



The Volunteer View

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

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Civic Center Fan Keeps Things in Order

By Shirley Trimble

An eye-opening tour of the Marin County Civic Center many years ago was the beginning of **Montserrat Sthymmel's** love affair with the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed building.

For 10 years, Monserrat was an enthusiastic Civic Center Volunteers tour docent and relished her opportunity to meet people from all over the world and tell them about this national monument. Her lingual fluency in Catalan, English, French, and Spanish made her tours especially valuable.

After the death of her husband, Gary, and caring for her then-infant granddaughter, Violette (now a college student), Montserrat returned to the beloved building as a library aide at the Marin County Free Library's Civic Center branch, located on the fourth floor under the dome.

Volunteering with Library Desk Supervisor **Teressa Snyder**, her first projects were re-labeling library materials to indicate "Marin County Library." Section by section, she used her eagle

eye and scoured shelves for misfiled books, which were then returned to their correct places.

Recently, Montserrat has been shelf-reading to make sure library items are in proper order.

"Montserrat is a person of great energy and flair and is a treasured volunteer," said Teressa.

"She makes the most of her weekly one-hour gig and the library benefits all the time from her work. She is such a pro at what she does. We applaud her excellent work and dedication." Teressa added: "She also makes the very best Key lime pie!"

Montserrat, who studied the history of Frank Lloyd Wright and met his protégé, architect Aaron Green, says she loves the Civic Center at all hours, especially at sunset when the sun's rays turn the atrium walls to gold. "One of the best rooms for me is the library,"



PHOTO BY ANNE STARR

Montserrat Sthymmel ensures that books are properly shelved at the Civic Center Library.

said Montserrat. "The atmosphere is delightful, and everyone treats me with

(Continued on page 2)

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VOLUNTEER NOTES

Volunteers and Interns Praised as Models of Caring

In appreciation for volunteers and interns' positive impact, the Board of Supervisors has proclaimed April as Volunteer and Student Intern Recognition Month in Marin. Board of Supervisors President **Kate Sears** sponsored the proclamation, which notes that Civic Center Volunteers participants are models of our community's ability to care for one another through direct and indirect service.

The proclamation highlights individual and team roles, including patrolling open space trails, cataloguing historic maps, tutoring students at Juvenile Hall, writing articles, pulling invasive plants, designing logos, ushering at Marin Center events, advocating for long-term care residents, drafting legal briefs, facilitating focus groups, preparing for emergencies, keeping foster children safe, assisting at the Marin County Fair, watching for wildfires, conducting surveys, leading Marin Civic Center tours, building a solar-powered welcome sign for the county airport, and much more.

Civic Center Fan Keeps Order

(continued from page 1)

respect -- perhaps because at 81 I am the oldest volunteer there!”

Originally from Catalonia, Spain, Montserrat went to school in Paris for two years to improve her French. Later, back in Spain, she taught French to adult students. In 1963 she came to San Francisco to learn English and met her husband, Gary, at an art gallery in the city.

The couple had two daughters, Nuria and Adriana. Today, Nuria and her husband own the charming Larkspur boutique Coquelicot. Montserrat works at the shop, filling in whenever needed. She stays busy with family activities and enjoys touring museums, attending the opera and symphony, hiking, and

PHOTO BY ANNE STARR



Montserrat Stbimmel

traveling. Her reading list favors biographies, art books, and historical fiction.

As a Marin County Free Library volunteer, Montserrat is part of a large group active at nine of the library system's 10 branches. Last year, 115 library volunteers and interns served 6,240 hours. Included in those numbers are Library Beyond Walls liaisons, who deliver materials to homebound patrons, and youth volunteers fulfilling their high school community service requirements.

Interested in volunteering with the library? Next time you visit your local branch, speak with a staff member -- or contact the CCV office at 415-473-7407. For Library Beyond Walls only, contact Community Library Specialist **Ann Bertucci** at abertucci@marincounty.org or 415-669-1288.

English Coach Encourages Conversational Fluency

By Tiyona Pariani

Civic Center Volunteer **Chuck Viebrock** volunteers Monday mornings at the English Conversation Club held at the Novato Library's main branch on Novato Boulevard. There he helps non-English speakers develop language skills.

He began volunteering six months ago after a 25-year career as a ship captain certified to command any vessel in the world of any tonnage.

Chuck decided to volunteer at the County of Marin after taking a class to help him learn Spanish.

Chuck believes what he does is important because English is the one language used throughout the world. "With the exception of the original British settlers and those from English-speaking areas, everyone who has immigrated here, plus the Native Americans, has had to learn to speak it," he says.

Library Assistant **Maria Lee Goodrich** is Chuck's staff supervisor and praises

his work. "Chuck is a pleasure to work with," said Maria Lee.

"He is always expanding our horizons with his 'Ship Days as Captain' and teaching about the world around us, whether it be where he has explored or what is happening in areas around us today."

Chuck is from Queens, New York, and has lived 41 years in Novato with his wife Rebecca, a prominent soprano singer and teacher. He has one son and two grandchildren.

Besides teaching, Chuck is devoted to nature photography, especially documenting bird migrations throughout Northern California.

"Many recent immigrants to the US know basic English but lack the confidence to speak it," Chuck says. "Being able to volunteer with this class allows me to help them improve their confidence."



PHOTO BY TIYONA PARIANI

Chuck Viebrock

Chuck's biggest pleasure from volunteering is working with people who are open to learning.

He enjoys helping with homework, meeting people from different cultures and languages, and learning more about other countries from his students than if he only turned on the TV.

Happy Anniversary!

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

26 YEARS

Art Marthinsen (San Rafael), Health Program Consultant, Community Development Agency

24 YEARS

Linda Davis (Sausalito), Consumer Mediator, District Attorney's Office

22 YEARS

Dan Healy (Woodacre), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

Shirley Trimble (Mill Valley), *Volunteer View* Newsletter Writer, Human Resources

19 YEARS

John Pope (Novato), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

16 YEARS

James Selfridge (San Anselmo), Aide, Fire Department

15 YEARS

Tom Zarraonandia (Novato), Steward, Marin County Parks

13 YEARS

Sue Baty (Pt. Reyes), Knitting Instructor, Point Reyes Library

Emily Cushman (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

11 YEARS

Larry Atkinson (San Carlos), **Catherine Way** (Larkspur), Search & Rescue Volunteers, Sheriff's Office

Susan Bunker (San Rafael), Library Beyond Walls Liaison, Marin County Free Library

9 YEARS

Genny Duffin (Sonoma), **Erica Shafer** (San Anselmo), Senior Peer Counselors, Health & Human Services (HHS)

Scott McDaniel (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

8 YEARS

Rick Bartolacelli (San Rafael), Docent, California Room, Civic Center Library

Robert Gehlen (San Rafael), **Rich Shelton** (Tiburon), Search & Rescue Volunteers, Sheriff's Office

Rich McGrath (San Rafael), Flag Raiser, Cultural Services

7 YEARS

Deborah Gregor (Novato), Event Aide, Human Resources

Terry Norton (San Anselmo), **Kathryn Thyret** (Mill Valley), Ombudsman Volunteers, HHS

6 YEARS

Bruce Bowser (Bolinas), **Duncan Hopkins** (Bolinas), Stewards, Marin County Parks

Larken Bradley (San Rafael), Senior Peer Counselor, HHS

Lisa Jack (Novato), Shelver, Novato Library

Scott Mullen (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

5 YEARS

Roberta Cohen (Mill Valley), Senior Peer Counselor, HHS

4 YEARS

Liam Anderson (Corte Madera), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteer, Sheriff's Office

Cachitin Brister (Kentfield), Chaplain, Sheriff's Office

Valerie Lels (Kentfield), Financial Abuse Specialist Team (FAST) Volunteer, HHS

Timothy Holmes (San Rafael), **Sarah Loughran** (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Volunteers, Sheriff's Office

Christine Camilleri (Novato), Mounted Patrol, Marin County Parks

Nancy Oswald (San Anselmo), Administrative Aide, Veterans Services Office, HHS

3 YEARS

David Gannon (Corte Madera), **Timothy Mahoney** (Fairfax), **Marion Matthews** (Petaluma), **Jon Melberg** (Kentfield), Search & Rescue Volunteers, Sheriff's Office

Joey Melberg (Kentfield), **Sean Sweeney** (Larkspur), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteers, Sheriff's Office

Paul Minault (San Rafael), Steward, Marin County Parks

Austin Patel (Kentfield), Teen Coding Instructor, Corte Madera Library

Mark Stoering (Tombales), Tombales Station Firefighter, Fire Department

1 YEAR

Chrisula Asimos (San Rafael), FAST Volunteer, HHS

Brian Beidelman (San Rafael), **Gideon Bernstein** (San Rafael), **Arran Caddy** (San Rafael), **Gabriel Carsillo** (San Rafael), **Tom Kennedy** (San Rafael), **Calvin Schrader** (San Rafael), **Tate Thompson** (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Volunteers, Sheriff's Office

Nancy Carlisle (Novato), **Michael Fischer** (Mill Valley), **William Hitt** (St. Helena), **Ann Ivan** (Santa Rosa), **Christian Jordan** (Mill Valley), **Kami Kitchen** (San Francisco), **Drew Levy** (Sonoma), **Joe Lopardo** (San Francisco), **Sean O'Leary** (San Rafael), **Mark Rudo** (Novato), **Steven Virshup** (Novato), Fire Lookouts, Fire Department

June Bernstein (San Rafael), **Cassidy Fragakis** (San Rafael), **Alexander Mormorunni** (San Rafael), **Kyle Nelson** (San Rafael), **Paul O'Driscoll** (San Rafael), **Kasia Page** (San Rafael), **Sofie Shafer** (San Rafael), **Michael Shirado** (San Rafael), **Genevieve Wyatt** (San Rafael), Search & Rescue Youth Volunteers, Sheriff's Office

Gary Robards (San Rafael), Survey Archivist, California Room, Marin County Free Library

Who's New & Welcome!

Jody Berman (Novato), Spanish Tutor, Novato Library

Phil Danskin (Sonoma), Map Archive Docent, Researcher & Cataloger, California Room, Marin County Free Library

Alexander DeGroat (Petaluma), Law Clerk, County Counsel's Office

David Hernandez (San Rafael), Teen Shelver, South Novato Library

Lorena Paredes (San Rafael), Legal Support Intern, District Attorney's Office

Sonia Saltzman (Mill Valley), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, Human Resources

Naydelin Santos (San Rafael), Teen Shelver, South Novato Library

Mia Tokarski (Mill Valley), Marin Teen Girl Ambassador, Human Resources

Ashley Winslow (San Rafael), Legal Support Intern, District Attorney's Office