

POINT REYES LIGHT

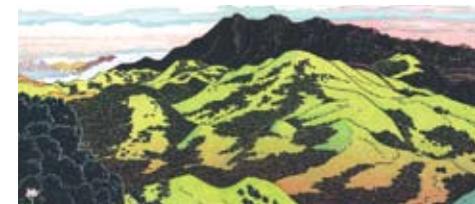
Volume LX No. 53/ Point Reyes Station, California

March 6, 2008

CALENDAR > West Marin galleries deluged with exhibits of jellyfish, ponds, vintage pistols and plein air paintings. /20



ARTS > Japanese-style wood block prints by Inverness artist Tom Killion sell as broadsides at Point Reyes Books. /12



Marin Supes bring word from Washington

Stegner's American West

Review by Mark Dowie

In the interest of full disclosure, Philip Fradkin is not only a friend, he dated my sister. So I suppose he should also be regarded as 'almost family.' When I told the *Light's* Managing Editor Tess Elliot this, she assigned a review of *Wallace Stegner and The American West* anyway. "It's simply impossible to find anyone in West Marin who doesn't know Phil Fradkin," she said.

So I blanked out the byline, wrapped myself in the cloak of objectivity and began reading the biography of a man I had almost forgotten, a writer whose work I hadn't read for 20 years or more. I soon forgot the author's identity and indulged myself in the triumph and turmoil of another writer's life.

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Golf tees bound with wire are on display at an art exhibit at Toby's Gallery in Point Reyes Station. Photo by Jacoba Charles.

by Justin Nobel

Marin County Supervisors Steve Kinsey and Charles McGlashan journeyed to Washington D.C. last week to bring the issues of West Marin before local Congress members, who began their yearly process of setting the budget in March. High on the supervisor's list of priorities were climate change, sustainable agriculture on parklands, and the Bolinas Lagoon Restoration project.

"The county has for many years recognized that in order to get attention in Washington we have to spend some time in their town," said Kinsey.

The supervisors spent three days meeting with Senator Dianne Feinstein, the staff of Senator Barbara Boxer and Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey, as well as Marin County's lobbyist. The supervisors also met with staff from the senate's Environment and Public Works Committee and the House of Representative's Resource and Infrastructure Committee, groups that control funding for many

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Bo guitarist remembered

by Justin Nobel

Buddy Craig, a Bolinas musician known locally as a "guitar phenomenon" who strummed his first strings at age eight and played country lullabies and bluegrass beats at Smiley's for years, passed away last week. He was 50. Buddy was troubled by drugs and alcohol throughout his life, which he ended himself in his Bolinas apartment.

"There is nothing that guy couldn't play. If it had strings on it, he could make it sound like it was supposed to sound," said friend Max Brimhall.

"He was afflicted by a lot of the things musicians fall prey to," said Max. "He was up, and he was down. When he was down he could turn on you in an instant and be incredibly sarcastic. When he was up, he was just as beautiful and admirable a human as you would ever want to meet."

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Pontacq on conserving the Giacomini wetlands

COLUMNIST /9

Learn the lingo of the Bolinas street scene

ASK MISSY /15

Let me introduce you to the *Point Reyes Light*

Art born out of artifacts

by Jacoba Charles

Our American West is one great rambling collage; a ragweed tumble of people and places, myth and technology, hope and nostalgia.

In Toby's Feed Barn, an art installation stitches together the disparate and conflicting parts of our history, juxtaposing artifacts from 150 years of pioneering, conquering and conservation.

"The installation is a sampler and an American tale of the West," wrote the artists, Madeline Nieto Hope and Heather Peters Pratt, in their description of the project. "Reaching back in time, we keep in mind historical edges surrounding our

people's progress westward."

Ten-foot-tall drawings of common weeds sprawl gracefully along the western wall, while a long table draped in painted leather hugs the room's eastern edge. A giant, brilliantly colored compass on the floor points north.

If you look closer, innumerable details emerge: a tapestry densely spangled with buttons, an aged pincushion studded with mismatched pins. Small shelves on the walls display found-object sculptures: wooden golf tees and rubber washers and an antique pistol.

A letterpressed banner with the text of

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>> Artifacts

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Wallace Stegner's 1960 Wilderness Letter wraps twice around every wall, a thread stitching the installation into a whole.

The show, titled "Tomorrow is forever," is one of several art exhibits running concurrently with the "Geography of Hope: Celebrating Wallace Stegner" conference taking place this weekend in Point Reyes Station.

"My work definitely is in the same period of interest as Stegner's," said Hope. "I use materials and he uses language, but I think that we both are studying the history, the culture, the changes and advances that show up socially during the 1900s."

The combination of artifacts, original art and multimedia creates an effect much like a scrapbook. A narrow wall of framed photographs, drawings, and found materials stands in the northern corner of the gallery. There are mountains, matchbooks, portraits, Joshua trees, bobcat fur, mining camps, and old lace. Behind the wall is a television, playing the documentary "Wallace Stegner: a writers life" by Stephen Fisher.

Viewers can watch the film from a smooth wooden bench, made by Rufus Blunk, sheltered behind the dark wall of



A vintage pistol is among the artifacts from the American frontier on display at Toby's Gallery. Photo by Jacoba Charles.

the framed objects. On this hidden surface, the complex molecular formulas of pesticides have been chalked.

Weeds, and weediness, is a theme that

runs through the installation. "The edgy quality of weeds is something that I really feel is a mirror to what people are like in the West: taking ownership over the land

and not being mindful," Hope said. She also feels that the materials she makes individual pieces from – a banner of old leather gloves sewn together, a framed

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fan of antique match books – are, in themselves, also weedy.

“I’m drawn to more peripheral, discarded things that most people aren’t interested in,” she said. “Deeper reasons for me choosing scrappy materials are part of my personal story. I feel more akin to them; they’re more like my people.”

Hope said that her use of historic, reclaimed objects is also an integral aspect to her work. By bringing those scrappy objects forward from the past – chips of mica from toaster ovens, a bundling board – she is able to remind viewers of where they came from.

“History tells us something about ourselves that maybe we would lose sight of,” Hope said. “Everything has a story about where it came from and how it came to me. By creating an artifact from something it can continue to live on, and continue to be relevant and meaningful.”

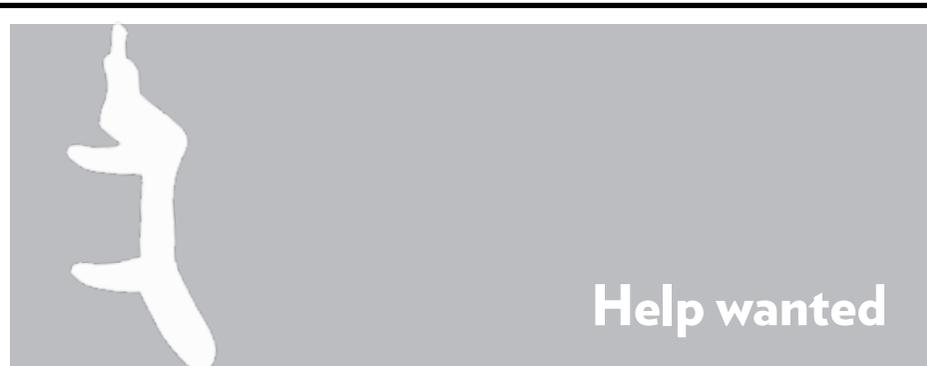
Walking through the installation is much like walking through a grandmoth-

er’s attic, or browsing the pages of a photo album with crumbling pages and assorted mementos: a pressed corsage, a bus ticket. The viewer can only brush the surface of the stories each symbol represents.

Still, there is a certain emotional coherency present in this assemblage of objects.

Any reflection on the last century in America brings a sweeping sense of nostalgia, as well as accomplishment. This feeling positively drenches Stegner’s book *Angle of Repose*, and a similar feeling is woven through the fabric of the “Tomorrow is forever” installation. So much has changed, and so quickly. The tangible artifacts that were integral to day-to-day life only a century ago are now relics, obsolete.

These are the things that our ancestors have held close to their lives and their hearts. Art, perhaps, can salvage them – along with a fading flavor of who we once were.



Advertising Representative

The Point Reyes Light is looking for a motivated, energetic individual to join our sales team and develop new business in southern Sonoma and East Marin. Must be organized and able to work within deadlines. Experience with computers is required. Must have reliable transportation as the position involves travel throughout the area. We offer a competitive commission plan and gas reimbursement. Send your resume to renee@ptreyeslight.com

Ask Missy



I was driving down the sidewalk the other day when an old friend stopped me and said “Gee, I like your column—it’s the only thing I read in the Point Reyes Light”—to which I replied “Why?” You’ve missed some really good new articles (with solid backgrounds) about important local issues. Or are you still holding it against us because Robert got off to a bumpy start? It has really amazed me that West Marin—especially Point Reyes-ites who are normally Tolerant, have been so Intolerant—and Often Nasty—to the Paper that has served them for 60 some years.

So, I decided to introduce you to six of the nicest, most talented people I know—The Staff that is here every day, who put together what I consider to be not only a Good Paper—but an Honest One. (Hard to find honesty anywhere these days). So here goes:

Tess Elliott—Our Editor, lives in Bolinas, raised in Eugene, Oregon, attended Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado—a beautiful (both inside and what you see) young woman—Sensitive, Caring, Fair, Honest (again) and a real worker. She listens—Really Listens—to people. She’s the Captain of this Ship and we’re all her appreciative workers.

Renee Shannon—Renee’s been the Advertising Manager for 20 plus years. Anyone who has ever put an ad in knows what a Tremendously Helpful, Talented, Gracious Person she is—Never losing her Temper, and I can tell you that there’s been good reason to over the years—No, Renee is the Lady of the Point Reyes Light, who is also Fair, Honest—well, there isn’t another like her in our part of the world.

And our two Reporters—Jacoba Charles lives in San Anselmo—went to grammar school at Ft. Ross and High School at Marin Academy before attending the University of Washington. Another beautiful young wom-

an—a good, thoughtful writer, who is really interested in people and the Environment and loves West Marin—the lovely girl all Grandmothers want their Grandsons to marry. And Justin Nobel who lives in San Geronimo, born in NY City, raised in the suburbs and went to Duke University. Aside from having a brilliant smile, wonderful manners, he’s one of the most dedicated and hard-working young men I’ve ever met—Also a Darn Good Writer—you can’t miss his byline—it’s all over the paper. He also is an Environmentalist. These two together with John Hulls (everyone knows him) our very dedicated Scientific Columnist with real contacts to True Science (as against the political type scientists that Neubacher leads around by the nose) have put together News articles that have gotten the attention of truly qualified Scientists.

Thomas Yeatts—born in Winston – Salem, N.C., graduating from the University of Virginia. Thomas is a wonderful Southern Gentleman who came to us as a Writer (and incidentally worked and wrote many of the PRNS vs. Lunny stories) but when the situation demanded it, he has become our very competent Graphic Designer—sending the paper to the Printer—earlier than anyone else ever has—Truly appreciated by his co-workers, who may get more sleep early Thursday mornings, and by the Printers who print the paper in Sonoma.

Last but not least—Carrie Stogner, raised in Tacoma, WA and lives and works (except on Tuesdays & Wednesdays) on the family Certified Organic Farm in Tomales, worked 6 years in the Newspaper Industry, is a cracker-jack Typesetter, and has had a good life of learning. Carrie has a wonderful sense of humor, follows directions, has a beautiful disposition and smile, and Files—Files—Files—and meets Deadlines Every Week. She’s only been with us for about a month or so—and we pray that continues for years.

So there you are—I’m the seventh work-day person—and you know me—so I don’t have to go into details about my Outspokenness. It’s an Amazing group—and they do an Amazing Job—so all of you out there who are mad because we don’t have a Lighthouse on the Masthead—Get over it! I guess in my outspokenness I can say—Grow Up!

Incidentally, FYI, no one told me to write this—It came about because of all of you who only read MY column.

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