

The Paths of Inverness



WALKING IS AN INVERNESS PASTIME. Ever since our streets were first laid out in 1889, generations of young, old, and in-between have walked between First and Second valleys; up the Mesa and onward to Mt. Vision; to the post office, store, coffee house; to Chicken Ranch and Shell. The woodsy streets of Inverness invite exploration, and there, at the end of a not-a-through-street, we find a path . . . and it takes us further.

Little do we know that the path is . . . a street!

The paths of Inverness are foremost amongst its hidden gems, and if you come to the Inverness Association Annual Summer Meeting on Saturday, July 14 at 7, you'll experience a historical and visual tour of the Inverness paths presented by Dewey Livingston and photographer Elizabeth Fenwick.

The Annual Inverness Fair is Saturday, August 11

Raffle tickets are a main fund-raiser for the Fair, and the more interesting and diverse the prizes, the more excitement we stir up when we set up our selling station in front of the Inverness Post Office this month. If you have an idea for a prize or would like to underwrite a gift of a dinner at a local restaurant or a certificate for a local store or something exotic in the realms beyond West Marin, please contact an IA director listed on page 2 with your offer. The Inverness Fair features fun-for-all-ages events, socializing, music and games, food, a flea market, information from local organizations and the Inverness Library book sale. The IA welcomes fresh ideas for the Fair each year as well as tried and true popular events. Want to help? Join our committee; it is forming right now. Email Julie Monson, president, and you will be included. Money raised supports the Fair costs and adds to the IA annual budget.

Wade Holland Sets the Bar High for Community Service

By Elizabeth Whitney

WADE HOLLAND: Born in Los Angeles, raised in Southern California; BA in Political Science, Whittier College, 1957; Resident of Inverness with wife Sandra since 1970; Director, Inverness Public Utility District, 1980-1985; General Manager, Inverness Public Utility District, 1985-2001; Appointed to Marin County Planning Commission in February 2004; Elected Chair of the County Planning Commission, January 2007; Reappointed to Planning Commission in 2008.

THE ABOVE are some facts about Wade Holland, facts that merely hint at the years of dedication to community service that have framed his life. He also served on the Inverness Association Board of Directors from 2001-2004 (and remembers when the membership was twice what it is now!) and has simply been a presence locally, like a solid rock in a rushing stream, enduring and witnessing the political, economic and cultural changes that come and go.

His home is the lovely Highland Lodge on the Inverness Mesa where his second son Michael was born—"Right there," he points to the center of an Oriental rug—and now where his 8-months old granddaughter Holly's bassinette sits. Holly and her parents, older son Elliott and wife Selena, are co-habiting at the Lodge, which graciously accommodates a second family. Images of Elliott and Michael, now 41 and 37 respectively, photographed at the Lodge in three stages, from cute tykes to necktie-wearing young men, were among those displayed at the Blackbird at the recent Art Rogers "Now and Then" show.

Reminiscing with Wade about 40 plus years in the heart of the

(Continued on page 3)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Gables Disability Compliance Project Gets the Green Light

The Inverness Library, in a historic house long and fondly referred to as The Gables, serves this community as more than a library. It is a meeting place where locals gather when taking out or returning books, using the library's computers, attending the occasional meeting, or just passing by. The librarians, headed by Nancy Hemmingway, keep it friendly and efficient.



Deeded to Inverness by Jack Mason's estate in the mid-1980s, the structure was completely remodeled, mostly paid for with local contributions and volunteer labor. A proud accomplishment for this small town. Since then, the property has been under the care of the Inverness Foundation. We are now in the final planning stages of some improvements, required by Marin County, to bring the building into current Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance requirements. The Inverness Foundation is responsible for structural modifications; the Marin County Library is responsible for interior (library) improvements.

If all goes well, work will begin soon. Terry Jevitt, our contractor, will schedule the work to disrupt the operation of the library as little as possible. This is an expensive proposition for the Inverness Foundation, the property's owner, likely over \$80,000, depleting our resources which have accumulated over many years for just this kind of necessity. You will notice a few changes: doorknobs, thresholds, stair railings, a much-improved coffee room and bathroom, and more, all designed to meet the needs of our handicapped library visitors.

We hope to have enough money left over from these required changes to replace the garden trellis with something new and lovely, a fitting entry point to our much improved, special library. This project has been long in the works and is funded by the Inverness Foundation thanks to generous donations over the years. This funding process is ongoing and we welcome any new donations toward The Gables ADA compliance upgrade.

— Julie Monson

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Welcome A-Board!

Introducing Three Nominees for the Board of Directors

Configuring the present 11-member Inverness Association Board, we say good-bye and gratitude to retiring members Jerry Abbott, Burton Eubank and Rebecca Dixon and offer nominees Mike Durrie, Jim Grant and Martha Proctor as our slate. Many people love Inverness but serving on community boards asks for a special commitment to help shape the essence of the good life we share. These three have stepped up! *The Bagpiper* requested a few introductory sentences from each in time for this issue.

WHEN I WAS 12 my Dad and stepmother bought property in Seahaven and built the house I live in now. I moved up here the next summer to attend 8th grade at West Marin School and then spent four years at Tomales High School. Since I first moved up here as an adolescent in the 50's I have loved the woods and the freedom to hike. I would like everyone to have an opportunity to come out and enjoy what has been essentially my "backyard" for over fifty years. I feel very grateful to be able to live out here.

Jim Grant

I HAVE BEEN COMING UP TO INVERNESS since I was a child as my father had a summer home here. When our lives pulled us away from the Bay Area, we still managed to come back to Inverness for lengthy visits. Now my grandchildren beg to come for visits too! As a Master Gardener, hiker, and photographer and someone who cherishes the beauty of the area, I'm interested in helping to preserve the integrity of the area and in maintaining the trails, beaches and parklands that make West Marin so unique.

Martha Proctor

I LOVE INVERNESS, and respect the work the IA has done over the years. Caring about the community by its members is one of the key variables. After watching others do so, I felt it was time for me to see what I might do to help. No specific agenda, just a desire to give back.

Mike Durrie

Wade Holland *continued from first page*

Inverness community, the subject of change is inevitable. “Inverness hasn’t changed physically,” he observes, “but it has changed socio-economically.” In the era when Wade and Sandra raised their boys, the town felt as if it were full of kids; now it seems half the homes are vacation homes, more empty than occupied.

From the perspective of the County Planning Commission, which functions something like an appellate court when planning issues in the unincorporated areas aren’t resolved through staff channels, Wade has seen large and small versions of classic land use power struggles played out. The balancing act between protecting the environment and recognizing property rights that in many ways defines Marin County doesn’t come easy. The job of being a planning commissioner, in Wade’s words, “is detailed-oriented, involves reading and concentrating, listening to what people say and applying the rules...Basically, I believe it’s a good commission doing a good job of a hard job.”

Wade is quick to acknowledge that it is equally true that the system is “difficult to navigate, confusing, time-consuming, daunting and expensive.” If there is any good news on that front it is that Marin’s reputation for stringent environmental regulation and deeply embedded planning consciousness has pretty well excluded mega-mansions in the unincorporated areas that the county oversees. “Don’t even try Marin!” says Wade, remembering the last time a billionaire tried to build a monster house on a rural property in Bolinas.

On a more informal level, the role he often finds himself playing is counseling people who want to develop their property to do their homework—“Study the design guidelines and don’t try to get exceptions.” He advises people to use the community



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forums like the Inverness Association to find out how the neighbors feel about their project before they go to the county. The IA operates as a clearinghouse for proposals to bring issues to light that could be controversial and help resolve them informally at the community level. The intention of the IA Board and Wade Holland as well is to help guide people through the daunting, expensive, and time-consuming permit process with the benefit of experience.

The answer to the question, “How does the community feel about this?” is an important part of the process from the county point of view, and a positive response from the IA plays a genuine part in their review process. On the current Board of Directors, Michael Mery and Bridger Mitchell share the “county coping” assignment, and all permit applications pass through their hands for an informal review.

The thornier aspects of county government such as the ever-increasing cost of permits and the budget limitations taking toll on staff support belong, in Wade’s mind, to a whole other realm. He puts it quite simply, “The wealthy are not carrying their burden of taxes.” As the federal and state governments shift responsibilities to the local level, the pressure on budgeting leaves everyone on the losing side. Fees are intended to cover the full costs of processing development applications without subsidies from the county general fund.

Dealing with the county remains a universal lament but for Inverness folks the bright light in the dismal scene is the privilege of having committed, sincere and intelligent neighbors like Wade Holland who also happen to serve on our behalf. At 76, however, Wade anticipates that, if Supervisor Steve Kinsey once again reappoints him for four years, it will probably be his last term. “I don’t think I want to be a Planning Commissioner in my 80s!” he laughs. More likely a full-time grampa is my guess.

Tennis anyone? No? How about a garden instead?

The Third Valley Garden behind the Inverness Valley Inn is one way owners Alden and Leslie Adkins recycled half of their tennis courts into a community resource. Deer fence, check. Gopher-proofing, check. The rest of the set-up arrived through a volunteer effort of enthusiasts who maintain the raised beds, small greenhouse and fire pit circle for all. Anyone is welcome to participate and help harvest. Alden’s policy is “No Rules” with “No Dogs” the only exception, since his little farm of llamas and sheep nearby spook if dogs come around. If you haven’t visited, take a stroll up Third Valley and meet Tommy the scarecrow.



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The Inverness Association 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



The Annual Inverness Library Book Sale will once again be a highlight of the Inverness Fair this August 11. Books are donated over several months and organized and stored at a friendly neighborhood garage. Volunteers unpack and set up the tables in the early hours of the Fair and by 10 a.m. the public is ready for the annual treasure hunt of bargains. If people read them and put them back in next year's book sale, only the volunteers know, but meanwhile the popular event brings book lovers out in droves. The IA shares with the library the benefit of the sale, giving the library a fund for purchases and the IA cash flow to subsidize the Fair and other projects.

The Bagpiper

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Memberships

Family \$45
Individual \$30