

# MILL VALLEY HERALD

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SERVING THE MILL VALLEY AREA

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## Inside



Hawk's Tavern in Mill Valley gets a good do-over.

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## Mill Valley In Brief

### Water main flushing program continues

The Marin Municipal Water District continues its annual water main flushing program in southern Marin. The MMWD will flush the east portion of downtown Mill Valley on West Blithedale Avenue and lower Summit Avenue on Jan. 26.

The water district flushes about a fifth of its water mains each year to remove sediment buildup and maintain water quality. To flush a water main, fire hydrants along a section of the main are opened up. The high velocity of the released water scours the line and removes sediment.

During periods of flushing, residents may notice large quantities of water in the street as well as water pressure drops and dirty water in their plumbing. The water district recommends restricting water use during the flushing and running the water for a short time following the flushing to clear the lines.

Water main flushing will continue through March in southern Marin.

### Mayor offers open hours

Mill Valley Mayor Garry Lion is holding open office hours every Monday from 11 a.m. to noon at City Hall. Residents may book 15 minute meetings by e-mailing City Clerk Kelsey Rodger at [krogers@cityofmillvalley.org](mailto:krogers@cityofmillvalley.org) or calling 388-4033, ext. 102. Alternative meeting times are available on an as-needed basis.

### First Italian wine dinner of the year

Piazza D'Angelo is hosting its first wine-maker dinner of the year Wed., Feb. 1, 7 to 9 p.m., at Piazza D'Angelo Ristorante, 22 Miller Ave. Chef Massimo will create a five-course tasting menu, with each dish paired with wines from the Maso Poli and Lechthaler wineries. One of the winery owners will be available to talk about the wines and answer any questions. The dinner costs \$45 per person, excluding tax and gratuity. For more information or to make reservations, call 388-2000 or e-mail [rsvp@scitydish.com](mailto:rsvp@scitydish.com).

# Winter's first storm packs wallop

By JESSICA MULLINS  
MarinScope Newspapers

After nearly two months of little precipitation, strong winds and heavy showers hit Marin last weekend, flooding roads and downing trees throughout the county.

Around 8 inches of rain fell in Kentfield between Jan. 20 and 23, according to National Weather Service forecaster Diana Henderson. "Kentfield is geographically set up for a lot of rain. It's our

local sponge," Henderson said.

The heaviest rainfall was between 4 p.m. Jan. 20 and 4 p.m. Jan. 21, when Kentfield saw 3.12 inches of precipitation. Many power outages were reported at the time.

Over the weekend, more than 4,000 Marin homes lost power, according to PG&E spokeswoman Katie Romans.

"Most of the power outages were due to trees or vegetation coming into contact with the lines," Romans said. "We had extremely high winds."

The majority of the outages lasted one to three hours.

San Rafael saw the largest number of outages — 2,230 homes throughout the weekend, including two outages of more than 500 residences, one Friday night, the other Saturday morning.

In Novato, there were roughly 930 households that lost power during the stormy weather.

Tiburon, which had a total of 525 homes without power at various times, had a 400-household outage Fri-

day night.

San Anselmo had 80 outages, Mill Valley had 40 and Sausalito had 15.

Romans said PG&E had predicted winds from 25 to 35 mph with gusts up to 45 mph for Saturday.

The California Highway Patrol issued high-wind advisories on Bay Area bridges Jan. 21. The same day, the National Weather Service issued a high-surf advisory for the North Bay coast.

Henderson said San Francisco International Airport reported wind gusts up

to 56 mph Saturday and at peaks of 49 mph Monday.

On Jan. 21 the CHP received reports of flooding on southbound Highway 101 near the Blithedale Avenue exit in Mill Valley and on Highway 1 near Sir Francis Drake. On Monday, California Highway Patrol Officer Kevin Bartlett said flooding was reported on southbound Highway 101 near the Lucky Drive exit.

The wet spell was expected to end this week, with a forecast predicting

See WEATHER A2

# Made in Mill Valley



SOREN HEMMILA/MARINSCOPE

Esther Cherk, at top, turns in her completed knitting at the weekly meetings of the Purlettes Plus One. Hector Richards, above left, who learned how to knit in grammar school, donates the money he earns to the Redwood Scholarship Fund. Above right: the balls of yarn the knitting group will turn into next season's purses, bags and clutches.

SOREN HEMMILA  
MarinScope Newspapers

Daphne Campbell stopped knitting for her family when a grandchild made fun of her handmade gift. Now the purses, bags and clutches she knits for Sarah Oliver Handbags sell for hundreds of dollars at specialty boutiques around the country.

Campbell, 90, is a member of the Purlettes Plus One, a group of senior knitters at the Redwoods retirement community in Mill Val-

ley that produces handmade items. The knitting circle meets once a week to socialize, talk about television and trade finished knitted products for more yarn and assignments to create the next week's bags.

"I do about 100 a year of varying sizes," said Campbell of her creations. Over her five years with the group, Campbell has knitted 500 purses. She will complete four this week.

Six years ago Mill Valley resident Sarah Oliver enlisted the help

of Redwoods residents when she was unable to keep up with the production demands of her business. "When I went to expand, it was a natural fit to come here. I asked the program director to start a knitting group to produce items for my business."

Oliver posted fliers and seven knitters showed up at the first meeting six years ago. The knitter-residents range in age from 75 to 96 and form the backbone of Oli-

See Purlettes A2

# Judge orders alleged killer to stand trial

## Naso is suspected of murdering four women in Northern California

NICOLE BAPTISTA  
MarinScope Newspapers

Accused serial killer Joseph Naso will stand trial for the murder of four women, Marin County Superior Court Judge Andrew Sweet ruled Monday.

Naso completed his closing argument Monday morning, after a two-

week preliminary hearing that started Jan. 10 led to the unveiling of photos of hundreds of possibly dead or unconscious women, a "rape journal," DNA samples and incriminating testimony. Naso, 78, is charged with the deaths of Roxene Roggasch, 18, of Oakland, who was found dead in Fairfax in 1997; Carmen Colon, 22, who was found

dead in Port Costa in Contra Costa County in 1978; Pamela Parsons, 38, who was found dead in Yuba County in 1993; and Tracy Tafoya, 31, who was found dead in 1994 in Marysville in Yuba County.

Naso could face the death penalty, though prosecu-

tors are keeping quiet until Naso's arraignment on Feb. 3.

### Naso's ex-wife testifies

Naso's defense focused on the prosecution's presenting circumstantial evidence, though the tide turned after Naso's ex-wife, Judy Naso, testified on Jan. 19. Authorities found panty hose containing Judy Naso's DNA wrapped

around Roggasch's neck.

Naso contacted her from jail asking her to tell the judge she'd misplaced her panty hose.

"I don't recall leaving it anywhere," Judith Naso told Deputy District Attorney Rosemary Slote, in a Bay City News report.

Dr. Regin Jindrich testified that Roggasch died as a result of strangulation by the panty hose. A semen sample taken from another pair of nylon Roggasch

See NASO A3



Joseph Naso

# PURLETTES: 75- to 96-year-old knitters form the backbone of Oliver's business

From A1

ver's business. The bags are handmade in Mill Valley by Mill Valley residents, so the bags are 100 percent made in America—something the knitters feel is important.

The Purlettes are big fans of the TV series "Mad Men." Several members of the group lived in Manhattan in the '60s, when "Mad Men" is set. It also doesn't hurt that Bryan Batt, the actor who played art director Salvatore Romano on the show, orders many of Oliver's purses for his New Orleans boutique Hazelnut.

Oliver's association with the Redwoods community began when the mothers' group she was a member of scheduled playgroups at the center. "It was a great opportunity to expose our children to people of different ages," Oliver said.

### The 'Plus One'

Nuns taught Hector Richards to knit in grammar school. He is the "Plus One" in the Purlettes—the youngest of the knitting circle at 75, and its only male. "Knitting is very therapeutic. They teach knitting in the military," said Richards, who donates the money he earns from Oliver to the Redwood



Sarah Oliver, owner of Sarah Oliver Handbags, talks with the knitting group during a recent meeting at the Redwoods retirement community.

Scholarship Fund.

Each knitter is paid by the piece to allow for differences in speed among the group. Some knitters whip out 10 pieces a day, others take longer. "I don't think they do it for the money, although

they're very sharp. If I make a mistake calculating how much to pay, I get a call, they're on me—they are on me for their tax paperwork," Oliver said.

Oliver hands out knitting assignments and

balls of yarn one week and returns the following week to pick up the knitting. After she collects the week's creations she takes them to her office in Sausalito, where three employees complete the final stage

of the process.

"I think they get the most enjoyment seeing the finished product," Oliver said. "So many of them have knitted their whole lives. They give a sweater and they work so hard on it and it's

not appreciated. But I bring back bags and they'll see what they look like when they're done, and how much they sell for, and they're just so proud."

Oliver and her staff wash the knitted items which shrinks the 100 percent Peruvian wool to form the felted texture of the bags. The handbags are carefully shaped and dried. To create the finished look, Oliver's employees use electric clippers to shave off the pills and extra fuzz that forms when the bags are washed. Oliver finishes the bags by hand—sewing handles, clasps or special brooches.

Sarah Oliver Handbags are available online and at 70 stores across the country such as Gump's in San Francisco and Pennyweight in Napa.

Working with a group with an average age of 83 has its downside. "I've lost a bunch. That's hard, but more people come and they're very supportive of each other," Oliver said. "They're like family to me. I'm grateful for their friendship and contribution to what is much more than a business."

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# Storm causes busy Mill Valley weekend

SOREN HEMMILA  
Marinscope Newspapers

The first big storm of the year kept Mill Valley residents and officials busy over the weekend.

As business owners along Miller Avenue used sandbags and plywood to keep water out of their storefronts, the city dealt with numerous weather-related problems.

Jill Barnes, director of Public Works, said the city responded to toppled trees and plugged storm drains. "Public Works was called out to remove downed trees and trees threatening to fall on buildings and to clear backed-up catch basins," Barnes said.

Before the storm hit, Mill Valley officials posted storm alerts on the city's website warning of the rain and upcoming high tide events, and encouraged residents to prepare for floods. Barnes says residents living in low-lying areas should gather sand-

bags and plywood to prevent water intrusion. The flood-prone areas are in the 100-year flood plain, roughly bordered by East Blithedale and Miller avenues.

At the Manzanita Park and Ride an electronic sign flashed high-tide flood warnings to commuters and reminded them not to park in no-parking zones. On Monday morning, as the 11 a.m. high tide approached, the lowest area of the lot became immersed in several inches of water. At the entrance to the lot water was deep enough to stall at least one car. Novato resident Joe Ascher helped push a commuter's car out of the water. "People don't read the signs," said Ascher, "and that's saltwater they're driving through."

Outside the Park and Ride on Shoreline Highway water covered much of the roadway. Caltrans workers began blocking off the flooded lanes with cones as drivers carefully made their way through the flooded roadway.



Cars surrounded by water during the 11 a.m. high tide at the Manzanita Park and Ride.

# WEATHER: Power outages, messy roads



HANS ROENAU/MARINSCOPE

The winter's first storm dumped more than 8 inches of rainfall last weekend, as roads flooded and power was lost to nearly 5,000.

From A1

sunshine and highs in the 60s through the weekend.

### Wind contributed to charred boat sinking

A 30-foot power boat on Richardson Bay caught fire and sank around 3 a.m. Jan. 23. Fire crews determined that fire damage and high waves sank the vessel. "The winds started to pick up after the fire was extinguished," said Kai Pasquale, Southern Marin Fire Protection District acting battalion chief.

The owner of the boat, who lived on the vessel anchored 200 yards east of Schoonmaker Marina, wasn't on board when the fire started and was found safe on land.

The fire's cause and the estimated loss is unknown, Pasquale said, but the boat was destroyed. The Tiburon fireboat, SMFPD's inflatable rescue boat and a Coast Guard inflatable vessel responded to the blaze, which was extinguished in roughly 20 minutes. There

were no signs of hazardous materials leaking into the water, Pasquale said.

### Reservoirs get fuller

The rainfall left Marin reservoirs close to capacity. Marin Municipal Water District's total reservoir storage (which comprises liquid in the Alpine, Bon Tempe, Kent, Lagunitas, Nicasio, Phoenix and Soualule reservoirs) reached 75 percent capacity after the storm.

At this time last year the reservoirs were 100 percent full, although the average is 80 percent.

Annual rainfall (measured from July 2011 to Jan. 22) at Lake Lagunitas was at 15.88 inches, compared to 31.60 inches at the same time last year. The Marin Municipal Water District's average for the location is 27.04.

The city of Novato gets 20 percent of its water from in-town catchment systems and buys 80 percent from the Sonoma County Water Agency. Anne Dubai, SCWA spokeswoman, said that agency's two major reservoirs received a goodly measure of water from the weekend's rainstorms. As of Monday,

Lake Sonoma was 81 percent full and Lake Mendocino was 84 percent full.

"We're looking forward to more rain this spring to get those reservoirs completely full, so we can head into summer with a good supply of water," she said.

The SCWA does not control all the water in both reservoirs, Dubai explained.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers controls the water that reaches levels that are higher than those allocated to the SCWA.

This water is called the "flood control pool." (Go to [scwa.ca.gov](http://scwa.ca.gov) and click on "water supply levels" to see an explanatory graphic.) The 81 and 84 percent figures Dubai referred to are specific to the amount of water controlled by SCWA.

At this time last year, Sonoma County had received so much rain that both reservoirs' flood control pools were full, and the Corps of Engineers was releasing water from both reservoirs to protect their structural integrity.

— Mary Southall contributed to this report.

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