly gatherings, I would probably not have practiced and therefore not rediscovered how important making music was — however imperfectly — instead of just listening to the great performers on CDs. Not only making music by myself, but with others in four-hand pieces, and even with other instruments like the violin and recorder.

The group includes a range of ability. The Piano Group includes several truly gifted pianists — one studied with Robert Casadesus before World War II interrupted her studies. Another has made professional recordings of works from the concert repertoire. And still another member not only teaches piano but

herself performs the most demanding works of Schubert and Beethoven. Others in the group are just beginning to play, or are just returning to long forgotten pieces of their youth. And in between are still others with varying skills, but whose reach always exceeds their grasp, whose desire outpaces accomplishment so that technique inevitably falters and fingers fail.

But no matter what the level of accomplishment, everyone offers encouragement. The fine pianists do not withdraw in scorn — they even sometimes make their own mistakes (possibly to make the rest feel better), and are generous with their support and help. And the rest of us soldier on — the regular meetings force us to practice, while the understanding and encouragement, even after a disappointing performance, stimulate us into practicing more diligently and working harder to control our tyrannical nerves.

From this account it is clear that The Piano Group thinks of itself as a working group, not a concert-giving group. But if an occasional public performance can assist a worthy cause, we will practice like mad, tame our nerves, and rise to the occasion. We did so a year ago to support the Gualala Arts Building program, and we will do so again on March 21 to support the enormously important music program at Horicon School.

The program will last an hour or thereabouts, and will be followed by punch and cookies. The Piano Group will be playing music that, while interesting to adults, will also appeal to children — for example, a selection from Katchaturian's *Al-*

*bum for Children.* There is no admission charge, but we hope that you will feel moved to donate \$5 or \$10 dollars to support Horicon's music program. And if you feel able to give even more, we will think of you as very special angels.

***Memorial Day has Meaning***

Memorial Day and Labor Day mark the dates of The Sea Ranch Volunteer Fire Department picnics. This year will be the tenth annual Memorial Day Picnic on Saturday, May 24, from 12 noon to 3 p.m. at One-Eyed Jacks on Leeward. But the Memorial Day holiday itself is given special meaning with the huge American flag gleaming in the sun above the entrance to the playground at One-Eyed Jack's.

There is a story that goes along with the flag and a laminated light green sheet clipped to an easel tells this part of the story:

*"Mrs. Elmore Blackburn has generously donated this flag to The Sea Ranch Volunteer Fire Department."*

It goes on to tell the story behind our flag, relating the meeting between Jim and Betty Quick of Davis and Elmore and Phoebe Blackburn sometime around 1979-80. The Davises looked up the Blackburns at the encouragement of their dentist in Berkeley. In the course of their visit they discovered that Phoebe and Jim are very distant cousins. Their early Dutch ancestors were among the original settlers of Manhattan in the 1700s. Jim's great, great, great- ... grandfather and Phoebe's great, great, great- ... grandmother were brother and sister!

During World War II, this flag flew over the Mare Island Naval Base, near Vallejo. After years of use, it was retired to the care of Jim Quick and his Boy Scout Troop. Following the Scouts' care of it, Jim gave it to Phoebe. Phoebe (Craven) Blackburn is a descendant of Admiral Thomas Craven, graduate of Annapolis Naval Academy, a Commander in the Navy during the Civil War, stationed at Vallejo.

The garrison flag made its first appearance at The Sea Ranch at a Fourth of July picnic at the Hot Spot. Tom Tucker borrowed the flag from Blackie and Phoebe, put his tall ladder in his truck, drove down to the Hot Spot and, along with his son Steve and Byrne Thraikill, hung the flag high above the picnic ground. "They showed us how to take care of it and fold it the right way," Phoebe mentioned. Red, white and blue balloons or flowers decorated the tables. Fred and Ginny Trumbull brought their van down to the river and provided thrilling patriotic music for the scores of picnickers. The Fourth of July picnics continue to this day.

In 1994, Phoebe donated the flag to The Sea Ranch Volunteer Fire Department. "Dick Warren has taken it under his wing," noted Phoebe. Phoebe holds dear the note from Sharon and Phil Simon, 1994 TSRVFD Memorial Day Picnic Chairpersons, thanking her for donating this beautiful flag.

"I'm thrilled to tell about the flag but I want the emphasis to be on Memorial Day." That is Phoebe's greatest wish. "That's what it's about. What our servicemen and women have done for our country is

what I want to stress. That's the blood and guts of the story."

You might see Phoebe and son Humphrey Blackburn, Edith and son Steve Tucker, Ginny Trumbull, the Thraikills, the Simons, and Dick Warren in the crowd at the picnic. You will definitely see the garrison flag. There is no way you can miss it!

The Fire Department's picnic is highlighted by a great barbeque complete with all the trimmings, organized games with prizes for the young people, and an opportunity for all to meet old friends and make new ones. There may also be a visit from Smokey Bear aboard the Life Support Rescue helicopter. Price of admission is \$8.00 for adults and \$6.00 for children ages 6 to 12 . There is no charge for children ages 5 and under.

The picnic is sponsored by TSRVFD members who participate fully in its planning and execution, aided by a large cadre of Sea Ranch volunteers. Sandy Moersch and Rich Hughes are Chairs of this Memorial Day picnic.

