



# NEWSLETTER

*Bringing Environmental Issues into Focus*

Fall 2005

**Founded 1972**

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A perfect autumn day to study coastal bluff scrub at Muir Beach Overlook.

## WELCOME TO EFM CLASS XXXIII

by Barbara O'Grady (31), Training Program Director

**A**t Audubon Canyon Ranch, on an overcast September 16, coffee and pastry greeted 31 eager trainees of Class XXXIII who had traveled from around the Bay Area to meet with EFM staff for Orientation Day. The new class was introduced to the goals, philosophy and history of EFM by a trio of speakers:

Dr. Marty Griffin, Phyllis Faber and Nona Dennis. These founders of the organization entertained and inspired the class, solo and in concert, with their recollections of EFM's beginnings.



Phyllis Faber and  
Marty Griffin



Nona Dennis



Kathy Cuneo and  
Steve Mason

Founding member Kathy Cuneo, also the Forum's events chair, organized a picnic lunch. Dining took place under a chilly Marine layer that refused to burn off. Picnickers huddled in jackets, but this did not diminish the warmth generated by the enthusiasm of the class.

## What Is Issuing from the Issues Development Committee?

by David Weckler (31)

The Environmental Forum's theme for this year is sustainable energy policy. The criteria for determining a theme include: urgency, timeliness, potential for reducing Marin's community "footprint," complexity calling for greater understanding, and financial impact. The Issues Development Committee identifies potential themes based on these criteria, and the Board adopts one of them for the year. Once a theme is selected, the IDC fosters its inclusion in the Training Program, Workshop Series, public education events and publications.

The committee identifies sustainable-energy-related issues, community needs and the policies that do or could affect them. We also identify the people and organizations interested in and working on these issues and policies. The information developed by the committee becomes a resource for coordinators, trainees, members and other audiences of the Forum to set learning objectives, identify presenters and select event topics and projects. Accumulating this information is the main thrust of the committee's work this year.

Another important role of the IDC is to identify the community's educational needs in regard to sustainable energy policy. It is simple to say that sustainable energy policy is any policy that reduces use of fossil fuels and increases use of renewable energy sources. Yet, it is not so obvious what policies and practices actually do that. Effectively educating advocates and voters about sustainable energy policy requires understanding what policies and practices actually promote sustainable energy use. The Issues Development Committee seeks continually to broaden its own knowledge to help shape the education of others, and welcomes assistance in doing so. ■

### IN REMEMBRANCE

Sue Markusfeld was an Environmental Forum graduate of Class 20. We are all saddened to hear of her passing on August 19, 2005. She will be remembered by many with whom she worked closely in her local community to protect the environment. Her advocacy and passion for protecting the health of Marin County's watershed was shown in her dedicated work as a board member of the Environmental Forum of Marin, an educator guide in the Richardson Bay Audubon Center's Bay Shore Studies program and cofounder of the Mill Valley StreamKeepers.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



The Board is currently considering where to concentrate our efforts for the year ahead. One thing is certain, and that is the need for help from you, our members, so I would love to hear from you via email or phone if you would like to be involved in any of our

activities, such as helping to staff an information table at an event, or assisting with future event planning.

The Board met some weeks ago for a retreat, with Kraemer Winslow and David Weckler as facilitators. The aim for the day was to take stock of the Strategic plan and to have a chance to air issues without the time and agenda restraints of an ordinary Board meeting. We shall be continuing the highly successful Saturday Workshop Series that started this year, and we are currently discussing options for spreading our message into the wider Marin community.

Best autumn greetings to you all!

Selvig Palm-Nicholls, President



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!

### Educational Program on Energy Policy in Early 2006

By Dave Coury (29) & Nancy McCauley (32)  
Public Education Committee

How can Marinites ensure that more of our electric power comes from renewable sources? Right now, PG&E controls all aspects of electricity procurement, generation, transmission, distribution and billing services. Recent legislation enables communities to set up their own purchasing, or procurement, while continuing to use PG&E for maintenance of transmission lines and billing. PG&E is already preparing for this sort of "unbundling" of electric service in some communities.

This new alternative is called "Community Choice Aggregation" (CCA). A recent consultancy group's report finds this approach could be financially feasible. How would CCA work in Marin?

EFM's Public Education Committee, in keeping with EFM's focus on sustainable energy and in cooperation with county staff, is developing a public program on this complex topic. Volunteers with both interest and event production experience are sought. Please contact David Coury, PEC Chair. ■

## Training for Community Leaders: “Toward a Sustainable Marin”

By Workshop Series Director Donna Miller (32)



Workshop Series Committee

Donna Miller, Mia Pelletier, Trudie London, Marilyn McConnell

**Y**ou know how valuable your experience was in taking the Environmental Forum of Marin’s training. Now we ask that you actively encourage your community leader contacts and staff to take advantage of an EFM training program that has been developed with their specific environmental education needs in mind.

Workshop Series presentations will be given by environmental and political experts covering Marin’s most pressing environmental issues. The program’s goal is to give them trustworthy, current and useful environmental information so that their decision making can help Marin evolve into a model of sustainable planning. The program’s overarching theme will be sustainable energy policy.

Toward a Sustainable Marin will be held on seven Saturdays, January 28 through March 18, 2006, from 9 AM—2 PM. All classes will be held at Marin Community Foundation’s executive meeting room, 5 Hamilton Landing, Novato. Being in this renovated Hamilton Air Base hangar is a treat in itself. It’s a gorgeous example of what thoughtful renovation can result in, one that everyone should see! The training cost will be \$160.

Since class size is limited to 30, please let your contacts know that early registration is advised. Please recommend that they get further information about EFM by checking our website: [www.MarinEFM.org](http://www.MarinEFM.org). And, by clicking “Training,” then “Toward a Sustainable Marin, Workshop Series,” they can get more detailed class information, print out our application form and mail it soon. Please see program subjects and dates in the next column. ■

## “Toward a Sustainable Marin 2006” Program subjects

- Sustainability (January 28)
- Fossil Fuels & Climate Change (February 4)
- Clean Energy Resources (February 11)
- Water Resources (February 25)
- Toxic Substances & Solid Waste (March 4)
- Land Use & Planning (March 11)
- Transportation (March 18)

For further information, please call Admissions Chair Marilyn McConnell.



**Save the date:**  
**Annual EFM Holiday Party**  
**Sunday, December 4, 2005**  
**4 to 7 PM**  
**at the home of**  
**Solvig Palm-Nicholls**

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On Geology Day, the weather forecast promised changeable weather, and for once it was accurate. Geologists Skip McIntosh (coordinator) and Jim Locke gave an overview of the geological makeup of California and the problems created by contaminants and toxics seeping into the water table. Andy Collision, a hydrologist, gave an in-depth discussion about the impact of levies and the diversion of a river from its natural path—very topical. The afternoon session included a trip to Ring Mountain, where the forecaster’s predications came true. The climb to the top was accompanied by thunder, lightning, rain, hail, wind and sunshine! Though drenched, Class XXXIII kept their sense of humor—and their enthusiasm.

Finally—a perfect autumn day for Day #3, Plant Communities. Nona Dennis and Kathy Cuneo taught oak and alder riparian communities under dappled sunlight. The day ended with a stop at Muir Beach Overlook to study coastal bluff scrub, and a renewed appreciation for the beauty and diversity of Marin County and the need to preserve it—the reason the Environmental Forum came into existence. ■