UNDER THE GABLES

Volume XXVII, Number 3 Fall-Winter 2026

"The magic is in the discovery that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."
May 7, 1976

"...The TBT was never about money. It was about believing in a value other than money and believing that that value is as tangible and measurable and accountable as money. It was about quality and integrity and sharing a consciousness, and, believe it or not, Truth. And if anyone thinks it didn't work, please drop in and look at 26 examples of our efforts."
April 22, 1977

Once Upon the Tomales Bay Times...

A new exhibit on display November 9 through January 2027

JACK MASON MUSEUM OF WEST MARIN HISTORY

Inverness Way at Park Avenue, Inverness Phone 415-669-1099 www.jackmasonmuseum.org

OUR NEW EXHIBIT:

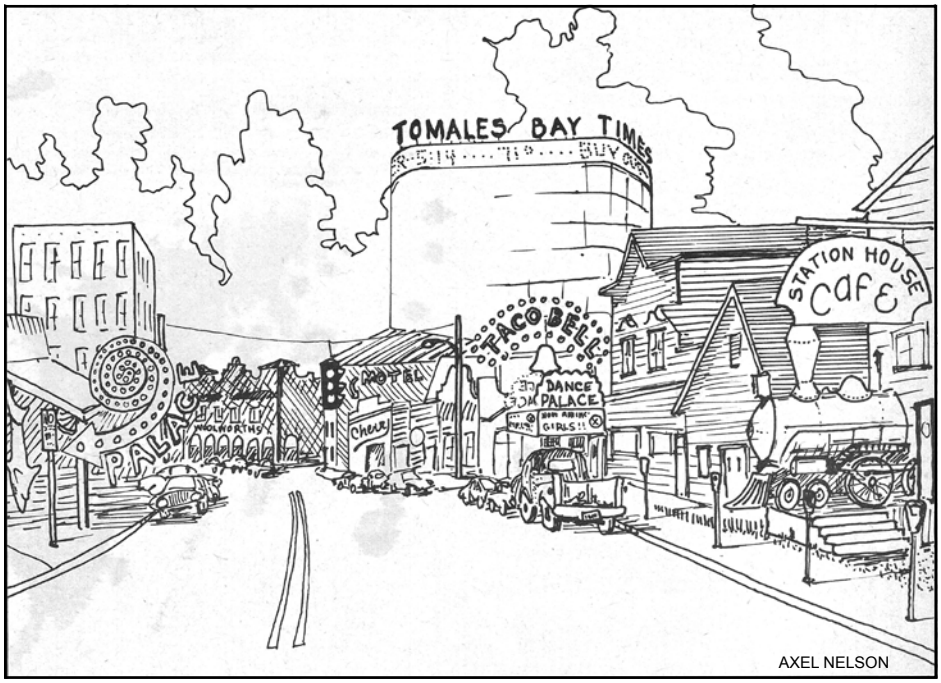
IT'S TIME FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT at the Jack Mason Museum. Our new exhibit is—to be delicate—out of the ordinary. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the short-lived yet influential West Marin newspaper, the *Tomales Bay Times* (known lovingly as the TBT), longtime local journalist and former TBT editor-in-chief Elizabeth Whitney has recruited the generation-younger Cedar Nordbye and others to create an exhibit reflecting the spirit of the exciting and all-in cooperative energy of the TBT.

The *Tomales Bay Times* was not intended to compete with the local newspaper of record—the *Point Reyes Light*—but rather to offer counterculture-tinged coverage of the significant changes that were happening in West Marin. As a non-paid collective nominally guided by editor Whitney, designer Howard Jacobsen, and photographer Art Rogers, the paper welcomed progressive opinions, art, poetry, children's writings and art, and profiles of interesting people and activities. Its coverage of Christo's Running Fence landed a copy in the Smithsonian. Alas, the TBT only lasted a year, likely because making money weas not the object.

In the exhibit we see clips and commentary direct from the TBT, posted against a backdrop of color like the museum has never seen. Join us for an opening reception—and no doubt a joyous reunion of 1970s stalwarts—on Sunday, November 22 from 2 to 4 pm.

Do you have old pictures or documents to share with the Jack Mason Museum of West Marin History? All subjects and periods are welcome, especially those from the 1960s on. Your photos will be carefully preserved and you will receive nice sharp copies in exchange. As an alternative, we would be happy to scan your photos and return them safely.

RESEARCH IN THE MUSEUM ARCHIVES
Email research questions to research@jackmasonmuseum.org.



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This edition of
Under the Gables
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and Carol Acquaviva.
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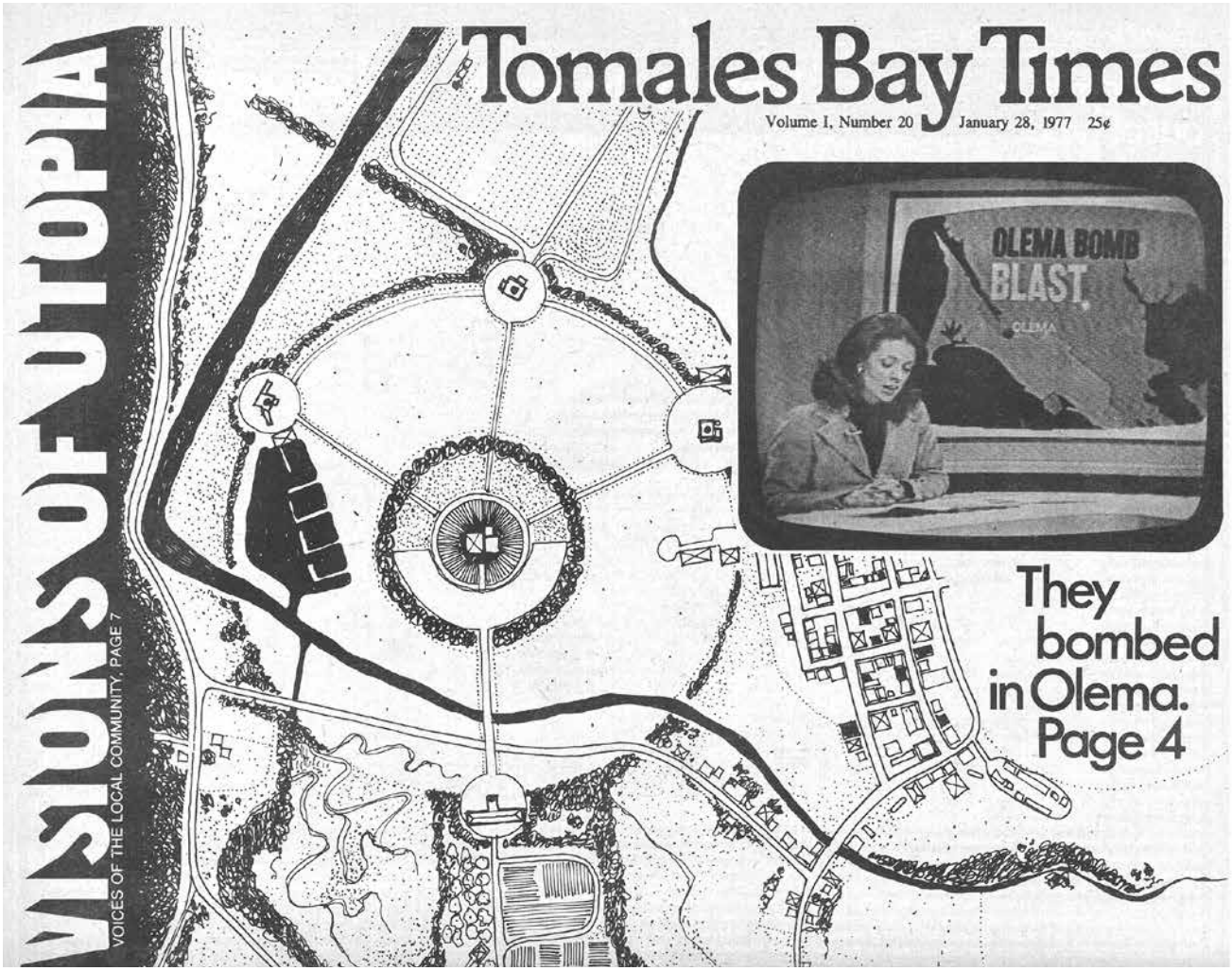


Once Upon the Tomales Bay Times...

By Elizabeth Whitney

SOMETIMES THINGS COME TOGETHER in ways so unplanned, so unimagined and so unlikely that you begin to wonder if there is, after all, a force beyond our realm setting things up for our behalf. That was the essence of *Tomales Bay Times,* a year-long journalistic adventure in creativity and idealism that wanted to exist and used a bunch of us to make it happen.

At least that's how I see it, 50 years later. From May 1976 to May 1977, a happenstance batch of creatives published a bi-weekly newspaper that expressed the lively counterculture of its time—and officially anchored that time in history. The beauty of a local newspaper is that it captures the every-day vitality of the community, from its advertisements to its controversies to its sense of humor. It is an authentic peek into the past, not an opinion about the past from a distant perspective.

The *Tomales Bay Times* was born out of a collective yearning to share what was happening on the street, not only with each other, but also with a vague idea of the future, when historians would look back on the era. When David Mitchell bought the *Point Reyes Light* in late 1975, he brought a perspective to the newspaper that ran counter to the counterculture—a perspective that leaned heavily on hard news, exposes and investigations. The fruits of his work were acknowledged in 1979 by the Pulitzer Prize Board, who awarded Mitchell a gold medal for "Meritorious Public Service" for his Synanon investigation.

Meanwhile, a flood of young people riding the post-psychedelic tide were dropping anchor with myriad creative exploits that were not considered

Continued on page 10

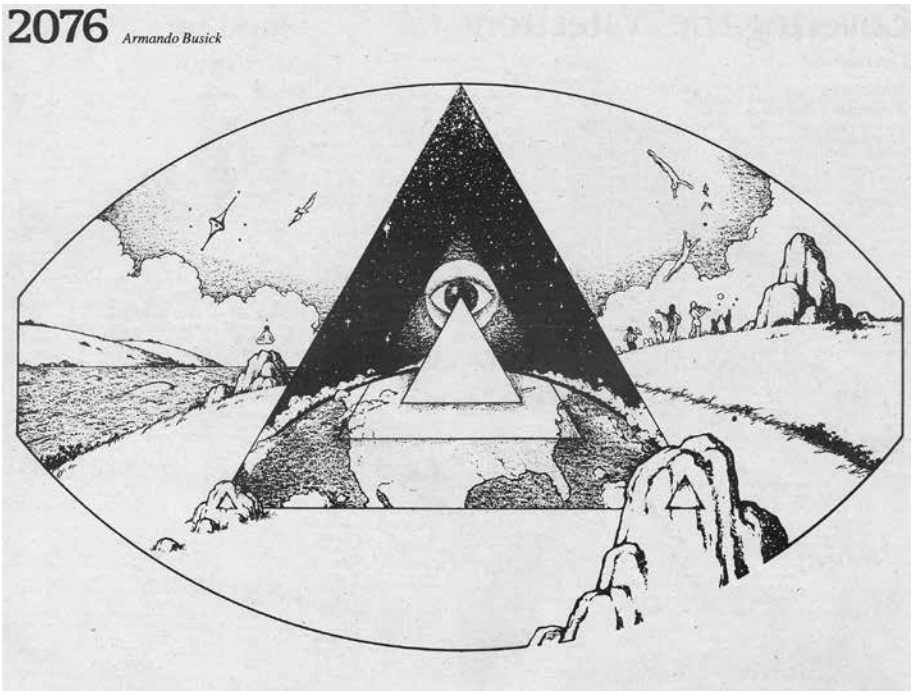
TBT saluted

Dear Ms. Whitney:

The Board of Directors of the Marin County American Revolution Bicentennial Commission would like to commend the *Tomales Bay Times* for being the only newspaper in Marin County to reproduce the Declaration of Independence in honor of the 200th anniversary of the birth of the United States.

To us, the reaffirmation of the principles of the founding fathers of our country was a most appropriate observance of our Bicentennial celebration.

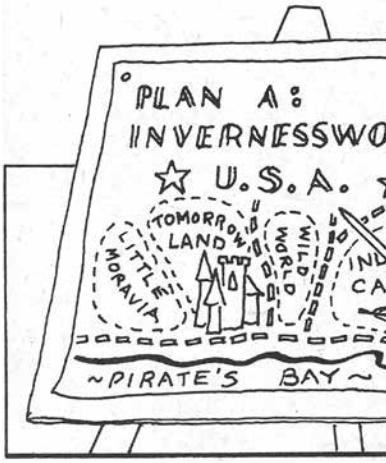
Nancy King Hayden
American Revolution
Bicentennial Commission
San Rafael



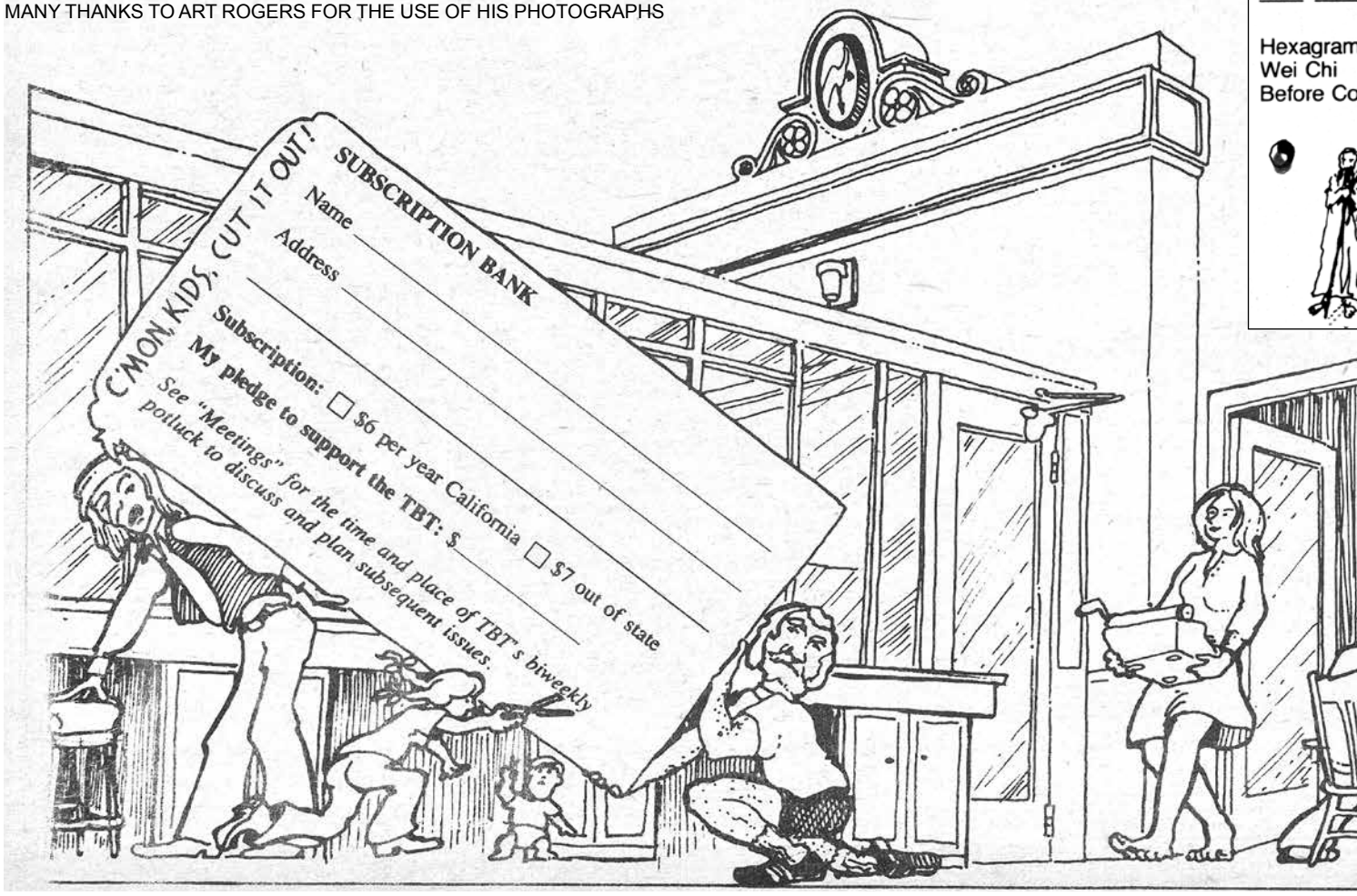
Bicentennial year in 1976 was a big event everywhere. The TBT got into the patriotic spirit. We dreamed up a signing of the Declaration photo, and put out the word to come to the Old Western at 4 p.m. Art Rogers orchestrated matching us to the painting, and the afternoon patrons at the bar joined in. At the end, we all signed the Declaration together. — *E.W.*

Tides & Skies

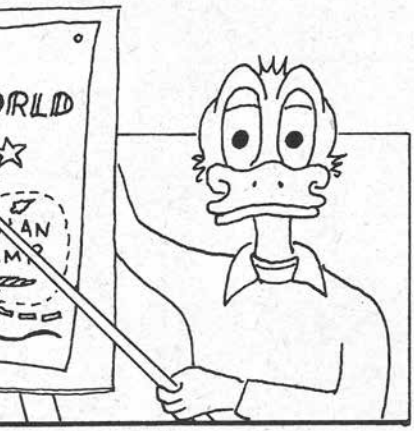
Classifieds



MANY THANKS TO ART ROGERS FOR THE USE OF HIS PHOTOGRAPHS



Film, Music, Theatre, Dance...



AXEL NELSON

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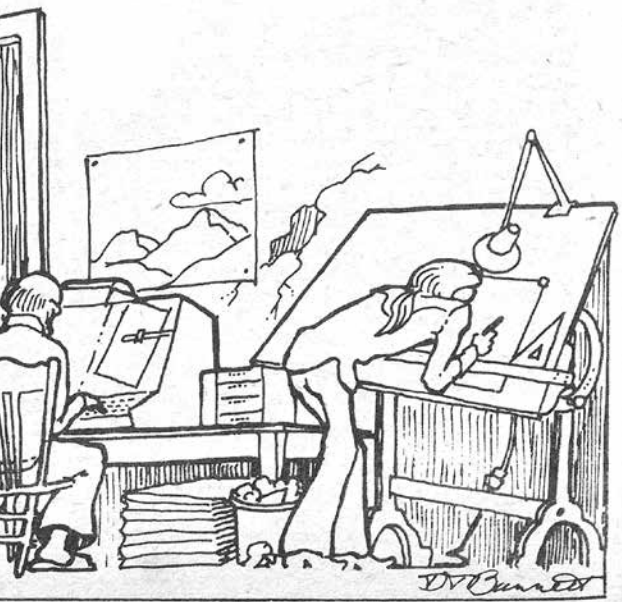
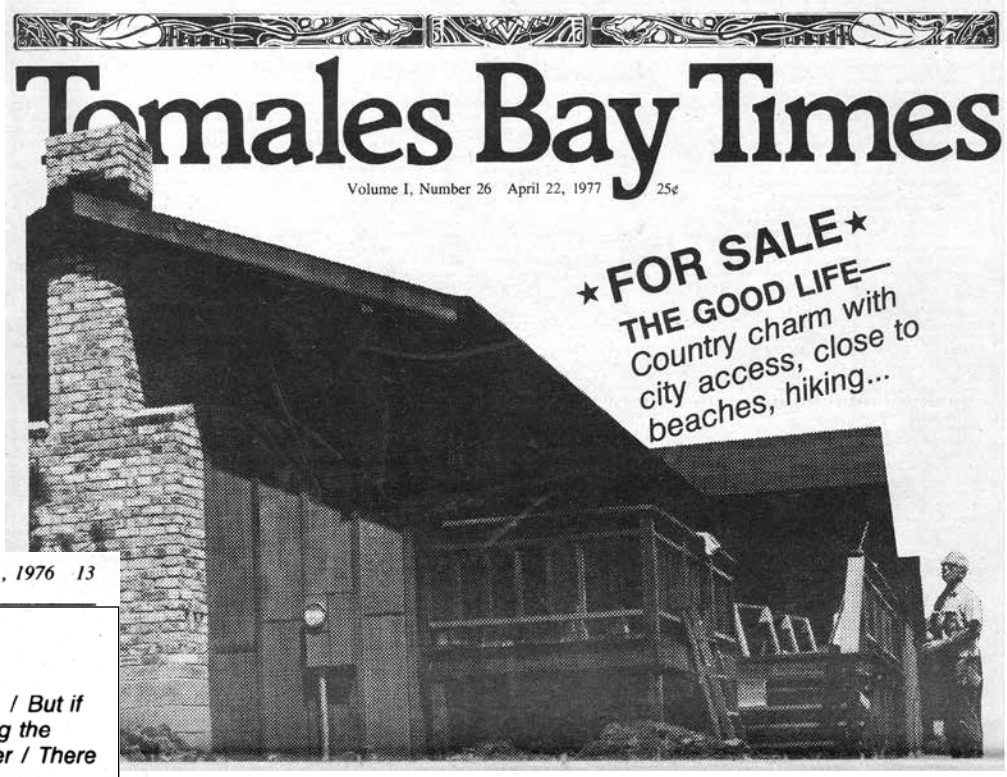
mpletion

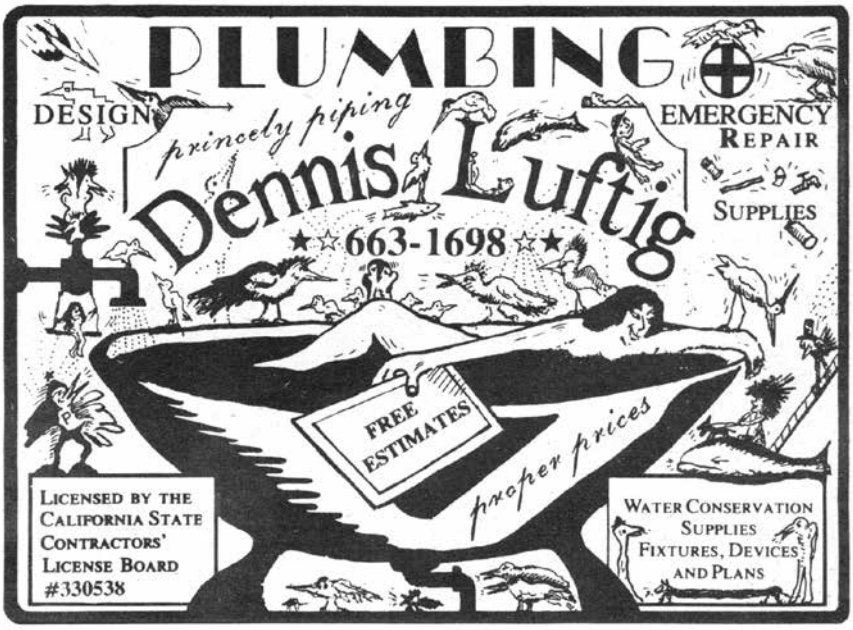
THE JUDGEMENT
BEFORE COMPLETION. Success, / But if the little fox, after nearly completing the crossing, / Gets his tail in the water / There is nothing that would further.

THE IMAGE
Fire over water, /. The image of the condition before transition. / Thus the superior man is careful / In the differentiation of things, / So that each finds its place.
—I Ching

Dance Palace
Point Reyes Station







Birthdays

Meetings

The Account of Running Christo
a story from the inside

"And the infantry was off again, climbing up out of Valley Ford where the completed Fence was dazzling and distracting us. The Fence was moving fast now, and we discovered one of its phenomena—the fact that once it is up, you are either on one side or the other, for going under is an uninviting bellycrawl through the dirt. In short order, the fence dived crews in half, who either communicated by shouting through the curtain or simply never saw each other again."

"Coming out of Valley Ford I walked along the Fence for a portion with Christo—for a moment separated from the ever-present parapazzi press who had dropped by the wayside before the long hot uphill climb. Christo's energy is boundless, his attention ever fixed on the Fence, his focus on the mechanics of it as precise as any engineer in the project. He spots every missed hook or incorrect sequence."

"All of us who labored on it and loved and hated it and laughed at it began to see it. We saw the early morning sunlight turn it into quicksilver and the hot light of noon blaze down on it and outline its shadow in black. Later I saw it again from Tomales Bay and Tomales Point, catching the last glow of the setting sun. Here, from home, I saw the view that people were buying from airplanes: a ribbon of light ending in the sea."

PHOTOGRAPH BY PERMISSION OF THE ARTISTS

The Christo issue was delivered to Valley Ford the first weekend the public could see it. 850 copies sold out in 3 days. 1200 more were delivered and sold out in a week. A second printing put a total of 5500 copies.

The Smithsonian chose the archives of the Running Fence for their collection on Christo and a quote from the article was written on the wall of the exhibit. This edition of the Tomales Bay Times will live forever at the Smithsonian Institute.

Running Fence Project

Christo
48 Howard Street
New York, New York
10013
Ph. 212-966-4437

Peter Selz
Project Director
861 Regal Road
Berkeley, California
94708
Ph. 415-922-0807

Lynn Hershman
Associate Director
3595 Clay Street
San Francisco, California
94118
Ph. 415-922-0807

New York, December 11th.1976.

Dear Elizabeth,

Thank you for your letter and for sending us the article on Running Fence. Christo wants to help you, and if you think it is a good idea, he will be happy to sign 100 copies of the Tomales Bay Times.

If you want, send us the front pages (sending the whole paper will be much too heavy), Christo will sign them and return them to you, maybe you could sell them for $3 or 4 each ??

Also, there is something else which might help you, though I can not yet promise anything, but there are many chances that E.P.Dutton, the New York Publisher, will want to reprint your text in a book about Christo's projects. Nothing yet is deceided, but we shall certainely try to convince him to buy your text from you.

For the moment that is all I can say, we read your text last night, after the work was finished, 3 am. and we love it even better than we did when we first read it, months ago.

Let me know what you think of the idea of selling signed Newspapers ?

Very best thoughts

Jeanne-Claude

P.S.
When you send us the front page-
please also send us 6 or 8 copies
complete copies, for us - Thanks -

Once Upon... *Continued from page 3*

news. The *Tomales Bay Times* came into being with a point of view that cultural expressions were news as well.

My personal history is that I was the Assistant Editor to the previous editor of the *Light*, Michael Gahagan, from 1973-1975, and had brought Art Rogers in as a photographer, launching his lifelong involvement with the community. Together we were producing feature stories about the cultural changes we were living. All that ended with the new ownership, and in short order I was in the vortex of the dissatisfaction that ensued. The subject of producing a second newspaper surrounded me.

As farfetched as it seemed, the community was determined to pursue it, and key players gelled around the impossible task. No one could be paid. No rent could be afforded. Advertising revenue, we trusted, would pay anything we couldn't do ourselves, like the printing and some of the production costs. Undaunted, the enthusiasm turned into a collective effort involving many strands of the community. Money was raised, a free workspace was offered, and key design and production positions were filled by eager artists of every stripe.

Art Rogers wanted to keep on doing photojournalism. A brilliant newcomer, Howard Jacobsen, was interested in the challenge of designing a newspaper and overseeing the production. David Bunnett and Wendy Friefeld came aboard with unparalleled talent and dedication. And many, many more volunteers poured in once the newspaper began production. We were a magnet to the talent lurking in our community, from elders to children. Writers, artists, commentators, storytellers, photographers, poets, production personnel and individuals meeting all the peripheral skills needed came aboard.

Six months after we launched, Richard Kirshman offered us the use of the empty Bank of America building—the brick building in the middle of town and the symbol of the establishment—for $1/month. We moved out of the cramped room given to us by the owners of The Old Western into the most luxurious edifice in town.

These were the types of little miracles that floated the TBT. My story chronicling the drama of hanging The Running Fence caught Christo and Jeanne-Claude's attention and got a delighted response and an invitation to include it in their mammoth coffee table book. The Running Fence project is the one of all the Christo projects the Smithsonian chose to add to their archives, and a TBT Christo issue lives forever in the Smithsonian.

It also seems to live forever in this community, because many an individual has saved precious issues and offered them to the Jack Mason Museum or to me, with the phase, "I can't throw these away." As the decades moved on and computers entered the picture, the landscape of media changed from homespun to formulaic, from paper to screen, from handcrafted to modeled by templates anyone could copy from. Reading the news morphed to watching the news. Newspapers folded right and left, and once meaty magazines shrunk to slivers of their former selves.

What was gained and what was lost is an ongoing conversation. The invitation to produce an exhibit of the *Tomales Bay Times* from the Jack Mason Museum is both a salute to a worthy piece of history and an opportunity keep this conversation going. Why did this year-long adventure have such an enduring imprint and, in its own way, make history?

The phrase "social" media today means a form of media that is typically formed from a single person with a big ego looking into a smart phone. The TBT was formed from an intense and disciplined collaboration of dozens of people sharing, engaging, laughing, and appreciating each other. Lifelong friendships evolved from the 1970s era in West Marin where similar collaborations occurred around passions for art, theater, children, music and the bountiful natural environment we shared.

Thanks to the Jack Mason Museum, we hope the TBT exhibit relives that experience and puts the social back in media where it belongs.

A regular feature created by students at West Marin School

Making Connections Through History

By Carol Acquaviva, Archivist

There's been plenty of activity in the archives lately. You never quite know what you'll encounter when opening a box of old papers. Recently, we welcomed descendants of the Edminster family, who came to explore the Shafter family collection. Mary Lovell Shafter Edminster was the younger sister of Oscar and James Shafter, and her descendants spent several hours looking through family photograph albums, genealogical research, and original documents. Among the materials they examined was correspondence dating from 1942 to 1952 between Dr. A. R. Guthrie, manager of the Inverness Water Works, and attorney Herbert K. Brainerd, who was connected to the Shafter family through marriage.

Meanwhile, the steady work of caring for our collections continues: updating catalog records in our PastPerfect database, organizing materials, and transferring fragile documents into archival-quality storage. These efforts help make our collections easier to find and use, while preserving them for future generations.

And perhaps the best part of working in the archives? There's always another box waiting to be opened.

Jack Mason Museum's Oral History Projects

The museum's two oral history projects, "Growing New Food Systems: Innovative Agriculture and Land Conservation in West Marin County, 1970-Present," and "Building Community: Young People Transform West Marin in the 1970s, Bringing Permanent and Positive Cultural Change," have collected dozens of the stories and insights of longtime and current farmers, ranchers, food producers, and longtime current residents who had a part in the creative and fulfilling 1970s era in West Marin.

Interviewers Sadie Barrett and Bay Whitney and now abroad and working to edit the transcripts and create two books based on the words they have recorded. On October 25, Bay and Sadie joined (via Zoom, at right) two panels facing an overflowing audience at the Dance Palace, a highly successful event that shared the projects with the greater community.Both these projects are ongoing, locally funded by donations and a generous grant from the West Marin Fund. If you'd like to contribute, please contact us!

On August 15, Museum committee member and Inverness Association board member Courtney Linn gave an excellent talk to an overcrowded museum about his book, "Inverness By Design, How Berkeley Made a Summer Place."

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Also see the Inverness Assocation's website, and be sure to join if you are not a member! The IA is the Jack Mason Museum's parent organization. **www.invernessassociation.org**

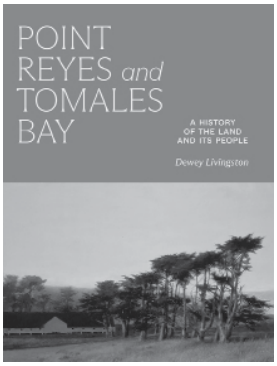
AVAILABLE!

POINT REYES AND TOMALES BAY: A HISTORY OF THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

by Dewey Livingston

$40 plus tax & shipping

www.jackmasonmuseum.org



Once Upon the Tomales Bay Times...

An explosive new exhibit on display November 2026 through January 2027

Reception and Talk on November 22, 2-4 pm

The exhibit can also be enjoyed during Inverness Library hours.