



OMVNA Newsletter

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Planning a Lawn Replacement?

by Susie Mader



Ready to do something about your water-guzzling lawn?

First, ask yourself: Do you really need to replace your lawn?

Perhaps not. Could you live with a seasonal lawn? Many grasses look good in the winter and go quietly dormant in the summer, for a natural look. Add some seasonal bulbs and wildflowers to make a meadow.

But if the answer is yes—the lawn goes—how should you do this?

Among the several ways to eliminate a lawn, **scalping** is the fastest. Rent a sod cutter and schedule a dumpster. You'll need a small pickaxe too. Even better, hire someone with tools and a truck and save your back for the fun stuff.

Or: Mow your lawn as short as possible. Dig out any large weeds. Cover the area with clear plastic, run a hose underneath and when the sod is thoroughly soaked, remove the hose, pin down the plastic and cover it thickly with mulch. Arbor Mulch (cut-up tree trimmings) or leaves are good.

Or: Mow, as above, then cover the area carefully with cardboard and/or thick paper. Cover even more thickly with mulch and soak the area. Why? Because this will rot the roots! It works faster in hot weather, but can be done in winter too, more slowly.

Now: What next?

First decide how to use your new lawnless space. What plants and non-living materials will you need? Mulch, flagstones, decomposed granite? Make a sketch,

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'Possums in the 'Hood

by Susanne Martinez

When my flashlight first caught a very large, very pregnant opossum sitting on top of our backyard fence, staring straight at me, I felt a wave of fear, called the dog to me, and ran for the back door.

It was like a big flesh colored "thing" had invaded my turf. But eventually, she produced this cute little guy hiding underneath my lemon tree.



After a little research on opossums—sometimes called possums—I discovered that these "guests" can serve a useful function. In fact, my strawberry patch has been free of snails and slugs since the family moved in.

According to the National Opossum Society (yes, they have their own non-profit organization), opossums eat insects, snails, worms, rats, mice, and carrion. They have been called nature's clean-up crew, working the night shift. Opossums may sometimes help themselves to berries and other fruit in your garden, but usually after it has already fallen on the ground.

Although rabies in opossums is reportedly very rare, they do harbor fleas and ticks which can carry various viruses. The American Humane Society says that opossums are not generally aggressive, although their open-mouth, defensive hissing may make them appear that way. But it is usually a bluff and if it doesn't

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Restaurant Scene

by Max Hauser



New breakfast option: Omelette House, a family-run catering firm that now operates the deli at **Ava's Downtown Market** (340 Castro), added an extensive breakfast menu, all day. Printed menus look like something from a white-tablecloth fine-dining restaurant. Photos and menu: <http://www.omelettehouseatavas.com/> I continue to be impressed by **Omelette House's** hot lunch specials and classy sandwiches.



Rumble Fish opened late October at 357 Castro, a full-menu, rather upscale independent Japanese restaurant. I've had two fine lunches so far.



Mahalo Bowl has offered acai bowls and smoothies at 650 Castro since November, expanding from a food truck.



Little Sheep Mongolian Hotpot, a trendy restaurant group from China serving meals you cook in simmering broth pots, opened at 102 Castro and was instantly crowded. I found lunch specials starting around \$10 and strong competition for Shabuway, the established Japanese hotpot (shabu-shabu) restaurant nearby at 180 Castro.

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Farmers' Market Open at CA & Bryant on SuperBowl Sunday, Feb 7, 9-12



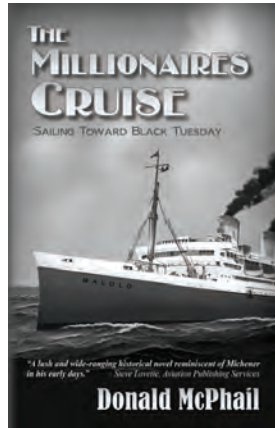
Old Mountain View Neighbor Profile: Author Don McPhail

by Susan Bickford

Old Mountain View resident Don McPhail's path to published author has had many twists and turns. He was born in Santiago, Chile and moved to Palo Alto when he was five. After graduating from high school, he attended Menlo College, and enlisted in the Navy. He qualified for the Naval Academy at Annapolis, and attended for two years before transferring to San Francisco State. He then went to work for United Airlines. He is now retired after 40+ years in the travel and hospitality industries. He has been a Mountain View resident since 1995.

Published in 2015, *THE MILLIONAIRES CRUISE: SAILING TOWARD BLACK TUESDAY* began as a modest family history and turned into a full-fledged novel. "I wanted to chronicle the things I know about our family," said McPhail, "so that my sons and nephews would know something about their heritage. My dad died when I was four, and my mom seldom talked about her background."

Their story is unique. McPhail's father was from South Africa and



his mother from South Dakota. They met in 1933, as crew members on a 90-day Pacific sailing of Matson's luxury ship, the SS Malolo. He was a cruise director, and she was a ship's nurse. Their courtship included ports of call like Yokohama, Shanghai, Sydney, Sumatra, Pago Pago, and Hawaii.

In his research, McPhail learned that this was a familiar tour pattern for the Malolo. It had sailed the same itinerary several years earlier, in September of 1929, carrying an elite group. The 1929 sailing became infamous for carrying some

325 millionaires, most of whom lost their fortunes on October 29, "Black Tuesday," when the stock market crashed while they were part-way into the cruise.

McPhail briefly noted the 1929 cruise in his family history. "I asked a good friend, a successful novelist named D.W. Buffa, to read the family writeup. He liked my writing, but said that I should make it into a novel about the 1929 millionaires cruise. He felt that story was a natural, with drama, glamour and intrigue."

That was in 2012, and McPhail suspended work on the family project and dove into the novel. The process took two years of serious writing and editing, and then he looked for a publisher. "Most people know what the Internet has done to publishing. After chasing agents for six months, and rarely receiving the courtesy of a response, I heard author Alan Furst tell KQED interviewer Michael Krasny that a writer should find a way to publish his/her work, and not be afraid to publish independently. So that's what I did."

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Keeping Mountain View Safe: Updates and Advice from the Mountain View Fire and Police Departments

by Lynn Brown

by Sgt. Saul Jaeger



Heating Safety

There is something about the winter months and curling up with a good book by the fireplace. But did you know that heating equipment is one of the leading causes of home fire deaths?

With a few simple safety tips and precautions you can prevent most heating fires from happening.

Be warm and safe this winter!

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, like the furnace, fireplace, wood stove, or portable space heater.
- Have a three-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Never use your oven to heat your home.
- Have a qualified professional install stationary space heating equipment, water heaters, or central heating equipment according to the local codes.
- Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and

inspected every year by a qualified professional.

- Remember to turn off portable heaters when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Always use the right kind of fuel—as specified by the manufacturer—for fuel burning space heaters.
- Make sure the fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room. Ashes should be cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container a safe distance away from your home.
- Test smoke alarms monthly.

FACT

Half of all home heating fires are reported during the months of December, January, and February.

Are You Ready for Wet Weather Driving?

The rain is here and the Mountain View Police Department would like to provide you with some quick tips to stay safe while driving in wet weather:

- Slow down: Speed is a factor in almost every collision. Slowing down, even just a little, gives you more time to react to the unexpected.
- Leave room: "Tail-gating"—or more properly following too closely—is also an extremely common factor in collisions. Leave plenty of space between



you and the car in front of you.

- Avoid driving through flooded areas/puddles
- Wipers on?: That means headlights on. The more visible you can be the better—and it's the law!

Properly working equipment is fundamental to safe driving in inclement weather.

- Tires: Proper tread depth is essential for traction in wet weather.
- Clean windshield: In and out to help glare reduction and proper clearing by your wipers.
- Windshield wipers: It's a good idea to install new wiper blades before the rainy season. Check for broken or cracked rubber.
- Headlights: Ensure both are functioning correctly. If you have fog lights, learn when and how to use them.
- Make sure your floor mats are not binding the pedals or they can slip.

Traffic safety is everyone's responsibility.

Keep in Touch with Mountain View's Finest

Want to get the latest on the Mountain View Police Department?

Read about it on Twitter @MountainViewPD, our blog at <http://mountainviewpoliceblog.com/>, or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/mountainviewpolicedepartment

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Learning From a New Kind of Neighbor

The Mountain View Cohousing Community, a new 19-condominium “intentional community” on Calderon Avenue, has attracted attention from many people in Old Mountain View and even public officials from surrounding communities. We who live in MVCC have paid attention to acting as good neighbors to all the people within MVCC.


We are often asked by others how they can foster greater neighborliness in their own neighborhoods and communities without creating or joining a cohousing community. Based on our experiences, here are some suggestions that any groups of folks living near each other can consider.

“Neighborly” means being friendly and helpful, especially to those who live near you. Having good neighbors—people you know who live near you—is valuable for people of all ages, from today’s young adults (the Millennials, those now between ages 18-34) to the Baby Boomers (now in their 50s and 60s) and older adults.









Consider some of the interactions that might occur between people living nearby who know each other in person:

-  When you hang your new picture, I can hold it up for you so you can see exactly where you want to put it, and where the picture hangers should go.
-  There’s been a package outside your front door for a couple of days. Are you OK? Or, if the person is OK, but not in town: Do you want me to take the package in until you get back?
-  I’m trapped in a big traffic jam and will be late getting home. Can I ask you to let my 7-year-old stay at your house after school, until I get there?
-  Do you have a power drill I can borrow?
-  I have a spare bedroom. Your relatives can sleep over here that weekend.
-  Do you happen to have a couple of eggs I can “borrow”?
-  I’ll take you to the urgent care

by Katherine Forrest
center—you’re in no shape to drive at this point.

 I can’t find my keys—do you still have that back-up key to my front door, so I can have a duplicate made?

Neighborly interactions are different from having connections with people over the Internet, people who do not live nearby, or people you do not know personally and trust. They often involve sharing—sharing knowledge and experiences, as well as things. Suggestions:

-  Make a list, with addresses and contact info, of the people on your block or your floor of your apartment building. This will make it easier to remember names.
-  Have occasional joint meals—say a block party, or monthly potlucks—and / or a party of the neighbors to welcome a new household that recently moved in.
-  Take something to a new household who are just moving in: cookies, a paper map, and list of things they’ll probably need to know soon, like the nearest appliance store, pharmacy, grocery, and / or a copy of your list of the neighbors on your block.
-  Let neighbors know if you have things to share, such as excess fruit that they can pick when it’s in season, or a large collection of tools they can borrow
-  Offer to pick up something for them at the MV Farmers Market, if you’re going.
-  Offer to water their plants while they’re away.
-  Offer to drive them to or from the airport or the train station.
-  If you have a front porch or patio, sit out there on nice days and make a point of saying a friendly hello to neighbors you see walking or biking by.

Mountain View Cohousing members have done all of these things and more to strengthen the ties within our own little “new old-fashioned neighborhood,” and find our lives are being enriched in the process.

Old Mountain View General Store Closing Its Doors

by Vanessa Merina

After three years of offering an array of fun and wearable Mountain View art, the Mountain View General Store (MVGS) is closing its doors February 26. Tina Ambrogio, the store’s owner, says she’s received tremendous support from the neighborhood, but it’s time to move on.

“It’s been a great experience,” says Tina, a resident for twenty years. She opened the shop to support local artists; to this day she’s never turned away a handmade product.

Over the years, Tina has collected many great memories of the store. She recalls one, when a young boy came in and bought a piece of Bazooka bubble gum. Walking out, he said to his mom, “I just found my new favorite candy store!” A few days later he was back with his cousin, the two yelling as they approached, “It’s open! It’s open! This is gonna be so fun!”

There’s still time to experience some of that MVGS fun: Mountain View t-shirts, hats, hoodies and bumper stickers are on sale while supplies last.

Old Mountain View General Store is located at 705A West Dana Street, Mountain View, CA. Hours: M, Sun (closed), T-F (12-6pm), Sat (11am-5pm). www.themvgs.com/

To sign up for neighborhood alerts by OMVNAtalk email:

- Send a blank message (no subject or content needed) from your preferred email address to omvnata-talk-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
- You will get back an automated message from yahoo groups
- Select option 2 (“Reply, Send”) to confirm your request.

For more information about the OMVNAtalk list, please see <http://www.omvna.org/omvna-talk.html>

For newsletter delivery problems, send email to delivery@omvna.org

by David Lewis

by Marina Marinovich

A longtime marketing executive and freelance writer, McPhail created a strategy that paralleled the large publishing houses. He formed a group of qualified readers to beta-test the manuscript, and made editing adjustments based upon their reactions. He developed a list of professional contacts from his years in the hospitality industry, his nonprofit board work, and his different university alumni groups. He generated articles in local newspapers and alumni magazines. And he backed those up with a book launch in San Francisco, followed by author events at Book Passage in Marin and Books Inc. in Palo Alto. You can see more about Don McPhail on his website, www.donaldmcphail.com.

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Break a leg to cast and crew of Mary Poppins - March at MVCPA.

We would like to thank our Mayor, Vice Mayor and Council Members who unanimously voted for the designation of Immigrant House as a historic structure. The Mountain View Parks and Recreation Commission has recommended that the new park be named either Heritage Park or Immigrant Grove Park.

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The Santa Clara Valley Water District (valleywater.org) has a good list of drought-tolerant plants. Or check **Sunset** publications.

Option 1: Design from the outside in. The borders, which are no longer constrained, can be appealing areas for shrubs and low water perennials. You can use larger native or Mediterranean plants. Plant starting in from the sidewalk and house and let them grow naturally. Now you have space!

A few more tips:

- Make sure the plants you choose have similar sun and water needs. You want all the plants in the same irrigation zone.
- Use an attractive mulch—tree clippings, small mixed rocks, or mini bark chips—for the rest of the area with perhaps smaller shrubs near the corners or walkways.
- Your landscape will have more impact with less green and more textural interest.
- You might want a grove of small trees—evergreen for privacy, deciduous for winter sun.

Consult with a professional if you are new to this.

Following these guidelines you'll save lots of water and the birds and the bees will love you!

George - Every day I am so grateful
for your love and support. S

[illegible]

Two people with the same birthday.
A match made in heaven - B

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Mervyn's, the venerable café name restored last year to 236 Castro, dropped its food program, but its bars remain open: historic **Mervyn's Lounge** in the rear, and in evenings, the new bar at the Castro-Street entrance.



Korean turnover: Compact neighborhood favorite **Totoro** (841 Villa) is scheduled to close at the end of January, to be replaced by a new Korean restaurant, **Song-Pa**.



Coming soon, Part 1: Eureka
<http://www.eurekarestaurant-group.com/eat.html> at 191 Castro
 is advertising a hiring fair February
 10-11.



Coming soon, Part 2: Verde Tea Kitchen, a full-service restaurant related to **Verde Tea Café** nearby, will “soon” open, 210 Hope at Villa (formerly Spice Islands).



Coming soon, Part 3: Izzo is pending at 246 Castro (former Cijjo space), a development of San José's Izzo (a Taiwanese and Asian-Fusion Restaurant).



Coming soon, Part 4: Pokeworks
plans to open at 211 Castro: <http://www.pokeworks.com/>

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥
Madison-->Bordeaux-->Mountain
View. Thanks for a great 7 years. ETP

Romeo, you are my valentine! Juliet

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work, they go into a kind of shock and appear to play dead ("playing possum") when really scared.

Like any wild animal, if cornered, they will try to defend themselves so it is best to keep pets as well as children away from them. Interestingly, opossums are the only North American marsupial, carrying their young in their pouches until they are 2 or 3 months old.

As the Opossum Society points out, they don't dig up your lawn, chew on wires, or create burrows the way some of our other backyard visitors do, but they may get blamed for things they haven't done, like knocking over your garbage can, because they are so slow and easier to spot than some other critters.

There are ways to discourage them from hanging out in your territory, like not leaving out food and clearing away brush. Since they are nocturnal, they don't like lighted areas at night. However, they are known to be great survivors and once they move into a neighborhood like Old Mountain View, they aren't likely to move on as long as there is food, water, and shelter available.

For now, my new neighbors are earning their keep clearing out the snails and slugs from my garden.



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