

Novato Village

Empowering older adults to remain active, connected,
and independent in the place they call home

February 2024 Newsletter

NOVATO VILLAGE STEERING COMMITTEE SAYS...

February, the shortest month of the year, has one extra day in 2024: February 29th is *Leap Year!* How did this happen? Roman Emperor Julius Caesar created the Year of Confusion when he decided that the year 46 B.C. was going to be 445 days long instead of 365 days long. He then made a 365.25-day year that added a leap day every fourth year. (National Geographic)

The list of holidays in February is long. A partial list includes Groundhog Day, Chinese Lunar New Year, Super Bowl Sunday, Abraham Lincoln's Birthday, Mardi Gras, Valentine's Day, Ash Wednesday, Presidents' Day, George Washington's birthday, and Leap Day.



- ❖ The **Chinese Lunar New Year** celebration is from February 10 – 24, 2024. It is the Year of the Dragon. To be more precise, the Year of the Wood Dragon.
- ❖ In Chinese astrology, the 12 zodiac animals are each affiliated with an element—metal, wood, water, fire, earth—as they move around the zodiac cycle, and when an animal reappears after 12 years its elemental affiliation will shift. For example, 2012 was the Year of the Water Dragon and 2036 will be the Year of the Fire Dragon.
- ❖ People born under each elemental zodiac animal sign have a unique set of personality traits that influence their lives, not unlike the concept behind the Western zodiac signs.
- ❖ Wood represents vitality and creativity, while the dragon is related to success, intelligence, and honor in Chinese culture. This combination makes people born in the Year of the Wood Dragon full of energy and drive.

Monthly quote

"We tend to forget that happiness doesn't come as a result of getting something we don't have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have." ~Friedrich Koenig

Friedrich Gottlob Koenig (17 April 1774 – 17 January 1833) was a German inventor best known for his high-speed, steam-powered printing press, which he built together with watchmaker Andreas Friedrich Bauer. This new style of printing press could print up to 1,100 sheets per hour, printing on both sides of the paper at the same time.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS!

Members: Inge Larson, Max and Cathy Lidl, Vicki Samo, Penny Singer

Volunteer: Karen Dolkas

Thank you for giving your time and energy to our village. We look forward to seeing you all at an event soon!

NOVATO VILLAGE EVENTS

If you need a ride to any of the events below, please call the office. (415) 457-4633

Here's the February 2024 calendar of Novato Village activities...details in this newsletter!

Thursday, February 1, 9:30am – Village Walkers, Indian Valley Campus Trail

Thursday, February 8, 1:30pm – CoffeeTea&Chat, Creekside Bakery, 1719 Grant Ave.

Tuesday, February 13, 1:30pm – Novato Village Book Lovers' Group, at a member's home

Saturday, February 17, time & location TBA – Village Viewers Movie Group

Monday, February 19, 10:00am – Novato Village Steering Committee, Beth Livoti's home

Wednesday, February 21, noon – Lunch at China Palace, 7089 Redwood Blvd, Novato

Thursday, February 22, 3:00 – Happy Hour, **new location to be announced**

Food & Drink

CoffeeTea&Chat

Thursday, February 8, 1:30 – 3:00pm

Creekside Bakery, 1719 Grant Ave., Novato

We'll see you at Creekside Bakery in February. Join us to meet lively friends and enjoy flowing conversation. Get connected to other Novato Village members and volunteers, and bring a friend who might be interested in Novato Village. RSVP is not required. For more information, contact hostess Joanne Lang, (916) 716-5800 or novatovillage@marinvillage.org. If you need a ride, contact the Marin Villages office at (415) 457-4633 or info@marinvillages.org.



We enjoyed our coffee meet-up at Panera Bread in January

Lunch at China Palace Restaurant

Wednesday, February 21, noon – 2:00pm
7089 Redwood Blvd, Novato

We will enjoy lunch at China Palace as the Year of the Wood Dragon begins. See the lunch menu at this link: chinapalaceonline.com. One Yelp customer comment: “This is one of the best decorated Chinese restaurants in Marin County, and the food is excellent, highly recommended!”

Please RSVP by Monday, February 19, so we can tell the restaurant how many guests we’ll have for seating. Plan to pay with cash. **To RSVP**, email novatovillage@marinvillage.org or call Joanne Keenan at (415) 883-5729. Joanne does not arrange rides. If you need a ride, contact the Marin Villages office at info@marinvillages.org or (415) 457-4633.

Happy Hour – new location to be announced

Thursday, February 22, 3:00 – 5:00pm

Novato Village invites you to our monthly Happy Hour. We’ll be confirming the new location in early February. **Please plan to RSVP** by Tuesday, February 20, so we can tell the staff how many guests we’ll have for seating. Please plan to pay with cash. *An email will be sent with the Happy Hour location so watch for it.* If you need a ride, contact the Marin Villages office at (415) 457-4633 or info@marinvillages.org.



January's Happy Hour at TOAST—check for a new location in February!

Education & Presentations

Did you miss the engaging Zoom chat on January 10th with our Marin County District 5 Supervisor Eric Lucan?

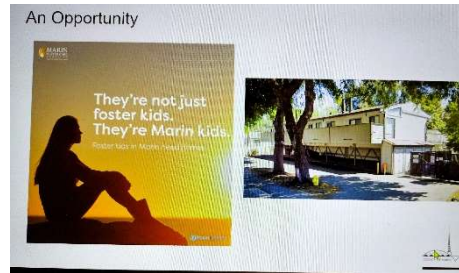
Supervisor Eric Lucan shared many details about District 5, the Marin County area that includes Novato, during his Zoom visit. Did you know 24.5% of Marin County residents are age 65 and over as of August 2023, according to the U.S. Census Bureau Population and Housing Unit Estimates?

He shared an opportunity that can provide *emotional support* for children who are in the foster care program in the county. YOU can become a foster grandparent—at no cost to you. Learn what that means by using this Zoom recording link.

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/5wgANWfPv-DKYCp-MhNAiSJPF6dcN3AIGXOBatoyEq1sDE_Aq-g1lUi_sP1-r_3Z.TjyPMiyYrO9WESm

Some photos from the presentation...





Exercise

Novato Village Walkers—IVC of College of Marin (COM) (canceled if raining)

Thursday, February 1, 9:30am

Indian Valley Campus, 1800 Ignacio Blvd., Novato—use free parking lot #5

We will start at the Indian Valley COM *free parking lot #5 (on the left) just before you get to the large pay parking lot* adjacent to the baseball field located at the very end of Ignacio Blvd. The plan is to walk from the parking lot to Indian Valley Rd. It's a very level walk—a wide path, no hills, about a mile round-trip. This is a firm, dirt-packed path. Please RSVP to Pat Bailey at pbailey49@aol.com or text or phone (415) 652-9073.



We enjoyed the sunny weather at Hamilton Levee in January

Books

Village Book Lovers' Group

Tuesday, February 13, 1:30pm

RSVP by Sunday, February 11 to get the location address

For the February meeting, we'll be reading *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating* by Elizabeth Bailey.

Please RSVP to Diana Shima for the address by Sunday, February 11. For more information about the Village Book Lovers' Group, contact Diana by email. dianashima3@comcast.net

Come join us in 2024!

Fun & Games

Mah Jong Club

Tuesdays, February 13 & 27, 10:00am – noon

ESCOM Center, Indian Valley Campus, College of Marin, 1800 Ignacio Blvd.



This club was formed to teach people how to play Mah Jong and to offer a venue for experienced players to meet. We play Mah Jong at the ESCOM Building on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month.

RSVP: Please contact Linda Henderson at linda_h@peak.org or (415) 382-8910, or Pat Bailey at pbailey49@aol.com or (415) 883-9156 with any questions and to advise us when you can attend. *We cannot accept walk-ins.* Remember you must be a **member of ESCOM** as they graciously allow us to use their facility at the Indian Valley Campus. Please contact Linda or Pat with any questions about ESCOM membership.

Groups

Village Viewers Movie Group

Saturday, February 17, time and location to be announced by email

In January, we viewed the movie *The Boys in the Boat* starring Callum Turner and directed by George Clooney. This was the story of the University of Washington Olympic rowing team of 1936. The acting and story were amazing...one of the best movies we've seen so far. The next movie will be announced the Wednesday prior to the event by email. Hope to see you there! Contact Joanne Lang with questions or movie suggestions, at (916) 716-5800 or novatovillage@marinvillage.org.



In January, The Boys in the Boat was popular!

Village Business

Novato Village Steering Committee

Monday, February 19, 10:00am—**date change**

Beth Livoti's home

The date and time of the Steering Committee meeting have changed. Please contact Beth Livoti, llivoti@comcast.net or (415) 892-1043 for more information and the address.

OTHER MARIN VILLAGES EVENTS

Men's Coffee

Wednesdays, February 7 & 21, 11:30am



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. The group meets at restaurants and coffee shops around Mill Valley the first and third Wednesdays of the month. To get more information or to be put on the reminder list for upcoming meetings contact Irv Gubman (irvgubman@gmail.com or (415) 250-6155).

Not Home Alone Valentine's Day

Wednesday, February 14, 2:00pm

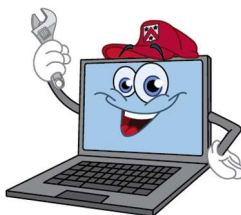
Red Rooster Restaurant 901 B St, San Rafael
Corner of Third Street



Join your hostess Donnalee Wells and other Villagers to celebrate Valentine's Day for an early supper at Red Rooster Restaurant—one of BJ's favorite restaurants! Always a fun time and a great opportunity to share the holiday with old and new friends. Six menu options will be available for \$27 – \$30 and include entree, salad, cookies, tax and tip. Drinks are not included. **RSVP is required by Monday, Feb 12.** First come, first served, and space is limited. Please bring **CASH** for your meal and drink, no credit cards. RSVP to Donnalee Wells by email, phone, or text at donnaleewells@comcast.net or (415) 302-9244. Please call the office for ride requests. (415) 457-4633

Technology/Computer Help Office Hours

Wednesday, February 21, 4:00 – 5:30pm
Zoom



Issues with your printer? iPhone not syncing properly? If so, join our volunteer tech support group for the answers to these and all of your other burning technology questions! We look forward to continuing to help solve your frustrating tech problems. This is a space where you can "drop in," ask questions, and receive personalized, individually focused, expert tech advice from some of our wonderful tech volunteers. Even if you'd just like to sit in to learn a little more about technology, we'd love to have you participate! So bring your questions about your computers, tablets, phones, etc., and our dedicated tech volunteers will do the rest. This opportunity is available to all Marin Villages members and volunteers. Please join us at this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89289995207>!

Bocce

Friday, February 23, 1:00 – 3:00pm
Bocce Federation of Marin, 550 B Street, San Rafael



What better way to spend an afternoon than on the bocce court?! No prior bocce experience necessary, just soft-soled shoes and your presence. Come for the company and watch others play if you prefer. Either way, join us! Bring a snack to share with the group. Questions? Call Larry Meredith. (415) 860-2535 Need a ride? Call Marin Villages' office. (415) 457-4633

COMMUNITY EVENTS

ESCOM Spotlight: Talking About Death Won't Kill You! with Jim Van Buskirk

Friday, February 16, 10:00 – 11:00am

Zoom

Jim Van Buskirk has spent much of his life not realizing that he was death ignorant, likely in death denial, and desperately in need of education. Magical thinking suggests that if we ignore death, it might go away; unfortunately, it doesn't seem to work that way. Van Buskirk shares his personal experiences hosting death discussions, volunteering with Final Exit Network, and compiling an annotated bibliography of resources on death and dying. The hope is that we become more comfortable with discussing this stigmatized topic. By having more conversations and doing more planning, we can achieve solace and a deeper appreciation of life's preciousness. Among the topics covered will be Advance Care Directives (including DNR and POLST), Medical Proxy, options for choosing one's time of death, disposition of one's body, and other important end-of-life issues.

To register, please use this link and a Zoom invitation will be sent to you.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/X5J33LC>

NOVATO VILLAGE ANNOUNCEMENTS

We have a very special birthday to celebrate! Novato Village member Marie Lazzari will enjoy her **95th** birthday on February 20th. Watch for photos in the next newsletter.

AND MORE

Does chicken soup really help when you're sick?

A nutrition specialist explains what's behind the beloved comfort food.

By Colby Teeman, Assistant Professor of Dietetics and Nutrition, University of Dayton
October 20, 2023



Preparing a bowl of chicken soup for a loved one when they're sick has been a common practice throughout the world for centuries. Today, generations from virtually every culture swear to the benefits of chicken soup. In the U.S., the dish is typically made with noodles, but different cultures prepare the soothing remedy their own way.

Chicken soup as a therapy can be traced back to 60 A.D. and Pedanius Dioscorides, an army surgeon who served under the Roman emperor Nero, and whose five-volume medical encyclopedia was consulted by early healers for more than a millennium. But the origins of chicken soup go back thousands of years earlier, to ancient China.

So, with cold and flu season in full swing, it's worth asking: Is there any science to back the belief that it helps? Or does chicken soup serve as just a comforting placebo, that is, providing psychological benefit while we're sick, without an actual therapeutic benefit?

As a registered dietitian and professor of dietetics and nutrition, I'm well aware of the appeal of chicken soup: the warmth of the broth and the rich, savory flavors of the chicken, vegetables and noodles. What gives the soup that distinctive taste is "umami" – the fifth category of taste sensations, along with sweet, salty, sour and bitter. It is often described as having a "meaty" taste.

Improved appetite, better digestion

All that makes sense, because amino acids are the building blocks of proteins, and the amino acid glutamate is found in foods with the umami taste. Not all umami foods are meat or poultry, however; cheese, mushrooms, miso and soy sauce have it too.

Studies show that taste, it turns out, is critical to the healing properties of chicken soup. When I see patients with upper respiratory illnesses, I notice many of them are suddenly eating less or not eating at all. This is because acute illnesses ignite an inflammatory response that can

decrease your appetite. Not feeling like eating means you're unlikely to get the nutrition you need, which is hardly an optimal recipe for immune health and recovery from illness.

But evidence suggests that the umami taste in chicken soup may help spur a bigger appetite. Participants in one study said they felt hungrier after their first taste of a soup with umami flavor added in by researchers.

Other studies say umami may also improve nutrient digestion. Once our brains sense umami through the taste receptors on our tongues, our bodies prime our digestive tracts to absorb protein more easily.

This can reduce gastrointestinal symptoms, which many people experience when they're under the weather. Although most people don't associate upper respiratory infections with gastrointestinal symptoms, research in children has found that the flu virus increased abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea symptoms.

May reduce inflammation and stuffy nose

Inflammation is part of the body's natural response to injury or illness; inflammation occurs when white blood cells migrate to inflamed tissue to assist with healing. When this inflammatory process occurs in the upper airway, it results in common cold and flu symptoms, such as a stuffy or runny nose, sneezing, coughing and thickened mucus.

Conversely, lower white blood cell activity in the nasal passages can reduce inflammation. And interestingly, research shows that chicken soup can in fact lower the number of white blood cells traveling to inflamed tissues. It does this by directly inhibiting the ability of neutrophils, a type of white blood cell, to travel to the inflamed tissue.

Key ingredients

To truly understand the soothing and healing effects of chicken soup, it's important to consider the soup's ingredients. Not all chicken soups are packed with nutritious healing properties. For instance, the ultra-processed canned versions of chicken soup, both with and without noodles, lack many of the antioxidants found in homemade versions. Most canned versions of chicken soup are nearly devoid of hearty vegetables.

The core nutrients in homemade versions of the soup are what set these varieties apart from canned versions. Chicken provides the body with a complete source of protein to combat infection. Vegetables supply a wide array of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. If prepared the American way, noodles provide an easily digestible source of carbohydrate that your body uses for energy and recovery.

Even the warmth of chicken soup can help. Drinking the liquid and inhaling the vapors increase the temperature of nasal and respiratory passages, which loosens the thick mucus that often accompanies respiratory illnesses. Compared with hot water alone, studies show chicken soup is more effective at loosening mucus.

The herbs and spices sometimes used in chicken soup, such as pepper and garlic, also loosen mucus. The broth, which contains water and electrolytes, helps with rehydration.

So, to maximize the health benefits of chicken soup, I recommend a homemade variety, which can be prepared with carrots, celery, fresh garlic, herbs and spices, to name a few ingredients. But if you need a more convenient option, look at the ingredients and nutrition facts label, and choose soups with a variety of vegetables over an ultra-processed, nutrient-depleted kind.

In short, the latest science suggests that chicken soup – though not an out-and-out cure for colds and flu – really helps with healing. Looks like Grandma was right again.

HELP US HELP OTHERS

If you know someone who could use our services or is interested in volunteering with us, visit our website (www.marinvillages.org) for application forms. We always welcome donations to support our work! Please visit <https://marin.helpfulvillage.com/pages/10049-marin-villages---donate> to contribute.

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