

POINT REYES LIGHT

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BOLINAS > Bolinas-Stinson School could dodge deep cuts with \$52 parcel tax increase. /10



HEALTH > Physical therapist discusses a case of recovery from rotator cuff tendonitis. /8



BUSINESS > BookBeat keeps its doors open after trying to sell the decade-old café. /2



CALENDAR > Slide Ranch Family Day on Saturday teaches kids about farming. /16



Point Reyes Seashore Lodge was closed this week for "spring cleaning." A colorful tent was visible to passersby in Olema on Tuesday as the business attempted to get rid of a pest problem. Photo by Eli Hamann.

No parity and equality for oyster farm

by Natalie Jones

The latest attempt to remove an oyster farm from Drakes Estero flopped last week when officials from the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) shot down the idea that Drake's Bay Oyster Company could be moved to Tomales Bay.

United States Senator Dianne Feinstein held a meeting Friday in San Francisco to discuss the possibility of relocation. Kevin Lunny, owner and operator of Drake's Bay Oyster Company (DBOC) was told by Feinstein's office in December that any reloca-

Please turn to **page 9**

Less cash for nonprofits

by Natalie Jones

Neysa King received an email from the state on Tuesday letting her know that although the budget has been passed, there is no word on when money will start flowing again to state grantees. In other words, no news.

King is the coordinator of the Tomales

Please turn to **page 7**

OPINION /4

Two newspapers is a dying proposition in Point Reyes

OCEANS /5

Wilderness on Farallones includes a helicopter pad

TAXES /7

How much you can save with solar, wind turbines

Lying naked on a trail

by Janet Fang

The clouds were moving across the sun Saturday afternoon. I lay silent in a tangle of naked bodies—like logs haphazardly floating down a stream, flanked by manzanita and coyote brush, flowing out into a cluster of young fir trees.

Forty nude bodies covered a rocky dirt path above Juniper Lane in San Geronimo, creating a river of flesh for Jack Gescheidt's TreeSpirit project—environmental art that brings attention to trees. Jack has photographed nudes in and around trees for several years, and now he brings TreeSpirit into his own backyard.

"When people are naked, they're vulnerable and harmless," Jack said. "They're open to the elements, to being scraped. If they're in big boots, plaid shirts and carrying guns, that looks very different. But naked, you know they won't hurt the tree."

On my side, with my back towards the camera, I try to inhale and exhale with the rest of the group. I hide my notebook and Canon Rebel XT under my arm and in my hair. With my left hand, I scribble, "hurts" and "rocks." The dressed rehearsal just 30 minutes earlier was less painful.

"Does this trail make me look fat?" one

Please turn to **page 18**

SERVICE FOR TIM FURLONG

Tim Furlong Sr. of Tomales passed away on Tuesday. A viewing will be held on March 3 at Adobe Creek Funeral Home from noon to 8 p.m., and a service will be held at St. Vincent's at 10:30 a.m. the next day. An obituary will appear in next week's paper.



“We are the River” from my perspective (above) and from Jack Gescheidt’s perspective (below). Photograph copyright Jack Gescheidt, TreeSpiritProject.com

>> Naked

continued from page 1

woman asked.

My head touched the leg of the man next to me, Fabien Gil from France. “I wanted to do some weird California stuff,” he explained. A spider crawled awkwardly over some rocks.

After ten minutes, we take a break from stillness and quietude while Jack reloaded. “Oww,” someone let out.

My friend Maria Tonione from the East Bay was on her stomach next to me, her head on my calves and one hand between someone’s legs. The pebbles dug into my hip, and I shifted onto my stomach. Toes wiggled against my leg. “I feel the wind,” Maria whispered. Knowing what part of her body she felt the wind with, I laughed and it hurt a little.

Jean Murphy of Larkspur lay supine next to her. “I’m the ass on the top of that Berkeley protest picture,” she said, referencing another TreeSpirit piece, in which participants climbed a fence around the contested oaks. “We have a responsibility to care for the trees, without whom we would all soon be dead,” she said. “They need our exhale as much as we need theirs.”

Three nudes perched in fir trees. “I can’t last another 10 minutes!” yelled Volker Frank of Oakland from the tree on the left. He was shaking—with his arms out in the branches, all his weight was on one leg.

“It smelled like Christmas,” recalled Christina Duffy of Sacramento. “It was really peaceful in the tree.” Her feet are still healing from stress fractures. “I wanted to give my all,” she said.

Her feet had started to turn purple when the branches started to give. “It takes a person that is really present to take care of the

tree and themselves at the same time.”

Scott Campbell of Santa Cruz had been in two TreeSpirit photos, and lying on the ground was different from his previous experiences, which involved climbing. On his side, outstretched with his arms over his head, he felt like he was about to push off the edge of a pool, twisting through the water. “Then I started to get into the head of the turkey vulture soaring above, looking at all these dead people lying on the ground.”

Donn DeAngelo from Forest Knolls lay at the end. “The serenity of everybody lying there without all our armor required a degree of trust.”

From a ladder, Jack yelled, “You guys are so beautiful. I don’t want this to end.”

About 20 minutes after we all disrobed, we wiped the dirt off each other and laughed at the rock prints on our backs. We cautiously hopped back to our clothes, trampling the shrubbery with our bare feet. A few men decide to stay naked.

I glimpsed at the picture on Jack’s digital camera. We did look like a river.

TreeSpirit

“It’s a photographic celebration of our interdependence with trees. If trees don’t survive, we don’t survive,” summed Jack, who has shot nearly 50 TreeSpirit photos in the past six years. “In this picture, you’re part of the larger landscape. We the humanity are connected to the land from which the tree springs.”

TreeSpirit is more than art, it’s also a tool for environmental awareness and promoting wise development. “I can make pretty pictures, but I wanted to involve people in a communal outdoor adventure, linking it to the notion that our connection with nature is critically important, especially when we are the dominant species on the planet,” he said.

Jack was born and bred in New York City by two professional photographers. He left college and became a copywriter for an advertising agency for six years. “The culture I was raised in is smart, funny, fast-paced, cynical, defended.”

He often escaped into the outdoors while visiting their country houses upstate. “All this comes from the little boy in me—happy, playful and alive in nature,” he said, his eyes—one hazel and one gray—following a squirrel as it climbed a tree in the rain. “Now, I have more information to draw upon. I can operate equipment and orchestrate people to express my love for nature artistically.”

At age 48, after 20 years of being a professional photographer, his perspective has changed. “If I was younger, I would be afraid that I’d be made fun of.” He wore three colorful buttons on his shirt on Saturday—each with a drawing of a tree and the word “hugger” underneath.

Last year, Jack and his partner and artistic consultant, jeweler Amy Pfaffman, left San Francisco for San Geronimo. “I love the peace and quiet,” he said. “The inspiration for the photo came to me in a flash a few months ago.” He has shot in Fairfax, but this is his first photo in West Marin.

Saturday wasn’t as rainy as forecasters had predicted, although wet glistening bodies in the rain is still a photo he has

yet to take. “I work with the palette that I’m given.”

Jack has a myriad of reasons for photographing nudes—being present in the moment, experiencing togetherness with nature and each other, feeling the textures of the earth and appreciating the timelessness without the cultural cues our clothing give.

“In our world, nudity is sexual and sexual is wrong. The more it’s pushed into the shadows, the bigger deal it becomes,” he said. “It becomes such a huge deal, it can bring down a president.”

Claire Morrison came from Sacramento for the photo shoot. “I was never taught to be ashamed of my body as a child, but I was never taught to embrace it either,” she said. “I think it’s really sad that nudity in its purest form is looked down upon as dirty and unacceptable.”

On Tuesday, Jack emailed the photo—now titled “We Are The River”—to all participants and thanked everyone again for their good spirits and generosity.

“How do I feel about this photo?” Jack asked. “It went well, I liked what I shot, and my opinion will ripen over time. But words fall short.”

As for my feelings, I haven’t figured them out yet. It was an adventure, I’m happy I did it and surprisingly, I can’t find the words either.

