

Dear friends and neighbors,

We hope all of you are finding ways to cope with our extended fight against this scourge. And I use the term “fight” purposely. It is a fight, and to win it, we need to be “all in”. Every precaution we take is in the interest of not only ourselves and our families but our neighbors and our community. Every local purchase we make, every take-out or delivery order helps sustain our local businesses. Every call we make, every note we write is an expression of care. So yes, we are all warriors for now. Keep up the good fight.

And importantly, don't forget that we all have times when we just need a friend. Perhaps to help in a low moment, or to share a joke, an amazing sight or a moment of optimism. It's a great time to rekindle connections and make those who cherish us know that we cherish them. We can never hear enough of “You've Got a Friend”. Click [here](#) for a reminder.

### **Knitting Us Together - A Mill Valley Community Project Deadline for Work - September 15th**



For those of you who missed this please take a look...or a second look. This “Urban Knitting” project in the downtown Mill Valley plaza will temporarily, and safely, cover some of the trees with knit or crocheted patches of yarn and flowers. If you can be a “maker”, they ask you to please knit or crochet **a 12 inch square or rectangle** (not to exceed 12 inches in height). The color theme is to be **reds, yellow and greens**, however nothing will be turned away. You can also finger crochet flowers for the project. Here is a video showing: [How to Finger Crochet a Flower](#). Completed pieces may be dropped off at The Mill Valley Community Center in the basket outside the front door M - F between 10 and 2 **before September 15th**. Mill Valley Village members who cannot drop off their work themselves are welcome to call the office (415-457-4633) to request that a village volunteer pick-up and deliver their work. The plan is to launch the Art Installation on **October 6** and for it to remain up for 7 - 10 days so we all get a chance to stop by and admire as well as take photos for those who cannot make it in person. Hope you all have some fun with this effort and we will keep you posted.

## VOTE 2020 - MAKE A PLAN - VOTE EARLY Election Day is November 3rd



One of the most important things we can all do to express our opinions on the way forward is to **VOTE**. With the news full of the importance of planning ahead and voting early to make sure your vote is counted the state and county have lots of good resources available to us: online, by email and by phone. The county is encouraging us to vote by mail (**Voting by Mail**) and is making the process straightforward. In addition, given the concerns raised about the possibility of the mail-in ballot process overwhelming curtailed postal resources, information about how, when and where to drop off completed ballots other than via USPS is being finalized. The following is a summary of key points and resources, with more to come as lists of polling places and drop-off boxes are available.

- **Every active registered voter will automatically receive a ballot in the mail**
- To check your voter registration information go to the Marin County Voter Information Portal (VIP), <https://apps.marincounty.org/vip/index.html>
- If you need to register to vote, go to <https://registertovote.ca.gov>, or email [elections@sos.ca.gov](mailto:elections@sos.ca.gov) or call 1-800-345-VOTE (8683)
- You may return your ballot by mail, in person or to a drop box. Because all active registered voters will receive a ballot in the mail, there will be **fewer polling places**
- Ballots returned by mail are postage-free, must be postmarked by Election Day and received by the Elections Department by November 20th. **Ballots may also be dropped off at the Marin County Elections office or at any Marin County polling place or drop box before the polls close (November 3, 8pm)**. The list of locations is not yet available online but we will include it in upcoming newsletters.
- Polling places are open **October 31 through November 3rd**.

Remember, **EARLY** is the key. These dates may help and can also be found [here](#).

- **September 24:** Voter Information Guides start to be mailed
- **October 5:** Vote-by-mail ballots start to be mailed
- **October 5:** Vote-by-mail ballots can also be issued at the Elections Department
- **October 6:** Vote-by-mail Drop Boxes are available throughout Marin County
- **October 19:** Voter registration deadline
- **October 20:** Conditional Voter Registration and same day voting begins
- **October 27:** Last day to apply for a vote-by-mail ballot to be mailed (voters can still pick up a ballot at the Elections Department - 3501 Civic Center Drive - #121)
- **October 31:** Polling places open with Conditional Voter Registration and same day voting available at polling places through Election Day
- **November 3, 2020:** Election Day

## Black Panther Shadows His Leopard Mate Photographed by Mithun H



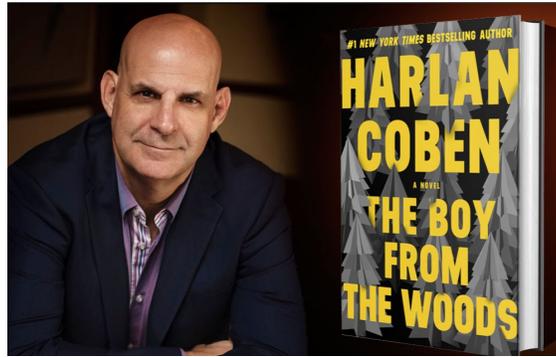
This is yet another find on [www.thisiscolossal.com](http://www.thisiscolossal.com), a new favorite website. I found this photo particularly arresting. The black panther really looks like a shadow. What fascinated me more was that I recognized the first “cat” as a leopard with her beautiful rosettes, but realized I had no idea what a “black panther” was or why it would have a leopard mate. Before filling you in on that, a bit of background on this stupendous shot.

The write-up said that since 2014, wildlife filmmaker and photographer Mithun H had been “pining for sightings of Saya, a black panther that’s been eluding his admirers in the Kabini Forest in India for years.” Apparently the photographer camped out in the area for nearly a week before capturing this stunning image of Saya, “shadowing” his partner Cleopatra. The photographer wrote on Instagram that the couple have been together for four years and have an atypical relationship for the species. He noted that usually the male takes charge, and moves around with the female following close behind. But with this pair it was definitely the female who was taking the lead. Here is a link to the photographer’s work, and more on this “power couple”: <https://www.instagram.com/mithunhphotography/>.

Regarding the term **black panther**, I read that the name refers to a “melanistic” color variant of any “cat” in the *Panthera* genus, especially the **leopard** in Asia and Africa and the **jaguar** in the Americas. Black panthers of either species have excess black pigment but their typical spotted markings are still present, though difficult to discern. According to National Geographic **black panther** is an umbrella term to refer to any big cat with a black coat. Here is a shot found online where the spots can be seen beneath the black pigment.



## Recently Read and Recommended *Boy From the Woods* - by Harlan Coben



Harlan Coben is a new writer to me. Sometime over the last few months this book appeared on a list of “recently released and recommended books”. When the list of books in my queue ran low the library filled my request for this much needed dose of escapism and made it easy to collect via their Curbside Pickup. In ***The Boy From The Woods***, Coben weaves an intricate story with numerous characters and inter-connections both past and present. Many likeable. Some, not so much. As my introduction to Coben’s work, these personal connections, as well as an unpredictable and complex plot made him an author I will, and did, return to. Many twists and turns, characters you want to know more about put ***The Boy From The Woods***, Coben’s latest, on my recommended list. Below is an excerpt from the write-up on Amazon:

**A Man with a mysterious past must find a missing teenage girl in this shocking thriller from the #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Run Away*.**

Thirty years ago, Wilde was found as a boy living feral in the woods, with no memory of his past. Now an adult, he still doesn’t know where he comes from, and another child has gone missing.

No one seems to take Naomi Plne’s disappearance seriously, not even her father -- with one exception. Heather Crimstein, a television criminal attorney, knows through her grandson that Naomi was relentlessly bullied at school....

Delightfully, Coben is a prolific author of mystery novels and thrillers. As one reviewer put it “the plots of his novels often involve the resurfacing of unresolved or misinterpreted events in the past, murders or fatal accidents and have multiple twists”. Several of his books have become Netflix series and ***Tell No One*** became a hit French film under the same name. Intrigued? Here is a link to his books: <https://booksreadingorder.com/harlan-coben/>). As you will see, he has a number of stand-alone books and is apparently renowned for his **Myron Bolitar** series. After I finished *The Boy From the Woods*, another dose was in order. Since the first book of the Myron Bolitar series was not available at the library, the first book in the **Mickey Bolitar** series was next. The first night I started reading it I was completely absorbed. Closing it to put it on the nightstand I noticed a TEEN sticker on the binding. Ha! Turns out Mickey is Myron’s nephew and has his own three (so far) book series. Despite the supposedly TEEN genre I liked it a lot and am ready to order the next in that series. I am also on the waitlist for the first in the Myron Bolitar series as an ebook. So many options. So little (?) time. The good news, if you decide you like his style, is that the stand-alone books can be read in any order, based on what is available at the library. If this is your genre, I highly recommend trying one.

## Good Links - Sites to Bookmark Mill Valley and Marin County



I am frequently amazed, and grateful, at how much information my brother in Virginia gleans for me and my sister in Sonoma whenever there is something unusual going on. Our lightning strikes, heat wave, power outages, fires and more qualified for many helpful bits from him lately, all from Twitter. I asked how he got these pieces knowing that, like me, he is a social media luddite. He explained that while these agencies use their Twitter feeds to disseminate updates directly to those who sign up, those of us who prefer not to create a Twitter account can go take a look at the same feeds by bookmarking these sites and checking them when needed. Like now. Nice.

Here are some of the links he has bookmarked to keep in touch with our Marin situation. The first one has been of most use lately. And remember, you DO NOT have to be a Twitter user to access this information:

<https://twitter.com/marincountyfire>

<https://twitter.com/MarinSheriff>

<https://twitter.com/millvalleypd>

<https://twitter.com/NWSBayArea>

Most of you have heard this suggestion before, but if not, or you have not gotten around to it, this may be the time. If you have not already signed up for nixle alerts you should do so here: <https://local.nixle.com/county/ca/marin/>. Also consider signing up for alerts at [www.alertmarin.org](http://www.alertmarin.org). It was because of these alerts that I did not panic when awakened by a strong smoke smell the other day. The alert told me it was a vegetation fire just up the mountain a way, but “contained, though drift smoke will be present”. Back to sleep with a sigh of relief rather than pacing with binoculars scanning for the source of the smoke.



## Help Us Help Others



If you know someone who could use our services, is interested in volunteering, or would like to donate to an organization serving older adults, please have them contact our local Mill Valley Village Volunteer Chair, Karen Robbins ([karobbins@comcast.net](mailto:karobbins@comcast.net) or 415-519-3420) or Membership Chair Sue Steele ([xerty.10@gmail.com](mailto:xerty.10@gmail.com) or 415-388-7832) for more information. They can also access our website at [www.mvillage.org](http://www.mvillage.org). Our volunteers continue to work tirelessly to provide connections and services to our members, from check-in calls and notes, to dog walks, picking up books, prescriptions and other items for delivery, as well as providing critical transportation to important medical appointments. If you can lend a hand once in a while or know someone who can, please get in touch with Karen. If you know someone who could use our services Sue would love to hear from you, or them. Your friends and neighbors will appreciate it.

### Events for September

Here is the run down for September. These events can also be found at [www.mvillage.org](http://www.mvillage.org) under either the **Events** or **Calendar** tab. The **Events** tab will give you a list in date order. The **Calendar** tab shows you the same events in calendar format.

#### **Tuesday, September 1, Caregiving and Family - Challenges and Rewards, 1pm**

Are you caring for a family member or friend? If so, this group may be for you. The group meets the first Tuesday of the month. First convened in early 2015, the group has as its goal providing 'support that recognizes one's inner strengths and resiliency, no matter the circumstances'. If such a group might appeal to you, Mill Valley villagers are invited to contact Sara Byruck ([sybruck@gmail.com](mailto:sybruck@gmail.com) or 617-599-8116) for more information and directions. **For now the group is meeting via Zoom** rather than at a home near downtown Mill Valley. If you have considered this group but have hesitated for any reason, now may be the time. Sara would be delighted to chat with you to see if it feels right to you. Give her a call.

#### **Tuesdays, September 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29, Knitting and Needlework Group, 3pm**

Have a knitting or needlework project you would like to undertake in the company of friends? If so this group might be for you. We typically meet weekly to discuss potential projects, enjoy each other's company and encourage each other as progress is made. **For now we are meeting via Zoom.** This group has been meeting regularly and is enjoying the camaraderie around their efforts. Beginners are welcome. Mill Valley Village members and volunteers, as well as those interested in finding out more about the village, are welcome to contact Sara Byruck ([sbyruck@gmail.com](mailto:sbyruck@gmail.com) or 617-599-8116) for more information.

### **Wednesdays, September 2 and 16, Men's Group, 11am**

This is an informal "gathering" with no particular agenda beyond the company of friends. We encourage you, whether a volunteer or member, to come join us. **While this group has historically met at the Sweetwater, we have been meeting online via Zoom since March.** To get more information or to be put on the reminder list for upcoming meetings contact Alan Hayakawa ([alan.hayakawa@gmail.com](mailto:alan.hayakawa@gmail.com) or 415-384-8998). The group meets the first and third Wednesdays at 11am.

### **Mondays? More?, "Back Before Lunch Hikes"**

These hikes, aimed at those looking for a shorter hiking option than our Friday hikes, have typically been 3 to 4 miles long, with an elevation gain of 500-800 feet and lasting about 2 hours. The group used to meet early Monday mornings and be "back before lunch". The hike was very popular, not only for the wonderful hiking venues but for the connections forged on the trail. While the once-a-week large group format is no longer feasible, new guidance from the County and Marin Villages opens the door to small group outdoor activities. To encourage you to keep on hiking, Sara Byruck, long-time group coordinator and hike leader, has offered to help you keep in touch with each other and out on the trail. And if you need a hiking companion she will put you in touch with others in the group who are also looking for someone to hike with. For more information or to get on Sara's email list contact her at [sbyruck@gmail.com](mailto:sbyruck@gmail.com).

### **Thursday, September 10, Book Club, 3pm**

The group, led by Trish Hibben ([t.hibben@me.com](mailto:t.hibben@me.com) or 415-215-8394), meets monthly. **Until further notice the group is meeting online via Zoom.** The group, aimed at local village volunteers and members, will be kept small. Contact Trish to be put on the list for future openings.

### **Wednesday, September 16, Third Wednesday Trail Walk Group, 10am**

We hold 2 - 4 mile trail walks on relatively flat terrain the third Wednesday morning of each month, occasionally heading elsewhere for an outdoor adventure. Our plan is to get together in small groups with local walks on wide open paths, keeping our distance and wearing masks. It will be great to see one another in the open air and catch up. If you are already on Karen's email list look for more information over the next couple of weeks for July 15th. If you want to get on the list, or for more information, contact Karen Robbins ([karobbins@comcast.net](mailto:karobbins@comcast.net) or 415-519-3420).

**Until next month...stay safe, stay well  
and keep on the lookout for what you can do  
to contribute to a better way forward**