

# POINT REYES LIGHT

Volume LXII No. 16/ Point Reyes Station, California

June 18, 2009



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Ralph Garside tells the story of two of his Brussels Griffons being mauled by his tenant's Bullmastiffs last Sunday. He said the dogs' owner had abused them regularly and blamed her for their behavior. Photo by Rollo Scott.

## Citizens fed up with lewd acts on beach

by Wes Venteicher

What's the difference between lewd and nude? The question was debated Tuesday night at what Supervisor Steve Kinsey called an uncommonly well-attended meeting at the Muir Beach Community Center. While a few residents called for banning nudity, the majority agreed to put up a sign warning against lewd behavior.

The meeting was called in the wake of complaints of lewd acts on the beach. Increased sexual behavior on Little Beach,

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## Bolinas dogs mauled, killed

by Leighton Cosseboom

Two Brussels Griffons were killed last Sunday when the owner's tenant's dogs got loose on a Bolinas property. The Bullmastiffs, which belonged to 39-year-old Karen Hunzinker, were preventing Ralph Garside from leaving his house above Terrace Avenue.

The Marin Humane Society arrived about an hour after his call, and along with deputies attempted to detain the Bullmastiffs. According to deputies, one of the dogs appeared to be doing a "death roll"—a hunting tactic used by alligators—when a control stick was placed around its neck. The Humane Society was forced to tranquilize it.

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Tribal lessons and the problem of trauma

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How do you envision the future of the seashore?

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Larry Kursa loved water, painted as a way of life

## Illusions of conservation

BOOK REVIEW by Herb Kutchins

*Conservation Refugees: The Hundred-Year Conflict between Global Conservation and Native Peoples.* By Mark Dowie. 336 pages. MIT Press. \$27.95 cloth.

Mark Dowie established his reputation as a reporter by exposing deadly design flaws in Ford Pintos and the dangers of Dalkon Shield birth control devices. He was also an editor and publisher of Mother Jones magazine. More recently, Dowie has written incisive reports about the conservation movement. One book, *American Foundations*, discusses problems in fund-

ing environmental organizations; another, *Losing Ground*, is among the best assessments of modern ecological programs.

In his new book, *Conservation Refugees: The Hundred-Year Conflict between Global Conservation and Native Peoples*, Dowie repudiates "Fortress Conservation," the principal environmental strategy of the five largest and most influential BINGOS (Big International Nongovernmental Organizations). He argues that the strategy of locking indigenous residents out of large, commercially undeveloped areas and creating parks to pre-

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## POINT REYES LIGHT

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## inBRIEF

**Point Reyes librarian to be cut**

Budget cuts to the Marin County Free Library have hit home with the layoff of Point Reyes Station Librarian Jennifer Livingston. "The effects of bringing our budget into alignment with our funding is painful, for Jennifer, for her colleagues, and for the communities they have dedicated themselves to serving," said Gail Haar, Director of the Library, which has 11 branches in Marin. "While our goal is to try and maintain our services and programs, we know that staff like Jennifer will be impossible to replace." This year the county has already cut the library's budget by \$500,000 with further cuts necessary before the end of the fiscal year. Citizens have shown their support for Livingston with letters to the county. In a letter to Supervisor Steve Kinsey, Inverness Park resident Mark Dowie wrote: "...Jennifer Livingston is really not a librarian. She is an imaginative community leader, teacher, friend and inspiration to scores of West Marin children, who just happens to work out of the Point Reyes Public Library."

**Inverness woman in critical care**

A 61-year-old woman remains in intensive care at Marin General Hospital after crashing her car into a utility pole around midnight last Saturday. Linda Peterson

crashed on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard near Inverness, where she lives. Her dog, Sebastian, was killed in the accident and Peterson suffered multiple fractures to the neck, ribs and extremities. Peterson also suffered critical internal injuries and underwent surgery for them. She fell asleep at the wheel after explaining to friend Dave Mitchell that she was tired and needed to get some rest. Peterson is the Advertising Manager for The West Marin Citizen and was working at a catering event earlier that day in Stinson Beach before driving home.

**Bolinas fisherman honored**

Bolinas resident and fisherman Josh Churchman, known for catching and selling rockfish and salmon, received the Volunteer of the Year Award from the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary in Washington D.C. last Wednesday. Sanctuary superintendent Dan Howard presented the award to Churchman for his service as a charter member on Cordell Bank's Advisory Council, his efforts to promote sustainable fishing practices in commercial fishing, and his help in creating the management plan for the sanctuary. "Out of 14 nominees in the country, Josh won the award. I think it was the first time Josh has worn a black tie in 30 years!" Howard said. As he accepted his award in Washington, Churchman received a standing ovation from his peers.

**Mercury Found in Stinson water**

Researchers from UC Santa Cruz discovered methylmercury, a neurotoxin that accumulates in fish, in Stinson Beach.

It was found in groundwater flows, and because methylmercury is often found in fecal bacteria, the presence of both substances is probably not a coincidence; the team believes that septic systems may be a contributing factor. Although drinking this water is not hazardous to human health, it could have an impact on the ecological food chain, starting with fish. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration funded the study to observe the effects of methylmercury in coastal groundwater. "Our research has identified a previously unrecognized source of MMHg [methylmercury] to coastal waters that people were not aware of," said Frank Black of the Department of Geosciences at Princeton University.

**Possible threats to sanctuary**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has identified several emerging threats to the Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuary resources. A report generated by NOAA indicates that the seafloor habitat has deteriorated due to contact between fishing gear and the sanctuary's reef and soft sediment habitats. The report also indicates populations of rockfish, salmon, some seabird species and leatherback sea turtles have been depleted. However, fishery closures are helping to restore fish stocks. Sanctuary superintendent Dan Howard said, "This report provides a baseline for monitoring changes to sanctuary resources and will help us to better understand and respond to these emerging threats." According to the NOAA report, "spatial fishing gear restrictions that are currently in place in some areas will help protect sanctuary habitats..."

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# West Africa comes to West Marin

**GUEST COLUMN**  
BY ELIA HAWORTH

David Conrad's work as an ethno-historian of West Africa is known all over the world. Now he is pleased to share his work with his own neighborhood of West Marin. On June 20, the Bolinas Museum is opening the exhibition "David Conrad: Mysteries of West Africa," with a reception from 3 to 5 p.m.

An Idaho country boy, Conrad went to Nigeria with the Peace Corps after finishing university in Pocatello. Today he is one of the world's foremost authorities on West Africa. For over 30 years, his Stinson Beach house has served as his anchor while his career—which includes work in 29 African nations—has unfolded.

Conrad's unpretentious charm belies his long list of prestigious accomplishments and honors. An Emeritus Professor, he leads trips for the Smithsonian Institute, and is currently the ethno-historian for a Yale University project. His constant return to Africa has been the key to developing deep and fertile relationships there, and has led him through remarkable experiences.

The Bolinas Museum exhibition features Conrad's personal collection and interpretation of meaning-rich African

sculpture, textiles and objects, and color-saturated photographs of places and events that few outsiders ever see. The exhibition reflects many areas of Conrad's expertise. Among these are medieval African empires, Islamic influences, female power and fascinating rituals. Each interest has led him to another. Conrad gives an example: "My interest in indigenous systems of belief derives from 1990s research in Guinea, when I stumbled on a large body of oral tradition about occult practices. Traditional religion is expressed through the material representation of gods and spirits (masks, statuettes, etc.), and this established my work with West African art history." In 1975 Conrad began his years of fieldwork in Africa with youthful zeal by hitchhiking across the vast Sahara Desert!

While being in Africa is second nature to him now, Conrad savors being at home in Stinson Beach with his wife, Barbara Wechsberg. He makes jam and chutney from the bounty of their garden. "It is great to be able to share my experiences in West Africa with friends and visitors here at home," Conrad says. He will give a free slide lecture "Serendipitous Ethno-History: Chasing Spirits through the West African Landscape" at 7 p.m. at the Stinson Beach Community Center. Everyone is invited to celebrate the exhibition's opening at the reception on Saturday, June 20, from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Bolinas Museum.



"David Conrad: Mysteries of West Africa" shows at the Bolinas Museum.

## >> Lewd

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a secluded and world-famous stretch of Muir Beach, has residents concerned for their safety and the safety of their children. A man was placed under citizen's arrest on April 22 after he was seen masturbating while viewing adolescent girls through binoculars. Muir Beach residents say other instances of sexual activity have not been reported to deputies.

When the sheriff's office receives complaints of nudity they ask nudists to clothe themselves, and the nudists usually comply. The beaches are not regularly patrolled deputies, since they do not receive many complaints and reports of lewd activity are uncommon. Although it is illegal, nude sunbathing has long been tolerated on the northern stretch of Muir Beach, Red Rock Beach and Hagmier Pond.

There had been four reports of lewd activity on Muir Beach in the last year, said Lieutenant Cheryl Fisher. She was surprised by the level of community concern over the issue, considering the scarcity of calls. Chief Ranger Yvette Ruan, also present at the meeting, shared Fisher's feeling. Ruan said there have been

only two reports of lewd activity in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in the last year.

Many residents expressed concern that their reports would be futile, because the nearest sheriff's station is 30 minutes away. Ruan informed residents that many park rangers are deputized and may make arrests, and are often closer to the beach than deputies. Officers suggested citizens take down descriptions of offenders, such as height, weight, race, gender, the vehicles they are driving and any clothing they are wearing. This last item drew laughter from the crowd.

One citizen expressed concern that such suspicion and monitoring of beachgoers might bring about an undesirable atmosphere similar to 1930s Germany. Resident Kathy Sward made the suggestion of erecting a sign warning potential offenders against committing lewd acts. Suggestions that the sign entirely prohibit nudity were rejected.

Proponents of nude sunbathing spoke about the feeling of freedom they experience and the pleasure of the sun on their skin. One nude beach-goer called Red Rock Beach a "magical, healing place." At a typical nudist gathering, you are likely to find picnics, board games, books, frisbees and maybe a guitar, harmonica or hand drum. Several nudists stressed the

importance of basic human values on the beach, saying it is not nudity but behavior that offends onlookers.

But there is no distinct point at which nudity becomes criminal, or when a passerby becomes a victim. "People are more fearful these days," said one supporter of nude sunbathing. Fisher encouraged community members to confront offensive situations by addressing the offender before resorting to calling the deputies—but not to hesitate in calling deputies if they do feel threatened.

The majority of the community expressed no desire to change the clothing-optional nature of the beach, though Kinsey said such a desire could be accommodated. Law enforcement patrols of the beach were discussed, but many community members said they did not want to foster paranoia with an increased police presence.

**Write to the editor**



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## >> Dogs

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"The dog died in the emergency room shortly after it was apprehended," said Carrie Harrington of the Humane Society. She added that it was "highly aroused and highly distressed," was "hyper-salivating," and had a large tumor. However, an official cause of death has yet to be determined. Deputies said the Bullmastiffs appeared to be hungry, and were possibly malnourished.

According to Garside, Hunzinker inherited the animals from her ex-boyfriend, who was unable to care for them. Garside believes Hunzinker herself was a negligent and cruel owner, which ultimately led to the incident.

"One day, the dog got loose and came into my kitchen and she came in and stomped on the dog's testicles and she beat him with some brass rods I had," Garside said.

He also believes it will be impossible for the one living dog to be rehabilitated, due to the cruelty it has endured. He said he once saw Hunzinker holding the tooth of one of the animals after beating it, implying that she had knocked its tooth out.