Fully restored, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's yacht, *The Potomac*, sails San Francisco Bay. This National Historic Monument is berthed at Jack London Square. An article on Page 3 inside tells you of her history and how you, too, may enjoy her hospitality.
ESCOM NEWSLETTER
835 College Ave.
Kentfield, CA 94904-2590
Pres: Marian Mermel (mmermel1@yahoo.com)
Editor: Don Polhemus (dondorpol@aol.com)

ESCOM COUNCIL MEETS IN JANUARY

Dr Arnulfo Cedillo, our Director of Student Services, invited Ms. Jean Steel, a motivational lecturer, to speak to the ESCOM Council as part of a series of talks she was to give to various campus groups. Ms. Steel’s power point presentation was well received, and our members engaged in an interactive discussion with her.

Preview Day on January 14, suggested by President Marian Mermel and staged by Community College staff and faculty, was a well-attended and an outstanding success. Twenty tables were staffed by faculty members who explained their courses to the attendees and encouraged enrollment in their class offerings. A number of the instructors gave brief talks or demonstrations which were both informative and entertaining. A table representing ESCOM greeted the incoming visitors, and a number of new members were recruited. Dr. Jason Lau, Director of Community Education, was Master of Ceremonies and displayed an uncanny skill at African Dancing. (Well, almost.)

Vice President Dick Park chaired the abbreviated business meeting of the Council and called on the standing committee chairs to give their reports.

Financial grants chair Bev Munyon reported that she had received 21 grant applications for the winter semester, a sharp reduction from earlier requests, and she expected to have favorable dispositions of these requests.

Dick Park reported that the Curriculum Committee approved two new courses at a special meeting on December 15, and had discussed the beneficial use of funds recently made available to ESCOM as a result of a generous bequest by the late Joan Hopper, Editor of the Newsletter.

The recent vacancy created by a resigning member of the Council was filled by the appointment of John Felling, a member of the Curriculum Committee and enthusiastic participant in ESCOM activities. John has retired from 26 years of facility support for primary education and lifelong adult education and university research programs. He attended several meetings of the Council prior to his appointment and promises to be an active participant.

Paul Tandler was re-appointed as Chairman of the Nominations and Election Committee, a task he has performed for a number of years.

Marian Mermel, Dick Park and Bev Munyon have formed an ad hoc committee to determine the best disposition of the funds made available to ESCOM and Community Education. Stay tuned.

The Council will meet again at the Indian Valley Campus Emeritus Center on February 16, 2012.

Reported by Paul Tandler

COM IN THE NEWS

Former President of COM Frances L. White has joined the Marin Independent Journal’s Editorial Board as its new public member. The Board meets weekly to discuss local issues and form opinions to be presented in the I. J.’s editorials.

Multimedia Game Design Class - Training the Next Generation: College of Marin's game design students are finding new local jobs, partly due to the "ever-growing" multimedia industry in Northern California. The Multimedia Studies Program is taught by David Maxwell at the IVC campus. It provides students with an Associate of Science degree leading toward a university degree. Students learn the basics of storyboards, modeling 3D animation, scripting, how to publish it to a disk and make it ready to hand out. They also are able to show their work to representatives from local companies involved with this activity.

EMS Instructor Wins top Honors for a Distinguished Career: Ted Peterson, 49, a College of Marin emergency medical services (EMS) instructor, Novato Fire Protection District battalion chief and EMS director, recently became the third Californian to receive the designation of Chief Medical Officer, an international, professional designation
that honors his 31 years of experience in the field and community. Mr. Peterson began teaching at COM more than five years ago and currently teaches several courses in the Fire Technology Program. The thing he likes most about teaching at COM is the diversity of the student population, to include people from various backgrounds interested in EMS.

Community Chorus Celebrates 50th Anniversary: In 1961 the College of Marin Community Chorus (now known as "Marin Oratorio") came to be. Now with more than 100 voices strong, the Chorus celebrated its 50th Anniversary with a special anniversary concert performed in December 2011, with works of Bach, Mozart, and Gabrieli, to name a few.

Emeritus "Yiddish" Conversational Class: This Emeritus language class is attended by a small but dedicated group of students intent on learning not only the language basics, but also on emphasizing history, music and culture. Yiddish words are recognizable in everyday life since the language has many root words from Hebrew, German, Slavic languages, and even English. The class is taught by Julie Egger who does so with much humor and enthusiasm.

Submitted by Alicia Warcholski

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE POTOMAC

The USS Potomac was originally built in 1934 as the Coast Guard cutter Electra. The 165-foot vessel, weighing 376 gross tons, with a cruising speed of 10-13 knots, was converted to the presidential yacht USS Potomac by Franklin D. Roosevelt, who had her commissioned as a U.S. Navy vessel in 1936. As former Assistant Secretary of the Navy, FDR had a deep love for the sea and Navy tradition. He hated to fly and chose either trains or ships as a preferred means of transportation throughout his presidency.

FDR suffered from sinusitis most of his adult life. Particularly during the sultry summer days in Washington, D.C., he preferred to cruise on the USS Potomac rather than stay in the White House. The USS Potomac gave the nation’s 32nd president much needed relaxation from the cares of governing the United States through the Great Depression and World War II. He loved informal strategy sessions with close advisors and congressional leaders in the privacy and seclusion of the USS Potomac.

After the President’s death in April, 1945, the USS Potomac began a long and ignominious decline from her former role in world affairs. Falling into private hands and later seized in San Francisco Bay as a front for a drug smuggling operation in 1980, the proud vessel’s hull was pierced and she sank at Treasure Island. She was re-floated by the Navy two weeks later and was sold by the US Customs Office to the only bidder, the Port of Oakland, for just $15,000. The Port of Oakland then spearheaded a cooperative effort with organized labor, maritime corporations and dedicated volunteers to complete a $5 million restoration. The Association for the Preservation of the Presidential Yacht Potomac now operates this National Historic Landmark as an active memorial to Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the momentous times through which he led our nation.

Today the Presidential Yacht Potomac regularly cruises San Francisco Bay, offering two-hour history cruises, cruise/tour adventures to Angel Island, holiday cruises and private charters. Every spring and fall the Potomac offers free cruises to classroom students from around the Bay Area. The Association is run almost exclusively by a staff of over 100 dedicated volunteers.

Long time Emeritus College member and Potomac docent Elizabeth Hannon notes that local residents often bring out-of-country/state guests on the luncheon/history cruises. They are thrilled by the dual experience: San Francisco Bay and the Potomac restored to just as FDR knew it. If you’d like to schedule a cruise on the Potomac call 1-510-627-1215. The 2012 season starts April 29, with Opening Day on the Bay. Shortly thereafter comes the popular Mother's Day cruise. Dockside tours are also available.

Would you like more information about being a Potomac volunteer or docent? Elizabeth would be pleased to hear from you. Call 415-883-2401.

Marti Burchell, Executive Director, and Elizabeth Hannon, Docent
MEMORIES OF MY FATHER
by Marian Mermel

I remember when I was young, being in my Grandma Anna's house and seeing a little candle in a small glass jar flickering on top of her stove. There was something sad and yet warm about it. Grandma would light the candle, muttering something in Hebrew, and only at certain times of the year. After the candle was lit, I could see tears streaming down her cheeks.

Many years later, I found myself in my kitchen lighting a small candle in a glass jar, muttering some Hebrew prayer and feeling wet tears on my cheeks. I learned that Jews lit these candles in memory of someone who had died. They are lit on the anniversary of someone's death. Every year, on February 4th, I light one for my father.

Though he died many years ago, at times I still find it hard to believe that he's not on a vacation in Florida with his parents, Anna and Mayer. Death simply is not an easy thing to accept. About four years ago, I was able to actually say my father died. Now, I'm able to remember - to let myself be filled with memories of my father.

He was one of those special people who really had a love for life and for others. Will Rogers may have said, "I never met a man I didn't like," but my father never met a person who didn't like him. I never really knew how many people my father had touched - cousins, aunts, uncles, and friends - who later shared the special relationships they had with him on afternoon walks and talks. As one cousin told me, "He was the only one I could talk to. He accepted me!"

I was my father's baby. He was protective of me and yet demanded I learn how to survive. Survival was very important to him and for his family. He instilled in all of us that sense that we had to take care of ourselves. I have learned to be a quiet fighter.

My father truly believed this life was a gift. He had a mystical side to him. He would talk about reincarnation and an afterlife. He said, "Although the body may turn to dust, our thoughts are made of pure energy, and this energy is given back to the universe." He believed that since thoughts could not be destroyed, they could exist forever. These thoughts, ideas, and shared feelings would be the part of him that would go on living within me and all those he had embraced in his life. Although he believed in some form of existence after life, he thought this life should be totally experienced, as any good novel, from beginning to end. He thought one of the exciting things about life, which helped him go on when times were difficult, was the curiosity of not knowing what the next chapter would reveal.

Yes, life was very special to him. I even remember when I was five, my father sharing the importance of this lifetime. I came home sobbing from kindergarten one day. My father picked me up and put me on his knee. "Now, baby," he said, "what happened?" I told him somebody at school said I was going to rot in hell because I was a Jew. I didn't know the meaning of rot, hell, or Jew, but I clearly got the message none of it was good and something bad was going to happen to me. My father gently said, "First, Jews don't believe in hell. Second, there is no heaven or hell. If you make this life hard and difficult and unloving, that will be your hell. But if you make this life a good one and find some joy and love, that will be your heaven." He kissed me. I smiled. I still didn't understand rot, hell, or Jew, but I felt better and secure knowing that some dumb kid at school wasn't going to send me to some awful place to rot.

Before my father's third open heart surgery at Stanford, he motioned me to his bed. God, all I could think about was, "Daddy, please don't give me a death talk now." And, of course, that's what he proceeded to do. He took my hand in his and said, "Baby, I know you will do fine. You have the right thoughts in your mind and you are a survivor. But you must help your mother for a little while until she, too, realizes she's a survivor." Then he said, "If I die, I will come back to make contact as a butterfly." I looked at him. We smiled and kissed, and I kept thinking - butterfly - meshugah, the medicine is making him even stranger!

Well, I will now share one more memory with you. My father passed away in February, shortly after his third surgery. In April, I was sitting with my para-professional in the school yard where I teach, watching the children play. It was
a glorious sunny day. As I sat on a wooden block, a big, beautiful butterfly started to fly around me. I held out my finger and it landed right on it. It sat there flickering its wings for several moments and then circled off and around the school yard. My colleague and I looked at one another in amazement - she, because it's rather rare to see butterflies where we teach; I, because I was overwhelmed with thoughts of my father.

Yes, I have a lot of good memories of my father that burn bright and warm, like the candle that I light on my stove every February 4th.

WHY IS A RABBIT'S FOOT CONSIDERED GOOD LUCK?

It is a long-held superstition that the bearer of a rabbit's foot will receive good luck. The original superstition was that it was only the rabbit's left hind foot that brought the luck, and it had to be rubbed in order to release the luck.

The origins of this superstition date back to western Europe in 600 BC, a time when people considered rabbits to be sacred animals, believing that man was descended from animals such as rabbits and that spirits inhabited the animals' bodies. As rabbits spent a lot of time underground, the Celts later believed that dark, diabolical underground spirits lived in rabbits. The prolific reproduction rate of rabbits also led to their being adopted as a symbol of fertility, prosperity and health. The speed of the animal, and the fact that its hind legs went ahead of its forelegs when it ran, brought about the idea that rabbits and their feet were a source of protective magic.

Because the rabbit was so highly revered, any part of the rabbit received equal honor. It's thought that its foot was selected as the good-luck charm because it dried quickly and its small size made it easy to carry.

CORRECTION

The painting by Karen Le Gault on page 3 of the February issue should have been titled Yellow Bell and Red Chili Peppers. We apologize for the error -- and just when we thought we were perfect!

Editor
Monday Afternoon Opera: March 19 at 1:00 PM. *The Marriage of Figaro* is opera buffo, and a favorite with opera-goers because it has arias which can be whistled when leaving the opera house, and it is funny. *Marriage of Figaro* continues the plot of *The Barber of Seville* several years later, and recounts a single “day of madness” (*la folle giornata*) in the palace of the Count Almaviva near Seville, Spain. Rosina is now the Countess. Count Almaviva has degenerated from the romantic youth of *Barber* into a scheming, bullying, skirt-chasing baritone. After the usual complications the Count's love for his Countess is finally restored.

Marilyn Seiberling offered to coordinate an ESCOM Opera Club at IVC if attendance indicates there is enough interest. Several ESCOM members have already shared from their DVD operas and others have come to learn, appreciate and enjoy. If you would like to be part of an Opera Club, please join us on March 19.

March on the Farm: The IVC Organic Farm Wednesday Market provides a learning experience in addition to fresh organic produce. You can now get delicious cabbage in a special variety. The lettuce, chard, and broccoli plants bought in November have already produced and reached our table. Strawberry starter plants are expected to yield in March!

Irish Soup
1/2 lb. Irish bacon, diced
2 large potatoes, peeled and cubed
1 (15 oz) can diced tomatoes with juice
1 cup chicken stock, as needed
2 cups thinly sliced dark green outer leaves of a Savoy Cabbage
(Salt, pepper, a bit of dried onion may be added.)

Global Issues: Friday, 3/16, 2 PM. *Tierras Libres*, a documentary by Edward Ellis. This film exposes the battle going on in rural Venezuela today between large and small farm owners. A new agrarian reform law has aroused the wrath of conservative elites, a radical sector of the Anti-Chavez opposition.

To follow up recent Global Issues films, *Maestra* (Cuba’s literacy program) and *Freedom Riders*, Colleen Rose offered these books for loan:

*Datedline Havana*, Reese Erlich (local author)
*Open Veins of Latin America*, Eduardo Galeano (1973)
*Cuba, A Revolution in Motion*, Isaac Saney (2004)
*The Warmth of Other Suns*, Isabel Wilkerson (2010)

Philosophy Club: Buddhism with Professor Malcolm David Eckel, Boston Univ., 24 lectures.
A religion without a god? On March Thursdays, the club will discover how, in Julie Otsuka's 2500 year history, Buddhism has grown into a movement that spans the globe. Two lectures each week are followed by discussion and questions from an accompanying study guide.

Film Noir:
3/31 A special showing of a Film Noir Classic shown five years ago.

Humanities Club:
3/03 Lecture 19, Trajan; Lecture 20: Hadrian.

IVC Book Forum:
4/23 *Buddha in the Attic*, Julie Otsuka.

Great Books Discussion Group:
After a successful and stimulating discussion of the great Italian novel, *The Leopard*, we began a new anthology of writings on Crime. Subjects for coming meetings are:
2/14 *Stackalee* (American folk tale and song) and *Life, Last Words, and Dying Confession*, Rachel Wall.
2/28 *The Real Trial of Oscar Wilde* (transcript) and *The Carpenter's Son*, A. E. Houseman.
WONDERFUL WORLD OF WOMEN

A Saudi Arabian woman can get a divorce if her husband doesn't give her coffee.

Barbie Doll's full name is Barbara Millicent Roberts. Her measurements, if life-sized, would be 5 feet, nine inches tall, 33-18-31½.

Stewardesses is the longest word which can be typed with only the left hand.

Virginia Woolf wrote all her books standing up.

Judy Garland's ruby slippers were auctioned for $165,000.

In 1953 Marilyn Monroe appeared as the first Playboy centerfold.

Shirley Temple made $1 million by age ten.

Sophia Loren's sister was once married to the son of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.

Anne Boleyn had six fingers on one hand.

Sarah Bernhardt played a thirteen-year-old Juliet when she was seventy.

The average woman consumes six pounds of lipstick in a lifetime.

In Minnesota it is illegal for women to be dressed as Santa Claus on city streets.

The Chinese ideogram for trouble depicts two women living under the same roof.

(Thanks to The Book of Useless Information.)
HEZEKIAH'S AQUEDUCT AND THE SILOAM INSCRIPTION

This is the third in a series concerning ancient artifacts which have been removed from their country of origin. The Siloam Inscription is not nearly as well known as the Elgin Marbles or the bust of Nefertiti, but just as treasured by its people. Our story begins, as recorded in the Bible, in 8th Century B.C. Jerusalem. Hezekiah is king and the Assyrians are threatening. There is only one water supply to the city, a spring outside and somewhat away from the city walls. If the enemy should discover and block its use, Jerusalem could be forced to surrender. Hezekiah's plan was to divert the spring underground and construct an aqueduct through bedrock to bring the water inside the city.

This was an awesome project and would require 1500 feet of work by hand with simple tools. Nevertheless, according to Scripture, it was completed successfully, and water flowed to the Pool of Siloam. The Assyrians gave up and went home, at least for a long period.

But no one in modern times had seen evidence of such an excavation. Was it all a myth? It seemed so until American Biblical Scholar Edward Robinson, when exploring in the area in 1838, found and identified the entrance to the tunnel. Much fallen rock had obstructed and obscured the structure in the intervening centuries. The loose rocks were not fully cleared until 1910, but even before this, in 1880, a teen-aged boy made his way about twenty feet into the Siloam outlet and found an inscription chiseled in the wall. It was written in ancient Hebrew and described how the tunnel was made.

Here is a partial translation: "while three cubits remained to be bored there was heard the voice of a man calling his fellow – for there was a crack in the rock on the right hand. When the tunnel was driven through, pick-axe against pick-axe, the water flowed from the spring toward the pool for twelve hundred cubits. The height of the rock above the head of the workers was a hundred cubits."

Word of the discovery spread quickly around Jerusalem. Eleven years later vandals secretly cut out the rock with the inscription and sold it to a Greek antiquities dealer. The Ottoman Turks who had ruled Palestine since the 16th Century confiscated the stone and took it to the Museum of the Ancient Orient in Istanbul where it remains to the present day, in a locked room on an upper floor and not accessible to the public. Israeli officials have tried without success to have the artifact returned.

In 1972 I had the opportunity to walk through the aqueduct. It wasn't lighted, so one had to carry a candle or a flashlight. It was a winding trip, evidence that the excavators had a hard time finding and connecting with each other. The floor was rough with gravel, and water still flowed a few inches higher than my knees. For me it was the experience of a lifetime and well worth the sacrifice of a pair of bedroom slippers.

Don Polhemus
Love Always

To love without expecting anything in return
   Is a sublime state that you can learn

Unconditional love of another is a gift to you
   As uplifting as receiving a compliment that’s heartfelt and true

Follow calm guidance within, not selfish desires
   Abandon attachments to what you can acquire

Put your love into action showing you care
   Discover another’s language of love as you share

Relationships unearth seeds of love within your heart
   Watch them flourish as you cultivate your part

Live your ideals, let your mind and spirit shine
   Despite circumstances, know your true nature is divine

When you have a disagreement, keep an open heart
   Find the pearl within your differences, give love before you part

Wrap your arms around your lessons in the school of life
   Learn them well preventing further strife

Love when you’re down, love when you’re up
   Live a life that fills your heart’s loving cup

   Your heart can stretch when it bends
   Strive to love foes, as well as friends

Look deeply into their eyes, see their goodness
   If they act hurtfully, offer forgiveness

When you say “I can’t,” pray love will endure
   May you find paradise with a heart that’s pure!

   Kim A. Jones

GEOGRAPHY QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Australia is three times as large, but they look about equal on a map because of distortion at high latitudes.

2. Rome, about 600 miles closer.

3. Lake Baikal in Siberia is the deepest.

4. No South American Countries are on the same longitude as Chicago. They're all east.

5. Westward is closer, but probably not by airline.


7. The Suez, more than a hundred miles long, has no locks. The Kiel, in northern Germany, at 61 miles, is longer than the Panama.

8. McKinley is higher, but only by a few hundred feet.

9. Bolivia and Botswana are landlocked.

10. The Red River.
CLUBS: Participation in all clubs requires an Emeritus Students Activities Card. For further information, call 485-9652.

ADVENTURER’S CLUB: Call Ruth King, 898-5845, for information on next meeting.

BOCCCE BALL CLUB: Bocce ball on Tues. at San Rafael courts, 9:30 AM. Call John Kouns, 332-5929 for other activities.

BOOK BANTER CLUB: 2nd and 4th Fridays (note this change) September to May, 1:00 - 3:00 PM, Emeritus Kentfield. Len Pullan, 381-6952, lenpullan@comcast.net.

BRIDGE CLUB: Mon. 1:00 - 4:30 PM, Cafeteria, Kentfield. Tom Metzger, 479-8290, trmetzger@comcast.net; Lynn Mason, 456-2508.

CURRENT EVENTS CLUB: 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 10:00 AM - 12 noon, Emeritus Kentfield. Jerry Weisman, 383-1831, gweisman@sprintmail.com; and James Kennedy, 388-3939.

FRENCH CLUB: Call Doyleen McMurtry, 472-4738, dmcmurtry@LVHA.net, for information on next meeting.

GLOBAL ISSUES CLUB: 3rd Friday, 2:00 – 4:00 PM, Emeritus IVC. Colleen Rose, 898-0131, colleenrose@juno.com.

GREAT BOOKS DISCUSSION GROUP: 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 10:00 AM - 12 noon, Emeritus IVC. Don Polhemus, 883-3567, dondorpol@aol.com.

GREAT IDEAS IN PHILOSOPHY CLUB: Thursdays, 1-3 PM, Emeritus IVC. Larry Witter, 883-6889, lswitter@sonic.net.

HUMANITIES CLUB: 1st & 3rd Saturdays, 1-3 PM, Emeritus IVC. Rudy Ramirez, 491-0522, rurmac@mac.com.

ITALIAN CLUB: 4th Tuesday, 2-4 PM, Emeritus Kentfield. Mila Weed, 453-6054, unsarda@mac.com.

IVC BOOK FORUM: 4th Monday, 3-5 PM, Emeritus IVC. Louise Kerr, 883-2823, lkerr210@comcast.net.

IVC FILM NOIR DVD CLUB: 2nd & 4th Saturdays, 1-3 PM, Emeritus IVC. Rudy Ramirez, 491-0522, rurmac@mac.com.

MORAL-ETHICAL & LEGAL ISSUES ROUNDTABLE: 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 10 AM - 12 noon, Emeritus Kentfield. Cole Posard, 491-4118, colemanposard@att.net; Len Pullan, 381-6952.

OPERA AND BEYOND: Last Wednesday of month, 1-3 PM, Emeritus Kentfield. Gil Deane, 456-2853, gildeane@aol.com.

SCRABBLE CLUB: Every Thursday, 2:00-4:00 PM, Cafeteria, Kentfield. Marlene Knox, 459-1427, marlsteve@comcast.net.

SHAKESPEARE CLUB: Third Monday. Please call Valda Carter, 388-6335, valdated@sbcglobal.net, for time and place.

SINGALONG CLUB: 2nd Wednesdays, 2:30-3:30 PM, location TBA. Marlene Knox, 459-1427, marlsteve@comcast.net.

WRITERS’ WORKSHOP: 1st Tuesday of the month, 1-4 PM, Emeritus Kentfield. Shirley Pullan, 381-6952, shirlmv@comcast.net, or Marlene Knox, 459-1427, marlsteve@comcast.net.