



WINTER 2016-17

The Bagpiper

INVERNESS ASSOCIATION



Dennis Rodoni addressed The Gables ceremony (see page 3)

Local Insight Inspires Dennis Rodoni Perspective

LOCAL GOVERNMENT GOT A LOT MORE LOCAL for Inverness and environs with the election of well-known building contractor Dennis Rodoni to the Board of Supervisors representing District 4. Rodoni, who attended Point Reyes and Inverness schools as a child and has lived in Olema with his family for 20 years, won definitively in West Marin, Corte Madera and San Rafael precincts. He captured nearly 65% of the votes in Inverness and 66.6% of the vote in Point Reyes Station.

Rodoni, 64, will be sworn in on January 3 replacing current supervisor Steve Kinsey of Forest Knolls, who served 20 years on the Board of Supervisors as well as six years as North Central Coast Representative to the Coastal Commission. He recently retired from a career that included teaching as well as construction, specializing in custom-home remodeling, and many years of local service. Since 1995, he has been the Director of North Marin Water District.

His local involvement includes leadership roles in the Point Reyes Village Association, the Point Reyes Seashore Association, the Coastal Health Alliance, the Senior Services Assisted Living Facility Committee, The Marin County Local Agency Formation Committee and the Tomales Bay Association. His attunement to nuances of the rural and recreational issues of West Marin has his constituents encouraged they will have both a familiar and informed advocate at the county level.

Asked about Inverness issues, Rodoni, in a conversation with *The Bagpiper*, acknowledged that the big picture and the small picture tend to converge around familiar themes: tourism, traffic, affordable housing, sea level rise and managing develop-

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Inverness Precinct Votes Emphatically Democratic

INVERNESS IS FEELING BLUE in more ways than one. In an election where California underlined its defiantly Democratic stance, Precinct 412259 was unequivocal. At the end of a month of ballot-counting, the final results for the Inverness precinct showed a high turnout and a very lopsided vote for Democrats. Inverness voters gave Hillary Clinton a decisive 86.56% of the total presidential vote with Republican Donald Trump receiving only 4.74%, less than Green Party candidate Jill Stein who received 6.52%. The final numbers are:

- Registered voters: 566
- Cards cast: 514 (90.81%)
- Total presidential/vice-presidential votes cast: 506
- Hillary Clinton: 438
- Jill Stein: 33
- Donald Trump: 24
- Gary Johnson: 3
- Write-in votes: 8

Votes for US Senator, US House of Representatives and California State Assembly were equally one-sided. Kamala Harris received close to 85% of the vote for US Senator; Jared Huffman virtually swept the whole precinct with 94% of the total to continue his service as a member of the House of Representatives and Marc Levine was returned to the State Assembly with 70% of the vote. (Levine and Harris were in run-off elections against fellow Democrats.)

- The District 4 County Supervisor vote in Inverness was:
- Dennis Rodoni: 65% (317 votes)
- Dominic Grossi: 35% (170 votes)

Rodoni won the district with a total vote of 9938 to 9007 for Grossi.

As unified as the voters in Inverness were, the morning-after turned into a communal commiseration when the impact of the presidential race sank in. Several impromptu gatherings arose to help those grappling with the sobering consequences of the national election results. When the month unfolded and votes kept being counted, the irony of the popular vote being at odds with the Electoral College added to the general state of unease. It seems that in these times it's not easy being blue.

—Elizabeth Whitney

It didn't take long for post-election sentiments to show up on Sir Francis Drake Blvd. between Inverness Park and Inverness.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

AT THE JULY 2015 annual membership meeting we were given a wonderful presentation on the Northern spotted owl by Inverness resident David Press. Joyce Arndt, our Treasurer, and I presented a summary of the financials for the just-ended fiscal year with an overview of the budget for this year, and the committees delivered their reports on maintenance, trails, design review, and the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History. The Inverness Fair was a success in spirit, attendance and budget.

The Jack Mason Museum is fund-raising on behalf of the West Marin history book that Dewey Livingston is writing. The Board of Directors voted unanimously to donate \$2000 from the Inverness Foundation to his project and we encourage our members to contribute as well. [See story, page 3] The museum reports that it has installed new storage units in their archives space, providing safer storage for the variety of materials that make up their collection. The Board had an interesting visit to the archives of the Point Reyes National Seashore at the Bear Valley Headquarters to learn how the more fragile JMM belongings are stored and how the National Park Service does its own evaluation and storage of artifacts.

In ongoing Inverness business, we have plans to install a railing on the upper portion of the Aberdeen stairs in the very near future and we've done major clean up of all the other trails getting ready for winter storms.

I am happy to report that a project bringing together all the information on repairs and renovations of the Gables is well underway. I found a wealth of material in the attic and gleaned more from interviews with past board members and contractors. The next step is to sit down with our consulting architectural historian (supported by a grant from the West Marin Fund) and come up with a ten or longer-year plan for repairs, improvements, and upgrades.

The Board will also be updating the IF bylaws. Attorney Dakota Whitney of Martha Howard's law office is helping us merge the older bylaws and their various revisions to come up with a workable and relevant document.

We are not meeting in December, but if you want to bring up a topic for any meeting (7 p.m., fourth Wednesday of every month) we can add you to the agenda. You can reach me at: president@invernessassociation.org.

—Kathy Hartzell, President

Congressman Jared Huffman Speaks Out: Protecting the Environment Will Take a Fight

Second District Congressman Jared Huffman took the time to call in to *The Bagpiper* to share his thoughts on a subject that is close to the hearts of the residents of Inverness: the fate of our environment under the next administration. His response was as straightforward as it could be: "We need to get focused and fight."

He stated, "Trump is showing up to be the worst environmental president we've ever had," adding that, "He has nothing close to a mandate." Huffman characterized the list of Trump cabinet appointments as constituting "an environmental wrecking ball. It could not be worse."

"As much as I would like to be wrong," he continued, "the worst case scenarios are coming true. He has handed a big win to the oil and gas interests. It's an environmental destruction agenda across the board."

He described the atmosphere in Congress as akin to a "seismic shift," adding, "We have a new political reality. The ground has shifted in a huge way beneath our feet." His perspective is that a call to action is the response that this new reality demands, and California is more important than ever before.

"California is the new fortress that is holding the line. We will stand and fight," he stated. "We have to fight in the courts, at every level of government, in our communities and as citizens. The stakes have never been higher."

Rep. Huffman has initiated a podcast called "Off the Cuff" to continue conversations with his constituents. The first one is conversation with journalist David Press of Inverness on the myriad challenges that the Trump election presents to the Democratic minority in Congress. It's available via his website: huffman.house.gov.

—Elizabeth Whitney



Christian Anthony

The Inverness Association and the Inverness Foundation have the same Board of Directors and both meet monthly at the Gables with back-to-back agendas.

The Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and manages the properties it owns among its other responsibilities.

Inverness Association
Post Office Box 382
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Memberships
Family \$45
Individual \$30

The Bagpiper

INVERNESS ASSOCIATION
INVERNESS FOUNDATION

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In the Works: A Comprehensive History of Point Reyes and the Tomales Bay Area

by Dewey Livingston

THE TWO MOST GRATIFYING aspects of local history research is discovery of new information and then sharing it. Knowing your community's story brings us closer to our neighbors, the land around us, and our place in the world.

It has been 33 years now that I have been studying and writing about the history of the Point Reyes Peninsula, Olema Valley, Tomales Bay area and the towns therein. Now is the time in my life to write the definitive history of this remarkable and historic place. The Inverness Foundation's Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History has agreed to publish this important book.

With a working title, *Point Reyes: A History of the Land and Its People*, it will be the first comprehensive volume about the people and the land of the Point Reyes Peninsula and Tomales Bay shores, including the towns of Inverness, Point Reyes Station, Olema and Marshall. Approximately 300 pages, the book will utilize not only archival sources but also the voices of longtime local residents, many of whom have since passed, to tell the story from a personal view.

The narrative will reveal the evolution of the cultural landscape and environmental changes and document the activities that have saved this unique and complex area from the forces of suburbanization. A particular focus is the agricultural legacy of West Marin and its place in the nation's heritage. Written in a conversational style and richly illustrated with maps, photographs, and graphics, the book will make local history accessible to young and old, new and longtime residents, scholars and history buffs, and visitors to this well-loved place.

Research during the past year has revealed a great deal of new information about the creation of Inverness and life here in the 1920s through the 1960s. Tomales Bay is a focus, with lots of new history emerging about fishing and boating, the shoreline settlements, and all the activities in the hills that we all gaze upon from Shell and Chicken Ranch.



The "father of Inverness," Capt. Alexander H. Baily, an early land merchant, the first postmaster, and builder of The Gables, poses on his porch with his twin grandsons.



Dewey Livingston talks about the past 30 years of the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History at the December 4 anniversary event at The Gables. Alexander Baily built the house, and Jack Mason deeded it to the IF in 1985. The party was sponsored by the new Inverness Foundation committee, Friends of The Gables, as well as the Tomales Bay Library Association and the Jack Mason Museum. Friends of The Gables will act as a fundraising and special events group dedicated to preserving and maintaining the 124-year-old building that

houses the Inverness Library and museum display room, as well as the grounds and archives building, Baily's Cottage.

The project is being funded through a combination of major and mid-level donors, fundraising events and a Go Fund Me-type campaign. The book will reach shelves by fall of 2017.

By the end of 2016, after a year of seeking major donors, we expect that we will have raised about two-thirds of the target amount, thanks to a \$10,000 matching grant. The next step is a Go Fund Me-type effort beginning in March. Until then, contributions of any size are appreciated. If you would consider making a tax-deductible contribution to this great project, please contact the museum via their website jackmasonmuseum.org, or give me a call at 415-669-7706. I hope that the entire community will join the effort to get this lasting book onto your shelves.

Rich Environmental Information Informs Annual Tomales Bay Conference

To discover what's happening beneath the surface of our cherished natural environment, I attended Tomales Bay Watershed Council's annual State of Tomales Bay Conference. This year's events, on September 22-24, began with a richly informational field trip to Millerton Creek Ranch (the former Borello Ranch). The next day, at the Inverness Yacht Club, researchers, biologists, naturalists, representatives of state and federal agencies, an aquaculturist, a rancher, MMWD and "citizen scientists" presented the research and monitoring they are doing on the bay, its tributaries and surrounding watershed lands.

The information was clearly and engagingly presented so that a layperson could glean insight into the habits and needs of the plants, animals and water systems that comprise our natural environment.

The day's presentations, as well as the previous six State of the Bay Conferences (1988 - 2016) can be accessed on the Tomales Bay Watershed Council's excellent website: tomales-baywatershedcouncil.org.

—Francine Allen

Historic Chicken Ranch Beach Needs County Action Against Pollution



Photograph by Paul Korhummel

by Elizabeth Whitney

THE INVOLVEMENT of the Inverness Association in the health and welfare of Chicken Ranch Beach has a long, long history. In the 1950s the public—mostly consisting of locals and summer residents—had access to the nearby Tomales Bay beachfront properties through informal and friendly relations with the owners. Letters from the Inverness Improvement Association dated July 10, 1954, express to the two owners, Dr. Elizabeth Whitney and Dr. R. M. Ottinger, “sincerest thanks of all the members” and “the gratitude of the whole community” for their “generous offers permitting use of the beach.”

Unfortunately, the legacy of generosity and kindness regarding these properties was short-lived. In 1959 Larry Marks took ownership of the Ottinger parcel between the highway and the private Whitney beach, and shortly the opening salvo of what became the historic Marks v. Whitney lawsuit shattered the peaceable Inverness summer scene.

Ten years of bitter struggle over public vs. private access to the tidelands ended on December 9, 1971, with a State Supreme Court decision in the public’s favor. Hailed as “the landmark environmental decision of the decade,” the Marks v. Whitney decision provided the foundation for the California Coastal Zone Conservation Act of 1972 (followed by the California Coastal Act of 1976) and public access to the entire coast of California.

Today, the former Ottinger/Marks property is a Marin County park, one that sees heavy summer weekend use, includ-



ing boat launching, parasailing, windsurfing and kayaking. Nevertheless, two stern warnings greet visitors regarding the health hazard of water runoff that comes on the beach from upland sources and consistently registers hazardous E. coli and fecal coliform counts. The Watershed Council has regularly tested this water source for 10 years and spearheaded the effort to deal with it for many of those years.

The complexity of the issues surrounding this situation is difficult to summarize, but of more importance than past malfeasance is its potential resolution in the next era of county political and bureaucratic relations. The new Marin County Parks Director,

Max Korten, and the newly-elected District 4 Supervisor, Dennis Rodoni, could potentially cooperate to mitigate this problem. Decades of local involvement by the Inverness Association and by local activists such as Tom Gaman of the Watershed Council have laid substantial groundwork for a series of relatively simple and inexpensive steps that would eliminate the hazardous water source and promote natural wetlands.

The Inverness Association at its November meeting heard a report from Tom Gaman and recommended forming a community committee with a Board member liaison to look into Chicken Ranch Beach anew. In the new political landscape it might be possible that the right players from the county are in place to take action to continue the long tradition of sharing and caring for this beloved Inverness beach.

IA Board Appeals Moonrise Kingdom Project to Planning Commission

Statement of the Board of the Inverness Association

The Board of the Inverness Association voted unanimously on November 30 to appeal to the Planning Commission a decision by Marin County planning staff to approve the Moonrise Kingdom project on the old Howard Waite property at the top of Vision Road.

The meeting on December 1 took place in front of the Deputy Zoning Commissioner. A hearing before the Planning Commission is likely to be scheduled in late January or early February.

The project includes a 4809 square foot main residence and garage, along with three existing, unpermitted buildings: a studio/library, a guesthouse/entertainment center (the windmill) and a workshop for a total of 8435 square feet of development.

Marin County's Single-Family Residential Design Guidelines state that the floor area of new development should not substantially exceed the median home size in the surrounding neighborhood, which in this case is 1595 square feet.

Deserves Planning Commission Scrutiny

There has been considerable public interest in and concern about this project, due to its size relative to the surrounding neighborhood and its inauspicious start without the benefit of permits. Ordinarily such a project would be referred by county planners directly to the Planning Commission rather than decided by the planners themselves. The Inverness Association believes that this project deserves the Planning Commission's scrutiny.

The basis of our appeal is the size of the project; the visual impact of two 12,500 gallon water tanks (which are typically 12' wide x 17' high) and the windmill structure from public trails in contradiction of local design guidelines; the windmill structure's violation of the height limit and the unpermitted enclosed building beneath it; inadequate protection during construction for Northern Spotted Owls, which are known to nest in this area;

and the risk of landslides due to the siting of the septic system, which will discharge subsurface water adjacent to an existing landslide against the advice of the applicants' own geotechnical experts.

Problematic Zoning Errors Found

Another major concern is the zoning of the property. Half of the lot is zoned C-OA (Coastal Open Area, no residential use) and the other half is zoned residential (C-RSP 0.1). Much of the proposed development is in the part zoned C-OA. The property came to the attention of the county three years ago, when officials red-tagged it after several months of unpermitted construction work and required the owners to apply for a Coastal Permit.

Subsequently, county planning staff determined that the county's official zoning maps were in error and that the part of the property zoned for open space (C-OA) was really intended to be an agricultural/residential zoning which they named C-A-2.

The zoning designation was then changed from C-OA to C-A-2 without the required public re-zoning process. There is no C-A-2 zoning in Marin County and the IA believes that the original Coastal Open Area zoning, in place for more than 30 years, is correct. In any case, the county cannot approve a project on the basis of its consistency with applicable zoning regulations if the zoning does not exist.

Despite the difficult start this project has had, the Inverness Association appreciates that the owners, Trevor and Alexis Traina, have now provided all the required documentation to the County and have opened the property to viewing by the IA and neighbors. We welcome them to the community and look forward to a satisfactory solution that will protect the character and safety of the neighborhood and enable them to enjoy their new home in this beautiful location.

Rodoni *continued from page one*

ment. Added to that list is a concern for the rights of immigrants and undocumented workers in the forthcoming political climate.

These are themes he is well versed in from the local as well as county perspective and will be on Board of Supervisors' agenda. On February 23, there is already a plan for a Tourism Summit meeting in Point Reyes Station with State Senator Mike McGuire attending.

On specifics, Rodoni mentioned that Kinsey's popular administrative assistant, Liza Crosse, will stay on and work with him for the next quarter to help with the transition. In addition, he will be meeting with the newly appointed County Parks Director, Max Korten to begin a dialog on the long-standing issues of Chicken Ranch Beach. (See story page 4). Local frustration with inaction on the health issues there often focused on the previous park director's unwillingness to clear a path through the complexity of the legal issues involved. Rodoni, like most of the Inverness residents, is hopeful that new leadership can resolve these.

—Elizabeth Whitney

Inverness Fair = Tostadas = Waterdogs = Swimming Lessons



One of the annual highlights of the Inverness Fair is the tostada booth organized by Socorro Roma and her team of cooks and servers. The plate of delicious food raises money for the Waterdogs, the summer swim program at Shell Beach. This year the tostada booth was as successful as ever and a record 46 young people were enrolled the swim program. Money raised at the fair sponsors scholarships so any young person in our area can learn the vital skill of swimming. Inspired by the late Maidee Moore of Inverness in the post war years, Waterdogs have launched generations of young boys and girls into lifetime of safe swimming. Photo by Carlos Porrata

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The Inverness Association / Foundation meets on the
4th Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m.
at the Jack Mason Museum.
The agenda is posted in advance on our website:
www.invernessassociation.org

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"Be your own prophet" was a recent addition to the graffiti that has been evolving on the changing room at Chicken Ranch Beach. Inverness Yacht Club youths have also ID'd themselves with Tomales Bay-inspired artwork. The writing is in charcoal from the beach.