



Should Inverness Be Firewise?

by Jerry Meral and Kathy Hartzell

With the passage of Measure C by Marin County voters in March, new funds will become available to the Inverness area for wildfire prevention and structure protection. The Inverness Association is considering establishing a “Firewise Inverness” program to take advantage of the availability of these funds and to protect our community from the worst effects of a wildfire.

Since the devastating Vision Fire in 1995 and more recent fires throughout our state, we are all aware that we in Inverness live with a high risk of wildfire. State and county fire agencies have designated Inverness as greatly at risk for a highly destructive wildfire. Many parts of Inverness have not burned since the 1940’s, and fuel buildup is massive. Recent clearing along PGE’s lines will do very little to prevent the spread of a highly destructive wildfire. PGE’s goal in clearing is not to stop all wildfires, but to make sure that their power lines are not the cause of any fires.



The situation in Inverness is not very different than that which existed in Paradise, CA before the Camp Fire. There is only one way into and out of Inverness (Sir Francis Drake Boulevard) and it is lined with explosive acacia and eucalyptus trees. Tomales Bay State Park is a virtual brushpile, which a spark could ignite. In recent

years there have been no fewer than five outdoor fires in and near the Seahaven area. Fortunately, none of them occurred on windy days. A strong northeast wind could quickly spread a fire in the Seahaven area through Inverness and all the way to Stinson Beach.

Measure C will provide funding for a wide variety of fire avoidance projects. Communities with a Firewise USA program in place will be first in line for this County funding.

What Is Firewise?

The Firewise USA Program encourages local solutions for safety by helping homeowners take individual responsibility for preparing their homes for the risk of wildfire. The program provides resources to help homeowners work together to reduce their wildfire risk and prevent losses. All insurance carriers consider Firewise USA status when renewing policies. Recent evidence also suggests that residents of Firewise USA neighborhoods are less likely than others to see “non renewal” letters from their insurers. Homes in recognized Firewise communities in California may be eligible for an insurance discount from some carriers, including the California FAIR plan and USAA.

A Firewise USA program does not bring a new level of regulation for property owners. The program is entirely voluntary and led by the community itself, not government. A Firewise community develops its own action plan to guide residential risk reduction activities by engaging and encouraging neighbors to become active participants in building a safer place to live. The Firewise USA program (in coordination with the Marin County Program, FIRESafe MARIN) will provide necessary educational materials, training, expertise and assistance to participating neighborhoods and communities. Once a community is registered, grants are available from a variety of local, state and federal agencies.

A Firewise USA Action Plan may include the following elements:

Evacuation Routes

Clearance along roads critical for evacuation. This also improves access for fire fighting vehicles.

Vegetation Management

Thinning and removal of highly flammable vegetation on public property and along roads near structures, by traditional and innovative approaches, such as grazing by goats.

Homeowner Education

Working with homeowners to educate them about what they can do to improve their property by making it more fire resistant. This applies both to vegetation management and to the house and other structures.

Chipper Days

This program could be expanded from once a year to two or three times a year. Costs to homeowners could be reduced.

Fire Detection

Cameras for early detection of wildfires while they can still be controlled.

Controlled Burns

No one likes smoke in their neighborhood, but controlled burns can reduce fuel loads, and make wildfires much more controllable. This would avoid health-threatening major fires in the future.

Marin County is a leader of the Firewise USA program, and, at present, the fastest-growing County in the program. To date, 63 Marin County neighborhoods and communities have joined the Firewise USA program, and another 24 are preparing to do so. But so far, the only Firewise USA neighborhood in coastal West Marin is the Drake's View Drive/ Paradise Ranch Estates part of Inverness.

The Inverness Association proposes establishing a Firewise Inverness program for Inverness from Dream Farm Road north to Shallow Beach. We would work closely with the Inverness Public Utilities District, the County Fire Department, and FIRESafe Marin in this effort. The Board of Directors seeks the opinion of our members and other Inverness residents. Please contact (president@invernessassociation.org) and let us know what you think.

The six-step process to becoming a Firewise Community:

- Form a Firewise board or committee
- Conduct a wildfire risk assessment for the area
- Create an Action Plan
- Conduct educational outreach
- Invest \$25 per home in local wildfire risk-reduction actions
- Submit an application online

For more information on Firewise USA, go to <https://www.firesafemarin.org/firewise>



Image above courtesy of richardblair.com

Fire Hazards in Tomales Bay S.P.

Inverness Association Board Member Tom Gaman has produced a report on fire hazards and ecological problems in Tomales Bay State Park, which is available at www.invernessassociation.org/disaster-preparedness. Fuel buildup in the Park is alarming, and is putting Inverness at risk, as well as reducing habitat for many native plants and animals. The Association is encouraging State Parks to take action to reduce the fire risk and restore the ecology of the Park.

The “NEW” Kenneth Path

by Francine Allen

Perhaps you have walked the old Kenneth Path and can recall its challenges. First, you needed confidence and clear knowledge that you were on a public easement and not traipsing through someone’s private property. Kenneth Path is particularly hidden. At the home located on the corner of Perth and Douglas Streets, you must veer past the lovely gate and stone pillars, and sometimes walk right along a parked car as you stroll between the fence and a line of three fruit trees. Then you turn left to walk along a garage’s north wall and head towards Kenneth.

The old Kenneth Path traced the route of an IPUD metal water pipe that spanned mid-air in places, the path itself having eroded down the steep bank and fallen away completely. Under trees and brush, muddy and slippery, the path seemed better suited for rabbits than humans. But no longer.



Image courtesy of Tom McCoy

Tom McCoy and Earlene Hass, who own the very last house on Kenneth Way, recently bought the lot below it and created a beautiful steep park that looks over and onto the bay, giving wonderful views from their home’s northeasterly windows. Kenneth Path runs between the house and the upper edge of this newly planted landscape.

Kenneth Path is now easy to walk on—reliably firm, even, and covered with wood chips. The property owners have even provided a handrail along its steepest section. Approaching Kenneth Way, one glances right at the newly created viewshed across



Image courtesy of Tom McCoy

the bay. And at the very end, or the beginning if you arrive from Kenneth Way, is a small, very proper sign: Kenneth Path.

The renovation of Kenneth Path creates a beautiful passage for all of us who enjoy walking through Inverness. We thank Tom and Earlene for this gift to the neighborhood!

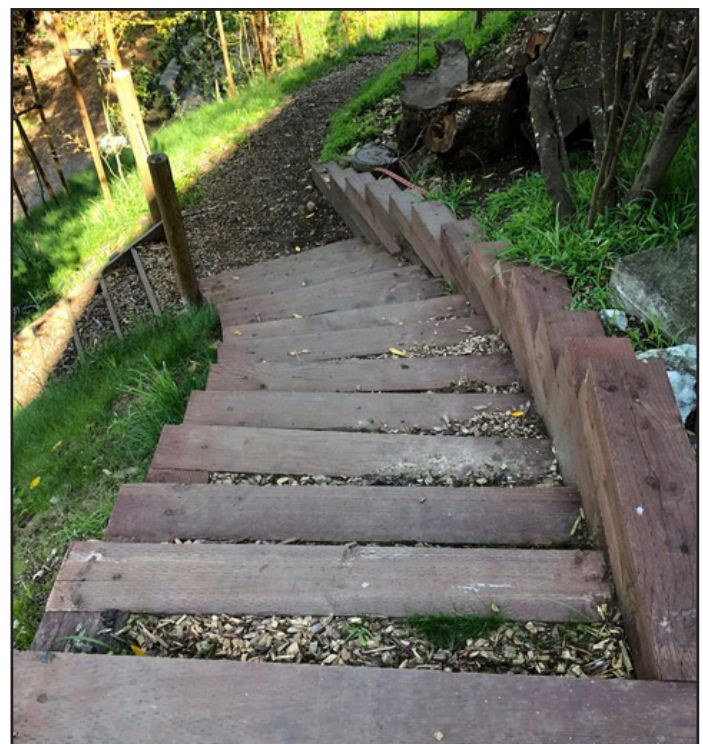


Image courtesy of Tom McCoy

Annual Report FISCAL Year 2018-19

The Inverness Foundation ended the fiscal year on June 30, 2019, with substantial expense over income, the direct opposite of last year's outcome. This was largely due to major capital improvement projects, including the new roof, safety treads on the Aberdeen stairs, and the bridge renewal work. We are in the enviable position of being able to tackle such projects thanks to gifts received over the past years and careful husbanding of our resources. When we receive a major gift, we set it aside for major maintenance or replacement needs, like the roof.

Most other income and expenses during the year were on a par with the same categories in past years and we were able to give a few grants for local community projects including Shakespeare and Water Dogs.

Please note that the Jack Mason Museum income and expenses are not included in this report. While we include them in our tax returns, their assets and income are independent of those of the IF. The JMM would be happy to provide their report to you upon request, and also to receive donations, which are tax-deductible.

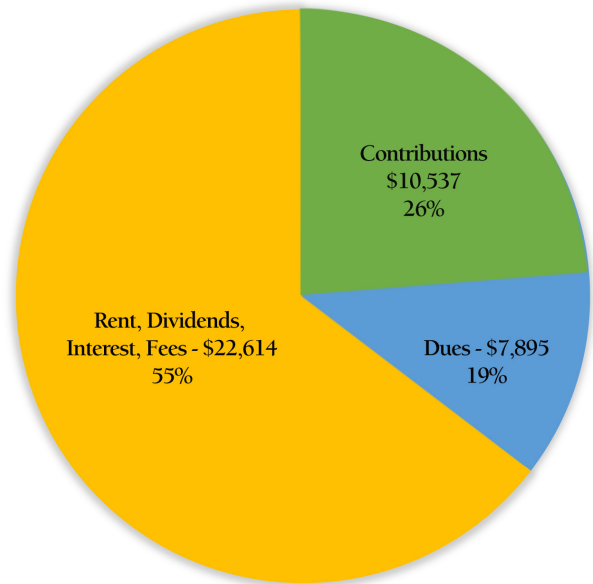
The IF maintains savings and checking accounts at Wells Fargo. Reserve funds are with Vanguard. The Moseley Fund for IYC Youth Scholarships is in a separate Vanguard fund. The Board keeps our reserves for essential maintenance and unexpected expenses that cannot be met with annual income and gifts. One such unanticipated expense occurred in the current fiscal year when our fire insurance was cancelled without notice and the only insurance we could find cost considerably more. More on that in my letter to members, elsewhere in this issue.

K. Hartzell, President

INCOME

Contributions, Restricted - \$6,037
 Contributions, Unrestricted - \$4,500
 Dues - \$7,895
 Rent, Dividends, Interest, Fees - \$22,614

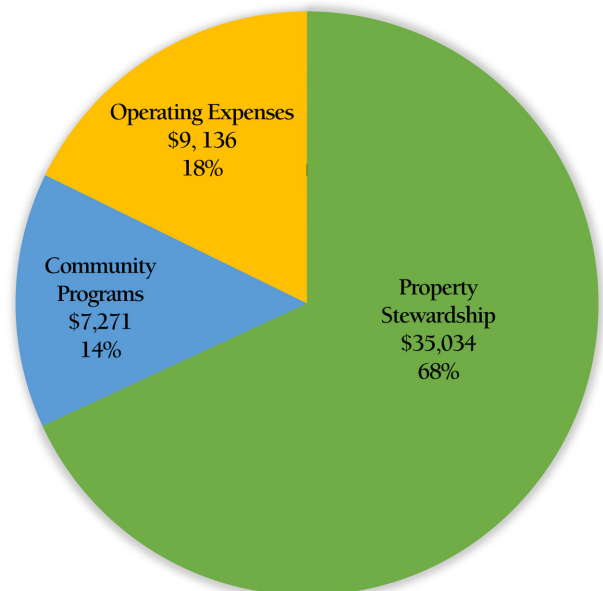
TOTAL INCOME - \$41,046



EXPENSES

Property Stewardship - \$35,034
 Community Programs - \$7,271
 Operating Expenses - \$9,136

TOTAL EXPENSES - \$51,441



Plant Park: An Enchanting Refuge in Downtown Inverness

by Leslie Pederson

Just at the entrance to Inverness, tucked away on an irregularly shaped lot beside a major roadway, near a post office, two restaurants and several small offices, is Inverness's own pocket park, Plant Park. It was not a bureaucratic action that created this park, but the generosity of Nora and David Plant, who in 1981 gave the land to the Inverness Foundation for the enjoyment of the community. Like the delightful pocket parks one unexpectedly stumbles upon in crowded cities, our Plant Park serves the local community as well as any passersby looking for a place of calm and beauty.

When I first encountered Plant Park after eating at Saltwater. I felt I had discovered a hidden treasure. I knew I would return often. As a garden club member, my first undertaking and main interest in the area was to work in the park. After a season of training under Barbara Meral and Linda Linder, my husband, Marvin, and I took over the planting, weeding, watering, and mowing on a regular basis for several years. I loved going there on summer evenings and would often see other visitors discover the park with the same sense of awe I had on my first visit.

Seasonal changes are dramatic in this park. In the fall, when the crowds disappear, it is time to cut back the year's growth, put away the hose, move the picnic

tables, and get ready for a long cold hibernation. Because of the high hills behind it, the park doesn't see a sunny day all winter and because it sits so low in the valley it gets very hard frosts, causing a suspension of activity, both animal and vegetable. Come spring, though, the animals return, the sun returns, and so do the gardeners.

This year those normal changes were intensified as we cleared brush and removed overgrown or sick trees. With support from the Inverness Foundation, we hired Alfonso Ramirez to open the pocket and turn it inside out to see the light of day. With the overgrowth on the edges of the park cut back and overhanging and unsafe trees removed, the meadow has become a prominent feature of the park. My husband and I have had to cut back on our care of the park, but others have stepped in to mow and weed. On a recent visit, I was amazed at the beauty of the steps that lead into the park. Someone had carefully tended to their weeding, which showed them off to their best advantage. My old rock garden plants had naturally thinned out, but had overwintered beautifully, with the most hardy among them surviving and indeed thriving.

I am really proud of my work in Plant Park. I am even more delighted when I have someone tell me that they, too, used to take care of it. It is a neighborhood tradition that care of this park is handed off to new people on a regular basis. May it always be so.



Image: Carlos Porrata

Who is your South Inverness Neighborhood Liaison?

by Lynn Axelrod

The Spring 2019 Bagpiper contained a map of the Inverness neighborhoods covered by the Inverness Disaster Council. This map shows the southern end of Inverness, which is in the jurisdiction of the Point Reyes Disaster Council (PRDC), a community organization formed in response to the 1982 floods. The PRDC is organized under and takes direction from the Marin County Fire Department. The Disaster Council's volunteers promote disaster preparedness through communication and education so that community members are trained and organized to assist the local First Responders.

The south Inverness area is divided into neighborhoods, each of which has a Neighborhood Liaison. During an emergency, Neighborhood Liaisons are the immediate "eyes and ears" to alert First Responders to changing conditions (e.g., neighbor or house in trouble, downed trees, power lines, flooding, etc.). They convey essential information via a two-way radio network within our neighborhoods to help the professionals prioritize their response. Check to see who your Neighborhood Liaison is. Volunteers also make up the Specialist Disaster Teams for other specific tasks such as Shelter Management, Medical Response, and Animal Rescue.

We encourage residents to volunteer for this important community job. You'll receive training and practice. No special expertise is required. For more information or to volunteer, contact PRDC Coordinator, Lynn Axelrod, at lynnaxelrod@hotmail.com



Image courtesy richardblair.com

To reach your Area Coordinator, Neighborhood Liaison, or to Volunteer, email Lynn Axelrod, Coordinator, Point Reyes Disaster Council: lynnaxelrod@hotmail.com
pointreyesdisastercouncil.org

407—Inverness Park North / Coordinator: Molly Boyes

407-1 Redwood, Sherwood, SFD - Nancy Hemmingway

407-2 North Dream Farm - Marshall Livingston

407-3 SFD 12411-12495 - Rich Schiller

406—Inverness Park Middle/ Coordinator: Steve Bowers; Alternate: Lew Rosenberg

406-1 Lower Laurel (through 61) - Sandy Backer, Lorraine Fisher Smith

406-2 Upper Laurel - Burton Eubank

406-3 Kyleswood, SFD 12411-12485 - Ted Pelton

406-4 Lower Drakes View (thru 100) & SFD 12495-12575 - Rebecca Braun

406-5 E. Robert (lower) - Christian Winslow

406-5 Baywood - Chris Harington

406-6 Douglas Drive - Chris Eckert

406-7 Drakes View (100 to 328 & Carlton) - Vacant

406-8 W. Robert (upper) - Christian Winslow

406-9 Sunnyside Dr. - Kate Carolan

406-10 Drakes View (330 to 355, Pinecrest & Sunshine Ct.) - Nina Howard

406-11 Dover Road - Michael Ongerth, Tom & Tamia Anderson

406-12 Drakes View (above 355, Buck Pt & Elizabeth Place) - Lew Rosenberg

404 & 405—Inverness Park South Coordinator: Susan Deixler; Alternate: Lyons Filmer

404-01: Fox & Noren - Marvin Pederson, Madeline Hope

404-02: Silver Hills - Don Lloyd

404 & 403: Bear Valley Rd to Fox & bottom of Silver Hills - Trinkia Marris

405-01: Blackberry - Don Jolley

405-02: Balboa/ Buena Vista - Garen Fechter

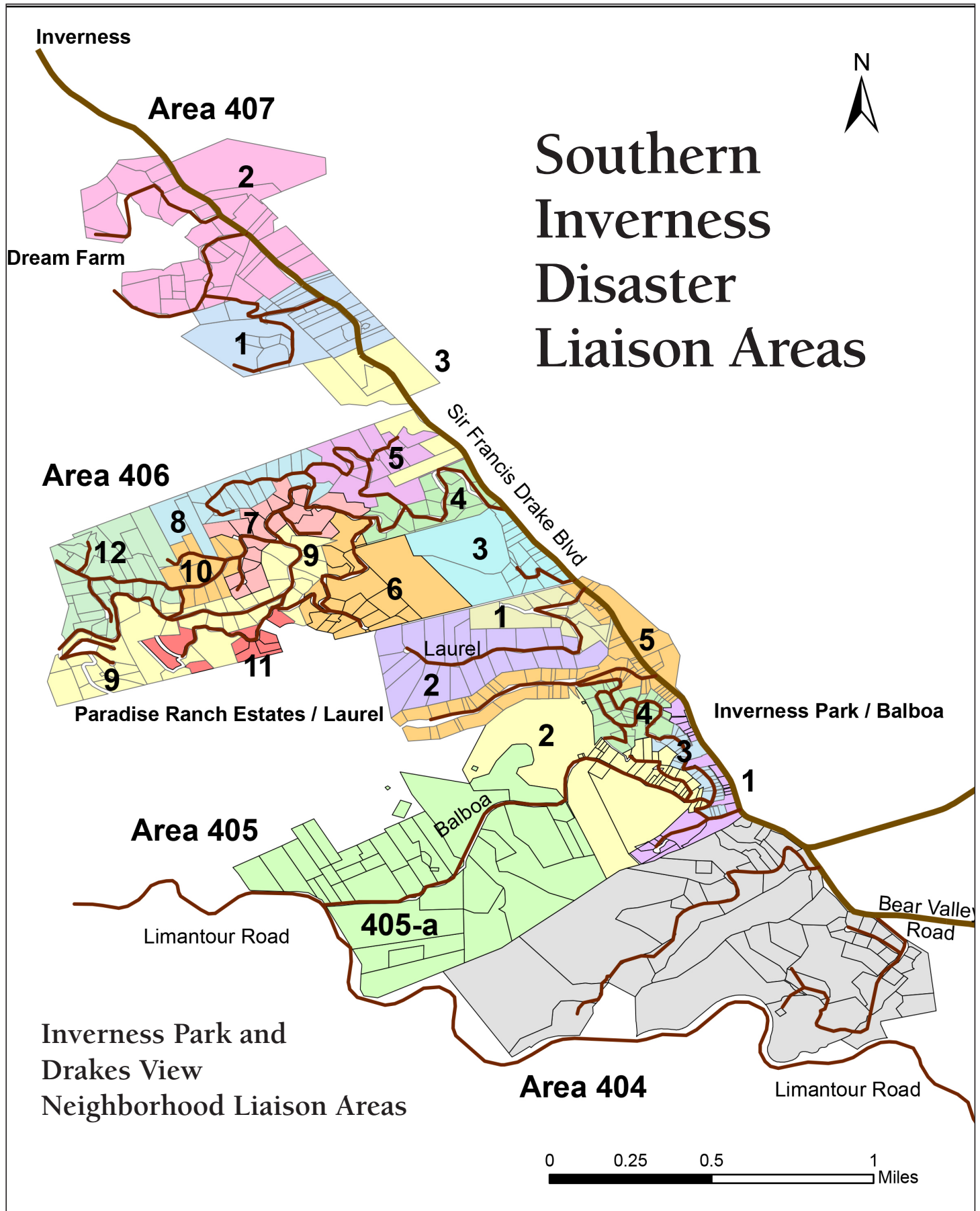
405-03 & 04: Portola - Mary Jo & Tom Maendle

405-04: Carmencita/ Buena Vista - Gail Fechter, Ann Griffin

405-05: Vallejo - Amy Whelan, Ashley Eva Brock

405-01 & 05: Sir Francis Drake - Caroline Rodoni

405a-01: Drakes Summit - Kathy Maxwell, Robert Fair, Art Tyson



Point Reyes Disaster Council of Southern Inverness Map created by Tom Gaman.

Your Membership for 2020-2021

With everything so topsy-turvy, it feels strange to be asking you to renew your membership in the Inverness Foundation & Association. But in these extraordinary times, we have had the importance of community brought home to us. We hope that life will be getting back to normal soon, and part of that is sustaining our local community. That is the Inverness Foundation's mission, which we carry out through maintenance of The Gables, home to the library and the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History, our local parks, including Plant Park, Dana Point, Martinelli Park (which is also a helipad for medical emergencies), and our wonderful Inverness paths. The Foundation also makes traditional Inverness summers possible for many children as fiscal agents for the children's sailing and tennis programs of the Inverness Yacht Club and the Inverness Tennis Club and with our support of the Tomales Bay Water Dogs.

The Inverness Association provides a forum for local issues, works with the county to review new developments, cooperates with other local agencies to maintain the health of the Tomales Bay Watershed. We also put on the annual Inverness Fair which, though it had to be cancelled this year, is another important expression of community spirit.

Our membership year is July 1 to June 30, so the time to renew is now. Because our bank is closed, we hope you will renew on our website through PayPal. Otherwise, please send a check to the Inverness Foundation (\$30 individuals; \$45 families).

The Inverness Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization, so your donation is tax-deductible to the full extent permitted by law. Your membership in the Inverness Foundation includes membership in the Inverness Association.

Thank you for continuing to support the Inverness Association and Foundation.

Catherine Caufield, Membership Secretary
membership@invernessassociation.org

Updates from the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History

by Andrew Buckingham

- The Museum's most recent exhibit, curated by Meg Linden, was a photographic illustration of the history of Bear Valley Ranch, before it became part of the National Seashore. Bear Valley Ranch was a vast property that included the landmark W Ranch—now the Point Reyes National Seashore headquarters and visitor center area—and three other remote ranches—U (now Coast Camp), Y, and Z (now Sky Camp). Sadly, the exhibit had to close early due to the COVID-19 restrictions, but the exhibit is featured in the current issue of Under the Gables, the history-filled 16-page quarterly newsletter sent to all museum members.

- The museum is to lend its fine painting by Jack Wisby, "An April Morning," to the Bolinas Museum for its retrospective exhibit of the prominent California artist's work. The 1920s piece depicts the view of the marshes and hills from near Chicken Ranch Beach. When not on loan, this valuable painting is securely preserved in the state-of-the-art archives at National Seashore headquarters. It was donated to the museum by John and Margaret Fall in 1996.

- Dewey Livingston continues to work on his book about the history of Point Reyes and Tomales Bay, to be published by the JMM. Due to the wealth of information and documentation Dewey has found, it is now likely that the book will consist of two volumes. Nonetheless, Dewey assures his many supporters that the book will be published by the end of the year, assuming the health crisis has passed by then.

- Many years ago the museum purchased the copyright for Jack Mason's books and his quarterly periodical Point Reyes Historian, with the goal of republishing everything in both physical and electronic formats. This project has taken a back seat to helping Dewey complete and publish his comprehensive history of the Point Reyes area. However, if we could get a volunteer or two interested in the republishing effort we will be able to move forward with that worthy project as well. Email info@jackmasonmuseum.org for more information.

The Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History is a committee of the Inverness Foundation and accepts tax-deductible donations at jackmasonmuseum.org.

WOW, What a Cake!

by Alex Porrata

The Cake Raffle is a highlight of the Inverness Fair, bringing out the community's best bakers, and most devoted cake lovers. Last year's entrants were fabulous, to look at and to eat.

Here's a recipe for Devil's Food Cake with Salted Caramel icing, adapted from Claire Ptak's Violet Bakery Cookbook and beautifully presented by her proud mother, Elisabeth Ptak.



[Click here for full recipe.](#)

Salted Caramel Sauce (used in cake icing)

At Violet Bakery, we use this sauce in our Salted Caramel Icing (see link in spoon), but it's also delicious drizzled over ice cream or warmed and poured over chocolate cake. *Mise en place* is really important here so that you are set to go as soon as the caramel is ready. Makes about 500g (2 cups)

Sauce Ingredients:

150g (2/3 cup) heavy cream
1/2 vanilla pod
4 tablespoons water
250g (1 1/4 cups) sugar
2 tablespoons golden syrup
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon fleur de sel
65g (4 1/2 tablespoons) unsalted butter, cut into small pieces

Measure the cream into a large, heavy-bottomed pan. Split the vanilla pod and scrape out the seeds. Add the pod and seeds to the cream.

Put the water, sugar, and golden syrup into another large, heavy-bottomed pan. Have the other ingredients measured out and ready to go.

Begin by heating the cream and vanilla. Keep an eye on it as it can bubble over quite easily. Meanwhile, start heating the water, sugar, and golden syrup—don't stir it, but you can swirl the pan if necessary—all the while keeping an eye on the vanilla cream. As soon as the cream starts to bubble rapidly, turn the heat off.

Once the sugar mixture starts to color, give it a few swirls. You want the sugar to turn golden brown and then almost black. When you see a wisp of smoke starting to rise out of the pan, you know it's done. Take the sugar off the heat and immediately whisk in the vanilla cream.

Don't worry about the vanilla pod at this point as it will continue to infuse flavor. Stir in the lemon juice, salt, and butter, mixing until smooth. Allow the caramel to cool completely, then remove the vanilla pod, transfer the caramel to a plastic tub (with a tight-fitting lid), and put in the fridge to chill. Once the caramel is chilled, it can be used in the Salted Caramel Icing. Caramel keeps well for up to 2 weeks in the fridge and 3 months in the freezer.

Below: Ideal lockdown food! This tempting display of fabulous desserts is always center stage at the annual Inverness Fair. These are from 2019.

Both cake images by Elisabeth Ptak



Dear Inverness,

Some good news – and a disquieting development. Read on.

One of the things that all-volunteer organizations must do is adapt to the skills and available time of those on deck. Yes, we're not producing as many Bagpipers as we once did, but we're not neglecting the ever-important work that the community expects us to do in maintaining trails, nature preserves, stairways, Plant Park and your safety in visiting our properties and of course the Gables. And we are expanding our efforts to protect Inverness from the ever-present threat of wildfires.

Here are some things that we've accomplished this past year. We fully replaced the lighting in the library spaces, thus generating less heat from the lamps and saving energy. We repaired the insect damage in both the Annex of the Jack Mason Museum and the Gables and installed a durable door at the foot of the attic stairs to improve access to the attic with bags or boxes.

We had Burton install sturdy steel plates on the treads of the Aberdeen stairs, to reduce slip hazard. We installed signage asking people to take note that they use the stairs at their own risk (per our insurance company) but at last report, those signs have been taken. I'm not sure how to deal with hostility toward informational signage!

We were surprised to receive notice that our property insurance was being cancelled by the company that had written it for years, especially since we've made no claims. Of course, we're not alone in this situation, but the consequences were costly.

Our broker requested proposals from 24 other companies and only two responded. One was for a policy so full of exclusions it wasn't worth the paper it was written on! The other was largely the same as previous policies, with the exception of an astronomical increase. And with the increase in property insurance, the cost of the

no-longer packaged liability insurance increased as well. The increase alone is more than the IF takes in membership dues annually. Such a cost is not sustainable for the operating budget of a small non-profit like ours, so we are searching for another carrier with the help of two brokers.

In order to pay the bill we were forced to use funds we had set aside for capital costs, such as the new roof, heating ducts, etc. that we have to do from time to time. I announced this situation at the Annual Meeting in July, and we are grateful to those of you who sent in additional contributions to help with this problem.

We are becoming more involved in fire prevention. We co-sponsored a great program that, but for COVID-19, would have occurred on March 14th to introduce the community to Fire-Smart landscaping. And in this Bagpiper, we are proposing that Inverness become a FireWise Community. Please let us know what you think of this idea.

Again, thank you for your continuing membership and your gifts. We pride ourselves on taking care of very special assets here in Inverness that serve the community. And your help, whether it's clearing branches off a path or donating funds to the IF, is always welcome and appreciated.

I remain happy to hear from you all. You can email me at president@invernessassociation.org

Respectfully,

Kathy Hartzell, President



Important Announcements About Future Events

Annual Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, our usual late July gathering will not take place. We are considering and will employ email, our website and the post office notice board to inform members when we know more.

Election of the Board

Andrew Buckingham, Catherine Caufield, Bob Johnston, John Longstreth, Seana Quinn and Alex Porrata will continue to serve their three-year terms. Francine Allen has reached her term limit. Tom Gaman and Kathy Hartzell are both standing for another three-year term. To comply with our bylaws, we will conduct an email vote in the near future.

Inverness Fair

We are very sorry to have to announce that the Inverness Fair, traditionally held the second week in August, will not take place this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and restrictions.



Image courtesy of carlosporrata.com

Inverness Foundation & Association

Post Office Box 382

Inverness, California 94937

www.invernessassociation.org

Board of Directors

board@invernessassociation.org

Kathy Hartzell

President

president@invernessassociation.org

Catherine Caufield

Vice President, Membership Secretary

membership@invernessassociation.org

John Longstreth Treasurer

Seana Quinn Secretary

Francine Allen

William Barrett

Andrew Buckingham JMM Liaison

Tom Gaman

Bob Johnston

Alex Porrata

KEEP IN TOUCH: You can keep in touch with us through our website. www.invernessassociation.org. You are also welcome to attend our monthly Board of Directors meetings at 7PM on the 4th Wednesday of most months at the Gables in downtown Inverness. At this time we are not certain when in-person meetings will resume, but we will inform you of opportunities for on-line meetings via the website and the Post Office display box.

The Bagpiper

INVERNESS ASSOCIATION

INVERNESS FOUNDATION