



The Volunteer View

The Monthly Newsletter for Marin County Civic Center Volunteers and Student Interns

VOL 41 ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2018

Volunteer Clears Invasive Plants from Open Space

By Mandy Behbehani

Every first Saturday of the month, Civic Center Volunteer **Kurt Ellison** hauls his weed wrench out of the trunk of his car and heads for Marin's open space for a face-to-face battle with French broom.

Since 2013, when he moved from the Monterey Bay area to Tiburon to marry his librarian wife, Jacki, the Marin County Parks' 2016 Heartwood Volunteer Award winner has logged over 300 hours in the county's parklands. He extracts various broom, fennel, thistle and other prolific and destructive plants that grow in dense, woody stands, displacing native vegetation.

Kurt, 61, a former photojournalist and librarian, works alongside co-members of Broom Busters, a group founded over 20 years ago to stamp out invasive, noxious plant species at the Old Saint Hilary's Open Space Preserve in Tiburon. Since moving to San Rafael in 2015, he is also working in the San Pedro Mountain Open Space Preserve.

A teacher in middle school inspired his interest in the natural world.

"He taught us how important it is to keep the planet healthy," Kurt says, pointing to the steep San Pedro hillsides blanketed in leafy-stemmed French broom. "I did a lot of hiking in the Monterey area and you could see French broom almost everywhere, but nobody was doing anything about it. When I moved to Tiburon, Broom Busters had been working so hard for 20 years. And you could really see the results. They had aerial pictures of before and after. Native plants had come back and the area was restored to its pristine condition. There are some very rare plants there, like the Tiburon jewelflower, that don't grow anywhere else in the world," Kurt adds. "If we let broom grow these plants will face extinction. There's a frame of mind where when you see something, you grieve, so this was an opportunity for me to do something about it."

"Kurt is very committed," says **Greg Reza**, volunteer program coordinator for Marin County Parks, which has about 4,000 volunteers annually. "We



PHOTO BY MANDY BEHBEHANI

Kurt Ellison pulling invasive broom

have school groups, community groups, corporate groups coming to volunteer in one-time efforts. What Kurt does is rare. He's one of about 35 environmental stewards. They augment what we do with contractors and staff, and they're also our eyes and ears on the preserves, alerting to new infestations and ones that may have fallen off the radar."

He added, "French broom seeds last for decades. We could pull up every plant we saw and come back next year to find new little ones coming up."

Kurt's wife, Jacki, jokes, "We can't walk anywhere without Kurt stooping over and pulling broom!"

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The mission of the Civic Center Volunteers program is to manage an effective partnership between community volunteers and County of Marin government.

VOLUNTEER NOTES

Community Honor for Kobe Pole of Search & Rescue

Congratulations to **Kobe Pole** of the Marin County Sheriff's Office Search & Rescue team on winning Heart of Marin's Youth Volunteer of the Year! See story on page 3.

Log Your Hours

Friendly reminder: Please report your service hours each month at marincounty.org/volunteer. Your information will be included in the next Civic Center Volunteers annual impact report to the Board of Supervisors. The report shows each department's total, and your up-to-date record helps reflect the true impact of volunteers and interns in your department. Need help logging hours? Call 415-473-7407.

Holidays

County offices will be closed Monday, February 19, for Presidents Day.

Encourage A Friend

Do you know someone who wants to help our community or share their expertise? We welcome your referrals. Call or email the CCV staff (contact information on the left).

Library Researcher Archives Historic Marin Maps

By Tiyona Pariani

Civic Center Volunteer **Brian K. Crawford** is a man with deep interests in maps and historical research whose efforts will open a local map collection to the public.

Every Thursday afternoon, Brian researches and catalogues old maps for the California Room collection of the Civic Center branch of the Marin County Free Library. Tens of thousands of original maps have to be examined individually before being catalogued

– a process he likes because of the vast variety of documents. So far, his favorites are hand-drawn surveys and maps from the 1850s.

Brian enjoys history as a hobby and is a published author with books about Marin available on Amazon.com. He frequently visits the California Room to do his own research. He got to know librarians **Laurie Thompson** and **Carol Acquaviva**, and after retiring from a career in programming, he offered to help research maps.

He began volunteering in late 2015. His staff supervisor is Laurie, who is also the county historian.

Laurie said, “Thanks to Brian, over 2,000 of our historic maps have been meticulously researched and catalogued, enabling the Anne T. Kent California Room to begin sharing its rare collection of

unrecorded Marin County maps online.” Posted documents have titles such as Rancho San Geronimo and Survey for San Rafael Development Co.

“Brian is also an outstanding writer and regularly shares his passion for local history and new discoveries with the community,” Laurie added. “He is the author of several significant publications on Marin County history and recently gave a highly acclaimed talk on the history of the Bolinas-Fairfax Road to a standing-room-only crowd as part of our local history lecture series. We are very grateful to have Brian on our team!”

Brian grew up in Ohio, attended Ohio State University, and came to San Anselmo in 1986. He and his wife Linda are parents of an adult son. Brian serves on the San Anselmo Open Space Committee and enjoys creating trails. After gaining approval from Town of San Anselmo officials, he and other volunteers currently are building a trail in the Red Hill area. He also pulls invasive broom and picks up litter. When not volunteering, Brian enjoys hiking, geocaching, kayaking, and sailing.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CCV ARCHIVES



Brian Crawford examines historic maps.

County Supports Diversity and Inclusion

Student Internships Coordinator **Joy Fossett** and Personnel Analyst **Alandis Pratt**, both from the Human Resources Department, represented the County of Marin at the 15th annual Afrikan Black Coalition Career Fair last month in San Francisco. The fair, a collaborative between the UC and CSU school systems, drew 800 attendees and was billed as the largest convention of black students in California.

At the Marin booth, Joy and Alandis shared their knowledge about internships and career opportunities, and 45

students signed up to receive more information.

Attending career fairs is one of several ways that the county connects with potential interns and future employees. Meanwhile, the internships program continues its formal support for the county’s effort to be a more diverse and inclusive organization. “This year, as part of the county’s 5 Year Business Plan, we will offer more students an introduction to local government,” said Joy. The county also will expand partnerships with high schools and colleges.



Alandis Pratt at the County of Marin’s career table

PHOTO BY JOY FOSSETT

Three Civic Center Volunteers Honored at Heart of Marin

By Robyn Madias

A Sheriff's Search & Rescue team member is the first person from a Civic Center Volunteers (CCV) team to be named Youth Volunteer of the Year at the annual Heart of Marin event. **Kobe Pole** was recognized for outstanding volunteer service – including saving a fallen hiker's life. One of five youth winners, he received \$1,000.

Alongside Kobe, Civic Center Volunteer **Josefina Perez** and Student Intern **Yessenia Hernandez** represented the CCV program as nominees and were applauded by a crowd of 700 during the awards luncheon at the Marin Center Exhibit Hall. This annual celebration

recognizes outstanding volunteers from local nonprofits.

Kobe, a Redwood High senior, has participated in more than 30 search-and-rescue missions across the state. A 2016 *Volunteer View* article told how he saved a woman's life: During a search in the Sierra, he heard a whistle and alerted the team to the injured hiker. He said he's privileged to be on one of just two search-and-rescue teams in California that let youth serve on the same level as adults.

Josefina is a bilingual Senior Peer Counselor with the Health and Human Services Department. She regularly visits four Spanish-speaking clients, offering emotional and practical support as they face challenges of aging. Many have no family nearby; sometimes Josefina is the last person a client sees before passing away. Josefina, a retired waitress, says her Senior Peer role allows her to do what she loves most – help others.

San Rafael High School senior Yessenia interned in the Public Defender's Office, where she helped design a survey



Kobe Pole, Heart of Marin Youth Volunteer of the Year winner

that revealed justice-system disparity. Defendants on the misdemeanor court calendar largely followed the racial breakdown of Marin, except for African Americans, who made up 16.7% of the calendar but only 2.6% of the population. This finding heightened awareness for Yessenia and fellow interns.

Thank you, Josefina and Yessenia, and congratulations, Kobe!



Honorees Josefina Perez and Yessenia Hernandez

PHOTOS BY ANNE STARR

Happy Anniversary!

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

37 YEARS

Amelia DeMello (Corte Madera), Aide, Corte Madera Library

22 YEARS

Bradley Haas (San Rafael), Marin Search & Rescue Volunteer, Sheriff

15 YEARS

Anne Rains (Novato), Aide, Novato Library

13 YEARS

Miriam Cohn (San Rafael), Administrative Assistant, Cultural Services

11 YEARS

Maggie Sartor (Mill Valley), Administrative Assistant, Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk

9 YEARS

Rand Selig (Mill Valley), Steward, Parks; **Carol Selig** (Mill Valley), Steward, Parks; **Peter Otis** (Novato), RACES/ACS Volunteer, Sheriff

8 YEARS

Stephen Sarhad (San Rafael), Consultant, Human Resources

7 YEARS

Sarah Brewster (Woodacre), Senior Peer Counselor, Health & Human Services; **Joel Schwartz** (San Rafael), Tour Docent, Cultural Services

6 YEARS

Michael Landram (Novato), Patrol Volunteer, Parks; **Drusilla Miller** (Novato), California Room Docent, Library; **Karen Ferris** (Novato), Administrative Assistant, Cultural Services

2 YEARS

Stephen Sarhad (San Rafael), Database Assistant, HHS; **Roger Lion** (Corte Madera), **Bruce Murphy** (Mill Valley), **Donna Posard** (San Rafael), **Teresa Saltzman** (Mill Valley), **Maryjane "Mick" Wets** (San Rafael), Senior Peer Counselors, HHS; **Jocelyn Moss** (San Rafael), California Room Docent, Library; **Cecille Silver** (San Rafael), Administrative Aide,

Sheriff; **Karen Solov** (Corte Madera), Children's Library Aide, Corte Madera Library; **Sylvia Roye** (Greenbrae), Investigative Aide, District Attorney's Office; **Stanton Klose** (San Rafael), *Frankly Speaking* Proofreader, Human Resources; **Pat Balderama** (San Rafael), Volunteer Equipment Tester, Public Works

1 YEAR

Cindy Fluit (San Anselmo), Environmental Steward, Parks; **Ilene Taekman** (San Rafael), Tour Docent, Cultural Services; **Lynda Pearson** (Mill Valley), Tour Docent, Cultural Services and Consultant, Human Resources; **Rieko Inoue** (San Rafael), Administrative Support, HHS; **Roger Rose** (Larkspur), **Jill Aggersbury** (Novato), **Karen Berke** (Novato), **Alexandra Cheney** (Novato), **Blake Cobb** (Novato), **Carol Copperstein** (Novato), **Phillip LoCoco** (Novato), **Golda Michelson** (Fairfax), **Marie J. Salerno** (Novato), **Maggie Saxon** (Novato), **Nyla Signer** (San Rafael), **Gwen Smith** (San Rafael), **Joan Wlodaver** (San Rafael), **Cynthia Youngless** (San Rafael), Ushers, Cultural Services

Who's New & Welcome!

Haley Anderson (Novato), CAPA Nursing Student, Health & Human Services (HHS)

Austin Burke (San Francisco), Law School Intern, Public Defender's Office (PD)

Kendy Chan (San Leandro), Law Clerk, County Counsel's Office (CC)

Sharon Clark (Novato), CA Room Writer and Researcher, Library

Alexander DeGroot (Petaluma), Law Clerk, CC

Monica DiLullo (San Francisco), Districts 1 & 3 Intern, Board of Supervisors

Kyle Dunson (Concord), Social Work Intern, HHS

Nicole Fuches (Greenbrae), Marin Teen Girl (MTG) Ambassador, Human Resources (HR)

Leah Fullerton (Mill Valley), MTG Ambassador, HR
Avasadat Gerami (Berkeley), Law Clerk, CC

Mayra Hernandez (San Francisco), Law School Intern, PD

Zoe Jordan (San Francisco), Law School Intern, PD

Harita Kalvai (San Rafael), Teen Program Intern, Civic Center Library

Emmi Kuimelis (San Anselmo), Student Service Intern, Fairfax Library

Georgia Lee (San Rafael), MTG Ambassador, HR

Julia Lindsey (Piedmont), Foster Care Outreach Program Assistant, HHS

Khadija Nakhuda (Mill Valley), MTG Ambassador, HR

Samantha Newman (San Rafael), MTG Ambassador, HR

Davion Petersen (Vacaville), CAPA Nursing Student, HHS

Elizabeth Posylkin (Novato), MTG Ambassador, HR

Karthik Raju (Menlo Park), Attorney, PD

Edwin Salgado (San Francisco), Law School Intern, PD

Sonia Saltzman (Mill Valley), MTG Ambassador, HR

Sinead Swayne (San Rafael), MTG Ambassador, HR

Daeja Tillis (Vallejo), Nutrition Wellness Program Intern, HHS

Audrey Tuck (San Rafael), MTG Ambassador, HR

Featured Volunteer and Intern Opportunities



High School Community Service

Local students can fulfill school service requirements at a county library or with Marin County Parks. Love the great outdoors? Visit marincountyparks.org, view the community volunteer calendar, and sign up. For indoor opportunities, stop by your local library or call 415-473-7407.



Law Library Data Assistant

Help keep records up to date at the Marin County Law Library, which provides residents with legal resources to help them represent themselves. Hours: 4-8 hours a week with a 6-month commitment. Apply online at marincounty.org/volunteer.



Marin Center Ushers

Join a friendly team whose members provide customer service at events held in the Veterans' Memorial Auditorium, Showcase Theater, and Exhibit Hall. Ushers scan tickets, hand out programs, and assist patrons with seating. Apply at marincounty.org/volunteer to get on the list for the next orientation.

Civic Center Volunteers
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