

## VOLUNTEER NOTES

### We Remember

Marin County Sheriff's Air Patrol volunteer **Frank Woolard** died in November at the age of 76. Fellow volunteer **Greg Felton** said Frank was an "enthusiastic, dedicated pilot." Others recalled him as "always a voice with humor and reason, a smart, skilled, and careful pilot, a dedicated member, a great guy, a positive force."

After retiring from a career as a PhD chemist, Frank focused on flying his Bonanza and serving with the Sheriff's Air Patrol, Gness Field Community Association, Civil Air Patrol, and Angel Flight.

Frank joined the Air Patrol in 2013 and was treasurer and secretary in addition to regular duties. Patrol members support law enforcement, public safety, and search and rescue missions.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Gness Field Community Association or Angel Flight.

### Holiday

County offices will be closed Monday, February 17, for Presidents Day.



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#### VOLUNTEERS

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## High School Senior Balances Double Internships

By Natalie Dybeck



Alex Sumski

In addition to being a senior at Redwood High School and applying to college, Marintern **Alexandra 'Alex' Sumski** juggles two County of Marin internships.

In one, Alex co-chairs the OD Free Marin Youth Action Team. (This is one of four action teams of cross-sector partners who make up the community-based overdose prevention coalition OD Free Marin, for which the Health and Human Services Department (HHS) plays a pivotal role and provides support, including funding.)

Alex's second internship is with the Marin County Free Library's after-school Homework Helpers program.

As co-chair of the OD Free Marin Youth Action Team, Alex volunteers a few hours a week to help prevent drug overdose deaths.

"I facilitate the Youth Action Team meetings and leadership team meetings, and I plan some of our events such as the One Stride at a Time 5k," said Alex.

She has learned to "label and distribute naloxone (NARCAN®) and fentanyl test strips, work on social media posts and outreach, and facilitate different naloxone trainings."

Alex found these opportunities with the help of an internship coordinator at Redwood High School. Over time, she has advanced to positions of leadership.

"The most challenging project I have been a part of has been working to get NARCAN® training in school districts," she said. "Convincing them of the value

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## Researcher Shares Her Science Skills

By Scott Harrop



Sophie Zhu

"Growing up in Montana gave me a deep appreciation of wildlife and the great outdoors, which inspired me to study animal science and pre-veterinary medicine," says **Sophie Zhu**, a MarinShares volunteer for the Health and Human Services Department.

Her passion was kindled by a job in a racehorse epidemiology lab. She then completed two internships: one at the Cornell Wildlife Health Lab, working on chronic wasting disease surveillance

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## Researcher Shares Her Science Skills

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in white-tailed deer, and the other at the Smithsonian National Zoo, assisting with research on emerging pathogens in dromedary camels.

Having discovered an interest in numbers, study design, and coding, Sophie continued her training in UC Davis's Epidemiology PhD program. There she acquired substantial experience with epidemiologic and statistical methods, including modeling, study design, and fieldwork. She also researched pathogen pollution and its implications for sea otter health in Monterey Bay.

Since July 2023, Sophie has been an Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS) Officer with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), based in the field at the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). EIS is a two-year applied epidemiology training program which offers Sophie an exciting chance to broaden her field of research.

"I worked with environmental samples and animals during my PhD, so this opportunity was the first time I was in the field interviewing human study

PHOTO BY DOUG KAYE



Sophie Zhu, left, with fellow researchers during a wastewater plant tour.

participants," she said. Sophie has worked on a variety of projects. She utilized data from the state's electronic reportable disease reporting system and immunization registry to calculate influenza vaccine effectiveness. She is currently engaged in the H5N1 (bird flu) response at CDPH.

In April 2023, Sophie began volunteering with the Marin County Health and Human Services Department (HHS).

She is part of a CDC-led team investigating the role of wastewater data in detecting increases in fatal and nonfatal

opioid-associated overdoses in Marin County.

Sophie's supervisor for her volunteer role is HHS Epidemiology Program Manager **Lee Ann Prebil**. "Sophie's team joined members of the county epidemiology team to collect data from local residents, including drug users, to understand how the information from wastewater could best be communicated to the public for overdose prevention," Lee Ann explained.

"We were thrilled to add their expertise and innovative thinking to our program, and to get the opportunity to work with Sophie and her team," she added.

Sophie's EIS officer role will continue through June. She is currently wrapping up a few manuscripts on the wastewater investigation and remains deployed to the H5N1 response in California.

"I moved to the Bay Area last summer and recently moved again to San Francisco, where I am enjoying public transit and the numerous parks with my dog," she said. "After EIS, I plan to stay in California with the state or a local health department."

## High School Senior Balances Double Internships

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of these topics has been difficult and is something I will continue to work towards, beyond my time with OD Free Marin."

Alex finds that the rewards far outweigh the challenges. "The most rewarding part of working with OD Free Marin is being able to recognize the change that this work can create," she explained. "Seeing how important overdose awareness is and being able to make a difference in this issue is extremely rewarding for me.

"Something that has stuck out to me has been meeting those who have lost loved ones to overdoses," Alex said. "Their gratitude for the work that OD Free Marin does keeps me motivated to stay active

in this community and to try to continue to make change on larger scales. I plan on working in similar fields in my career, so these experiences have provided me a base for what I am able to accomplish."

"Alex has brought a positivity and can-do attitude that is contagious," said HHS Senior Department Analyst **Fay Zenoff**. "OD Free Marin is very lucky to have the engagement and leadership she offers."

For her library internship, Alex is the Homework Helpers site lead at the Corte Madera branch of the Marin County Free Library. (Homework Helpers was created by high school Marinterns and the Marin County Free Library in 2020. It offers free, one-on-one homework

help sessions at the Civic Center, Corte Madera, Fairfax, and Novato branches.)

She volunteers one afternoon a week as a Homework Helper peer tutor. In this role she manages other peer tutors and assists her own students. She also has been part of the Homework Helpers summer planning team, focusing on improving the program as a whole and conducting outreach for new tutors and students.

Alex's internship supervisor, Librarian **Rebecca Esquivel**, describes her as "a consistent and driving force," well organized, and a talented tutor.

Alex's free time is spent hiking, running, practicing photography, and spending time with her family and friends.

# Happy Anniversary

We congratulate these volunteers who celebrate their anniversaries this month and thank them for their ongoing involvement.

## 46 YEARS

**Bill Bastida** (San Rafael), Air Patrol Volunteer, Marin County Sheriff's Office

## 28 YEARS

**Steve Toquinto** (Novato), Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service/Auxiliary Communications Service (RACES/ACS) Volunteer, Marin County Fire

## 16 YEARS

**Carol Selig** (Mill Valley), **Rand Selig** (Mill Valley), Stewards, Marin County Parks (Parks)

**Peter Otis** (Novato), RACES/ACS Volunteer, Marin County Fire

## 13 YEARS

**Michael Landram** (Novato), Patrol Volunteer, Parks

## 8 YEARS

**Lynda Pearson** (Mill Valley), Consultant, Human Resources, and Civic Center Tour Docent, Cultural Services

## 7 YEARS

**Elizabeth Purcell** (San Rafael), Teacher Assistant, Probation Department

## 6 YEARS

**James Cook** (Rohnert Park), Veterans Remains Officer, HHS

**John Donaghue** (Walnut Creek), Cartoonist, Human Resources

**Rob Hayden** (Point Reyes Station), **Kathleen Pear** (San Anselmo), **Rita Wengler** (Novato), Senior Peer Counselors, Health & Human Services (HHS)

## 5 YEARS

**Cynthia Bellows** (Mill Valley), **Peter Nielsen** (San Rafael), **Dot Spaet** (Novato), Marin Center Ushers, Cultural Services

**Jackie Herzog** (San Rafael), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

## 4 YEARS

**Donna Eng** (San Rafael), **Blair Ogden** (San Rafael), Senior Peer Counselors, HHS

**Anthony Fedanzo** (Corte Madera), **Ann Shores** (Corte Madera), Radio Communications Volunteers, Department of Public Works (Public Works)

**Michael Rubin** (Novato), English Tutor, Novato Library

## 3 YEARS

**Robert Rowlands** (Mill Valley), Radio Communications Volunteer, Public Works

**Bea Goop-Lott** (San Rafael), Client Assessments Volunteer, HHS

## 2 YEARS

**Ed Essick** (Petaluma), Radio Communications Volunteer, Public Works

**Max Gehm** (San Anselmo), Newsletter Writer Intern, Human Resources

**Jayne Goodale** (San Anselmo), Environmental Steward, Parks

## Election Ambassadors Support MLK Day Event



PHOTO COURTESY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARIN

Marintern **Nancy Deras**, left, poses with League of Women Voters representative **Sara Thorpe** and event organizer Florence Williams during the MLK Celebration Day at the Manzanita Recreation Center in Marin City last month. Nancy and fellow Marintern **Ashanti Ovalle** (not pictured) helped staff the League table, answered questions about voter registration, talked with people about civic engagement, and promoted the Student Elections Ambassador program, which is sponsored by the Marin County Elections Department. Nancy and Ashanti are both elections ambassadors.



## Youth Volunteer Chips In at Library

New youth volunteer **Joselin Ordoñez** smiles while helping at the South Novato branch of the Marin County Free Library. Joselin joined the library's literacy support program Reading Buddies last spring and soon expressed interest in volunteering. She became a Library Ambassador early this year and serves one hour a week. Joselin welcomes other children, helps them find their next adventure in reading, and selects favorite books for children's displays. "I was interested in volunteering at the library because of their programs like Reading Buddies and some of the books that I've read there," said Joselin, who is enthusiastic about working at the library someday. Her staff supervisor is Community Library Specialist **Hector Garcia**. He explained that the Library Ambassador program aligns with the library's five-year Anti-Racism & Equity Strategic Plan, which aims to create joyful learning opportunities and foster community power. "At South Novato, we strive to open up opportunities for younger children through volunteering so they can develop lifelong skills," said Hector.

## Who's New & Welcome!

**Harriet Baker** (San Anselmo), Restrictive Covenant Project Intern, Board of Supervisors

**Sharie Camren** (Berkeley), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Annie Carmona** (San Rafael), Lead Ambassador/Marin Teen Girl Conference, Human Resources

**Ashley Fitting** (Petaluma), Nursing Student in Communicable Disease, Health & Human Services (HHS)

**Lynette Kofinow** (Novato), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Maria Lienkaemper** (San Rafael), Digital Team Volunteer, Information Services & Technology

**Haizhu Patterson** (San Rafael), Nursing Student in Adult Protective Services, HHS

**Douglas Sides** (San Rafael), Friends of the Family Volunteer, HHS

**Lynne Simon** (Corte Madera), Marin Center Usher, Cultural Services

**Alexandra Sumski** (Kentfield), OD Free Marin Intern, Board of Supervisors

**Kristine Tang** (San Rafael), Nursing Student in Communicable Disease, HHS

