

CONNECTION

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Community Homes & Services

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From Mallow to Mule's Ears: A Marin Wildflower Tour

with Joe's group

Spring is here! I think we can all agree it was an exceptionally wet winter - maybe one of the wettest winters any of us here at CH&S can remember. This can only mean one thing: super bloom! A "super bloom" is just what it sounds like - a massive statewide flowering event that occurs in California after an extra rainy winter. Maybe you remember the super blooms that happened in 2017 and 2019?

So, naturally, as we observed the flecks of color that began to dot the verdant hills of Marin (and our sinuses observed the pollen they produced) we began to think about wildflowers. One day Bert brought in a few from just outside the front door to show us. He asked what kind of flower it was, which stumped everyone in the room. How could this be? We'd spent our lives enjoying these flowers, but we'd never even caught their names. Rude!

So, to save you from a possibly awkward encounter with a flower, Mike, Phoebe, Tyrone, Bert, and Joe spent a morning photographing some of the common ones you might see in the North Bay, then an afternoon looking them up and learning their names. Check them out!

These yellow, daisy-ish flowers (right) are called *Wyethia*, or "mule's ears". We found them growing in dense clusters on the ground. This was perhaps the most common wildflower we saw in our travels.



These purple flowers (above and at the top of the page) are called *Sisyrinchium bellum*, or "blue-eyed grass". They grow all over the place in the Marin Headlands.

The Marin Wildflower Tour Continues



Poppies! Also known as *eschscholzia californica*, these bright orange flowers are probably familiar to most residents of our fair state. Something interesting we noticed about poppies is that the landscapers that keep our medians and parks neat and tidy will avoid cutting them down when trimming the grass. This can be seen all along Redwood Boulevard in Novato. We've heard that it's illegal to pick them...



(Left) The only red flower we found was this one: *castilleja subinclusa*, or "franciscan paintbrush." After much searching online, we were unable to figure out where the name "franciscan paintbrush" came from. In 1579 Sir Francis Drake landed his vessel not far from where we found this specimen growing, so that's our guess.



(Above) *Sidalcea malviflora*, or "prairie mallow" is a beautiful purple flower with delicate leaves. They almost look like hibiscus when they get bigger.



And finally there were these beautiful yellow flowers (left) called *Oxalis pes-caprae*, or "sourgrass". The plant is indigenous to South Africa and is incredibly invasive. According to our research they overtake yards and parks all over the Bay Area every spring, then die and create a mess that's quite difficult to clean up. Well you know what they say: "Il faut souffrir pour être belle" ("beauty is pain").

Andrew's Corner

King Kong Facts

King Kong was created by Merian C. Cooper and Edgar Wallace for the film of the same name. The King Kong film has been remade three times, first in 1976, (with Jessica Lange and Jeff Bridges) second in 2005, (directed by Peter Jackson and starring Jack Black and Naomi Watts) and lastly in 2017 With Brie Larson and Samuel L. Jackson and Tom Hiddleston) . King Kong comes from a hidden island called Skull Island, which also contains prehistoric animals or other animals that have gone extinct.



The King Kong series has been the property of RKO Radio Pictures, Universal Pictures and Warner Bros. The first King Kong film was released on April 7, 1933. There have also been Japanese films based on King Kong that were made by Toho, the same studio that made Godzilla. A play has been made that is based on the first King Kong film. There have been two animated series based on King Kong called Kong: The Animated Series and Kong: King Of The Apes. The Simpsons did a parody of King Kong called King Homer. I am interested in King Kong because he was basically the first American kaiju.

Darnell and I asked some people what their favorite version of King Kong is:

- **Martha:** The 2005 version with Jack Black
- **Aidan:** 1933
- **Darnell:** 1933 "Whatever happened to Fay Wray?"
- **Jennifer:** The O.G. 1933 version
- **Bruce:** 1976 with Jessica Lange (Hubba Hubba!)
- **Chas:** 1933 (He reminded us of the best monster movie of them all, Bambi V.S Godzilla)



Bio: Andrew Newson is a student at Life College and is 25 years old. He likes comic books, video games, hiking, exploring new places with his mom.... and babies. He is an authority in all things Star Wars, Star Trek and great places to go in the Bay Area. He is currently learning Mandarin and loves to research and learn new things.

May is High Blood Pressure Awareness Month

May is a time to raise awareness about the dangers of high blood pressure. Here are some general facts about high blood pressure:

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 45% of adults in the United States have high blood pressure, also known as *hypertension*.
- Many people with high blood pressure don't even know they have it because it doesn't usually cause any symptoms.
- High blood pressure can lead to serious health problems. High blood pressure can damage your heart, kidneys, and other organs if left untreated. It can also increase your risk of heart attack, stroke, and other serious health conditions.

According to John Hopkins Medicine, here are some natural ways to lower your blood pressure:

- **Balance nutrients.** Go for less sodium (salt intake ideally under 1,500 mg per day) and more potassium.
- **Put probiotics on your side.** Eating food that contains probiotics—consumable live bacteria—has been linked to healthier blood pressure. Probiotics can be found in yogurt, other fermented foods such as sauerkraut or kimchi, and/or dietary supplements.
- **Lose even a little weight.** Researchers are finding that extra pounds can actually cause heart muscle injury, so dropping even a few pounds can be helpful.
- **Move more.** Did you know that physical activity can be as beneficial to your heart as medication in some cases? Exercise lowers blood pressure because it works like beta-blocker medication to slow the heart rate and lower blood pressure (at rest and also when exercising). High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease.
- **Relieve stress.** Prolonged stress can raise your blood pressure and keep it higher longer than is healthy. One way to relax your mind, body and blood pressure is to do yoga. We like this yoga class by one of our favorite senior chair dance teachers Sherry Zak Morris:

Find Sherry's yoga class on YouTube:

<https://youtu.be/d8h9or9pKts>

Who knew relieving stress could be so fun?

We did!



International Museum Day May 18!

with Jennifer

When it comes time for Armchair Travel, virtual visits to museums are hard to beat. We recently checked out Sweden's Museum of Failure, a collection of failed innovations, products, services, tech, and food. Exhibits included everyone's favorite time machine on wheels, the DeLorean; a cursed-looking face mask called "Rejuvenique" that toned your face with electric shocks (it was never safety-approved...yikes); and Google Glass smart glasses. The glasses ran a cool 1500 bucks, and had a built in camera and, but apparently didn't work very well.

In another class, we read a National Geographic article "A rare look inside the Smithsonian's secret storerooms", and learned that only 1% of the collection is on display at any given time. What's in the back rooms? Turns out, plenty, including "a multitude of Muppets", Mr. Rogers' iconic red sweater, the original stop watch from 60 Minutes, and Sylvester Stallone's fake blood-stained shorts and boots from Rocky. The freakiest thing we read about was a gremlin from Gremlins 2: The New Batch, in a wooden crate with a hand-written note stating "Do not remove screws". Sound advice, we think.

Here are a few museums on our future itinerary—check some out for International Museum Day May 18!

SPAM Museum, Austin MN

UFO Museum, Roswell NM

The Jello-Gallery Museum, LeRoy NY

Circus World Museum, Baraboo WI

International Spy Museum, Washington D.C.

Museum of Puppetry, Atlanta GA



FIRE: This Is Not a Drill!

by Darnell with help from Randall, Devlin, and Nino

"Fire!!!" Nobody wants to hear THAT. But, last month, we heard those dreadful words at Life College during our Zoom art class with Chris. We looked out the window at the apartment building next door and flames were shooting out of the top floor! Some of us stepped outside to get a better look and a firefighter told us to evacuate Life College—they were afraid the hot embers would fly over to our roof and our building might catch fire.

We quickly said, "sorry Chris, we have to evacuate the building!" then we followed our fire drill routine as we have practiced.

It was heartbreaking to see some of our neighbors standing outside in shock as the flames grew and their apartments were in danger. Luckily, the damage was mostly limited to the apartment where the fire started. It was awe-inspiring to see how quickly the Novato Fire Department responded and put the fire out.

We thought at first that the whole building was beyond repair, since everyone that lives there had to stay at a nearby hotel. We were told that the owners would fix everything and then invite people to return when repairs were done.

We put our fire drill skills to the test and I am happy to report we passed with flying colors. No one panicked, everyone was quiet and professional, and we did not get in the way of the firefighters, even though we were very curious!

We were so excited about the whole thing that we forgot pictures of us.

So some people offered to re enact the the reactions that we had:



May is Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month

President Joe Biden proclaimed May as Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month last year. It's also called Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month and it is a time to celebrate the contributions and achievements of AANHPI individuals and communities in the United States.

The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

Did you know that the term "Asian American" was created in 1968 by two Cal students Yuji Ichioka and Emma Gee during the founding of the Asian American Political Alliance?

The AANHPI community is incredibly diverse, encompassing people with roots in East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Pacific Islands. To learn more, check out this YouTube video "Are You "AAPI" or "Asian American"? It's Complicated. | A People's History of Asian America":

https://youtu.be/6bLwF_KFrZU

AANHPI Heritage Month is an opportunity to recognize each group's unique cultural traditions, languages, and experiences, as well as their shared struggles and triumphs. This month, we honor how AAPI individuals have shaped our country's history and culture. From building the Transcontinental Railroad to fighting for civil rights and immigrant rights, AANHPI people have played a vital role in shaping the United States into the diverse and vibrant nation it is today.

It's a time to acknowledge the challenges that AANHPI people have faced and continue to face. Discrimination, racism, and hate crimes against AANHPI communities have increased dramatically in recent years. Let's stand in solidarity with AANHPI individuals and work to combat these injustices. By recognizing and appreciating the contributions of different groups, we can build a more inclusive and equitable society for everyone.

The Animals Formerly Known as "Endangered Species"

Endangered Species Day May 19th got us thinking about what critters may no longer be celebrating—because they aren't endangered anymore! Here is a partial list of species that have bounced back from the brink and been “delisted”:

American Alligator
Blue Iguana
Gray Whale
Gray Wolf
Grizzly Bear
Golden Lion Tamarin
Humpback Whale
Manatee
Red Kangaroo
Sea Otter
Southern White Rhino
Snow Leopard



May 12 is National Limerick Day!

Let's start with some classics:



*There once was a fly on the wall
I wonder why didn't it fall
Because its feet stuck
Or was it just luck
Or does gravity miss things so small?*

*The limerick packs laughs anatomical
Into space that is quite economical.
But the good ones I've seen
So seldom are clean
And the clean ones so seldom are comical.*

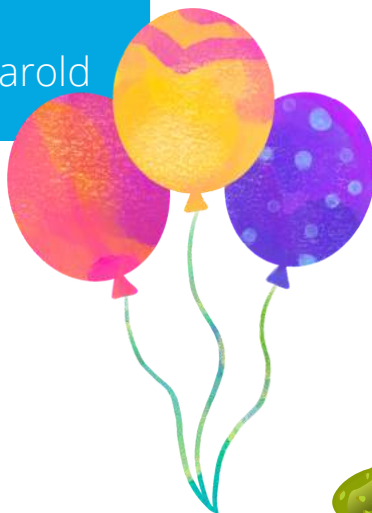
Yvette's Limerick



*There was once a wise old flea
Who sneezed a pickle on my knee
He was digging in his nose
Watered the flowers with the hose
As he sang an old song of glee*

CH&S May Birthdays

5/2 Gail
5/7 David G. and Katie
5/8 Andrew N.
5/11 Colleen and Harold



Pranks...In Space!

with Jennifer



Our resident prankster, Darren, joined forces with space enthusiast Connor to research pranks that have been pulled in space. It seems the sky is NOT the limit when it comes to practical jokes.

One of the earliest (and stinkiest) pranks in space dates back to 1964, when pilot John Young surprised his crewmates aboard Gemini III by pulling a smuggled corned beef sandwich out of his jumpsuit pocket shortly after launch. Apparently, he'd gotten sick of the official menu they'd been eating before the trip, and he snuck half a leftover corned beef sandwich on board as a joke/snack. As far as sandwiches go, corned beef wasn't the most practical choice for zero gravity space travel—it almost immediately fell to pieces, which floated around the cabin. And it stunk! "I hadn't counted on the pungent odor in a closed cabin," Young told Life Magazine. (We are thinking we ought to add this story to our Epic Sandwiches Knowledge/Cultural Literacy class, along with a discussion question: what type of sandwich would YOU bring in your pocket to space?)

In 1973, a full decade before Sally Ride became the first female astronaut, Mission Control was baffled by a woman's voice broadcasting from the Skylab 3—the woman said she was just popping in for a quick visit, and to drop off a nice home-cooked meal for her husband and the crew. Astronaut Owen Garriott had recorded his wife Helen's voice months before launch.

The most slapstick prank in space involves, of all things, a gorilla suit. On his birthday, February 21, 2016, during a year-long mission in space, astronaut Scott Kelly donned a gorilla suit and chased his Expedition 46 crewmates around the International Space Station. How does one sneak an adult-sized gorilla costume into space? Kelly's twin brother and fellow astronaut/prankster Mark had it secretly shipped to the ISS as a birthday surprise!

Space Survey

by Randall Martin

In honor of National Space Day May 5th, Randall took a space survey of Life College students and staff.

If NASA offered you a ride on the next space shuttle, would you take it?

Darnell- Of course!

Bruce- No way!

Jennifer- Oh, no thank you.

Michelle- Absolutely not! I need to keep my feet on the ground.

Cat- Yes!

Nino- Yes!

Aidan- Yes, I will!

Martha- Yes.

Colleen- Nope.

Iris- Yes.

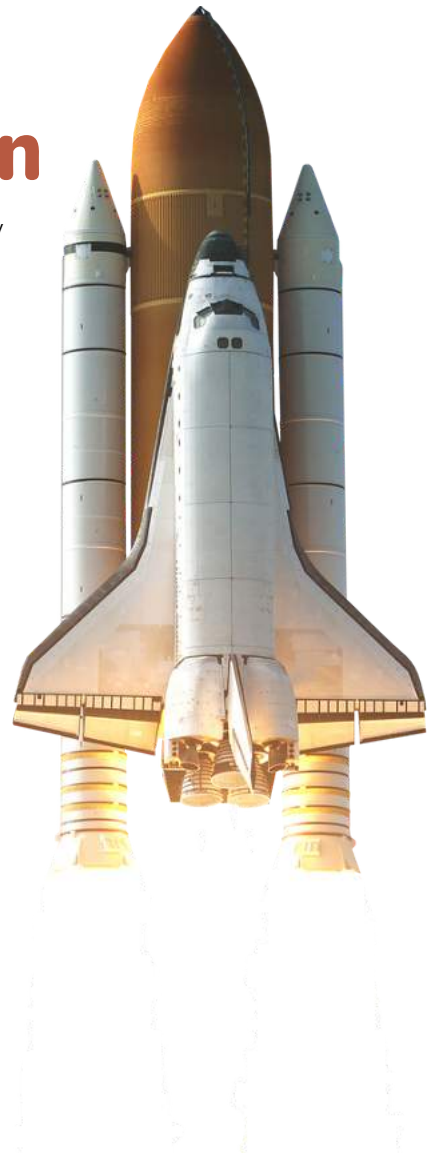
Zachary- Ya

Connor- Yes, I'd love to!

Andrew- Yes.

Randall- Hell ya!

Amy- No way, Jose!



Who would be your bff in the Star Wars or Star Trek universe?

Darnell- Chewbacca. He's just so hairy and (mimes hugging)!

Bruce- Mr. Spock

Jennifer- R2D2

Michelle- Chewbacca

Cat- Everybody

Nino- Luke Skywalker

Aidan- The emperor

Martha- Captain Kirk

Colleen- Princess Leah

Iris- Captain Kirk

Zachary- Luke Skywalker

Connor- Cannot decide

Andrew- Chewbacca

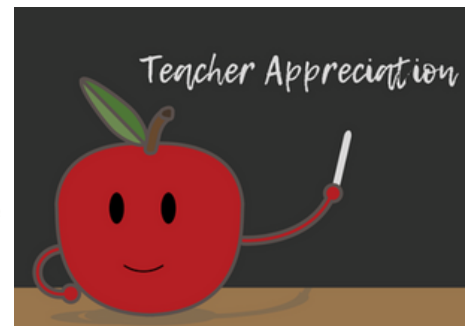
Randall- None



MAY 2023 NATIONAL DAYS

Mental Health Awareness Month
Salad Month

- 5/1 - May Day
- **5/2 - Teacher Appreciation Day**
- 5/3 - National Garden Meditation Day
- 5/4 - Star Wars Day
- 5/5 - Cinco de Mayo, National Astronaut Day, and National Space Day
- 5/6 - Kentucky Derby and National Scrapbook Day
- **5/7 - National Lemonade Day**
- 5/8 - World Red Cross Day
- 5/9 - Lost Sock Memorial Day
- 5/10 - National Clean Up Your Room Day
- 5/11 - Twilight Zone Day
- 5/12 - National Limerick Day
- **5/13 - National Train Day**
- **5/14 - Mother's Day**
- 5/16 - Sea Monkey Day
- 5/18 - International Museum Day
- 5/19 - Endangered Species Day
- **5/20 - World Bee Day and Rescue Dog Day**
- 5/23 - Lucky Penny Day
- **5/26 - Paper Airplane Day**
- **5/29 - Memorial Day - HOLIDAY**
- 5/30 - National Creativity Day
- 5/31 - National Smile Day



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May 2023 Connection Magazine

The Wildflower Edition

We identified a lot of Marin wildflowers, but this one that Bert found had us stumped.

Can any of you help us ID this flower?