WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Thursday, January 9
FREE FOOD DISTRIBUTION. BCC, Noon

AFTER-SCHOOL CRAFTS. Arts and Crafts
open to all families @Bolinas Library 3:30pm.
Supplies and snacks provided.

Friday, January 10
DALE POLISSAR TRIO w/ St Perkoff and Piro Patton,
William Tell House, Tomales 6-9:30 PM.

ATLANTICS Film Screening, Book Exchange, 7:30 PM,
Free

Saturday, January 11
Soup Saturday at St. Aidan's, noon - 2.

ANNY DENSMORE music played by Bill Quist, Calvary
Presbyterian Church, 2-3PM, Free

MARYLYN YOLLES WALDMAN art reception, Stinson
Beach Library, 3-5PM

Super Low Tide, -1.4 feet, 66PM

Mon, Jan 13, 7:00-9:00 pm
Rewilding the Voice: West Marin Choir's
An all-levels vocal improvisation with others led by
Briony Greenhill. All voices welcome. Stinson Beach
Community Center, 32 Belvedere. Info 415-683-5018.

Wednesday, January 15
BUCK MEEK Grammy-nominated
singer/songwriter/guitarist of Big Thief, Gospel Flat
Farmstand, w/ Desiree Cannon & Ric Robertson

HAPPY HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!

January 9: Susan Burke Woods
Scott Siedman
Lily Phillips-Leavitt
Brook Phillips-Leavitt

January 10: Tenaya Tremp
Ida Seversen
Matt Yerlington

January 11: Michael Rabin
Nigel Ian Alexzander
Taylor Bartlome
Charlie Plant

January 12: Mary Bruce (remembered)
Anton Skye Lepanto

Today's Hearsay brought to you by:
Steve Heilig, editor
Kelsey McCurdy, ads
Nicole Lavelle, press

COVER ART: "SURFING" FROM "BE HERE NOW"
BY RAM DASS, R.I.P.
(Ram Dass died just before Christmas. His last public post
said “Going Beyond, Hail the Goer,” and he went. Besides
being a revered teacher on many topics, the Seva
Foundation which he co-founded has now given sight to
over 5 million people. As we have space today, please see
an interview I did with him long ago herein; also, his dear
friend Frank Ostaseski, founder of the Zen Hospice Project
and himself a renowned teacher, will appear at
Commonweal on March 14. More to come on that.
Thank you. - Steve Heilig)
For more information, to volunteer, or to join Call 415 663-1075 Save $ by buying tickets in advance at: www.dancepalace.org

Kids Musical Theater
January 13, 2020 @ 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm |Recurring Event

KWMR Retirement Party for Lyons Filmer
January 19, 2020 @ 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Kankouran West African Dance Company
January 18, 2020 @ 8:00 pm - 10:00 pm
$15 - $30

Point Reyes Community Lunch
Every Thursday - 12:00pm
By West Marin Senior Services 415-663-8148, x.104.

LALUNA

ACUPUNCTURE + BODYWORK + HERBAL MEDICINE

AMANDA ROSS SALON

TUE: 9:00AM - 7:00PM
WED: 9:00AM - 7:00PM
THUR: 12:00PM - 7:00PM
FRI: 9:00AM - 4:00PM

CONTACT:
PH: (415) 384-9660
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Dear Friends: This talk will be a special one. Join us if you can. Please do RSVP as it could draw a crowd. Many millions have watched BJ’s TED talk, for just one thing.... - Steve Heilig

BJ Miller, MD and Shoshana Berger: A Beginners Guide to the End
~Co-presented with the Mesa Refuge and Point Reyes Books.

Please join us for a conversation with physician BJ Miller and writer Shoshana Berger, with TNS host Steve Heilig about their new collaboration: A Beginners Guide to the End—Practical Advice for Living Life and Facing Death.

Register HERE:
https://www.commonweal.org/registration/miller-berger/

Saturday, February 1
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Commonweal, Bolinas

By donation;

BJ Miller

BJ is a hospice and palliative medicine physician and educator and has worked in all settings of care: hospital, clinic, residential facility, and home. His career has been dedicated to moving healthcare towards a human-centered approach and he speaks on this topic both nationally and internationally. He is a Mesa Refuge alum, has been featured in the New York Times, and interviewed by Oprah Winfrey, Tim Ferriss, Krista Tippett, and GQ Magazine.

Shoshana Berger

Shoshana Berger is the editorial director at IDEO, where she has worked on projects ranging from the end of life to modern Judaism to school lunch. She was a senior editor at WIRED, and has written for the New York Times, Fast Company, TIME, WIRED, Popular Science, Marie Claire, and Quartz. She co-founded the DIY design magazine, ReadyMade, later turning it into a book, Ready Made: How to Make (Almost) Everything.

https://tns.commonweal.org/events/miller-berger/#XhTaXiWZtw4
Wednesday, January 15
Robert Carrigan, newest Rotary Club of West Marin member from Stinson Beach, will speak about his experiences in Cuba in the 1990's during the regular breakfast meeting of Rotary Club of West Marin from 8-9 am in Toby's Gallery. Guests welcome. Breakfast is $10. RSVP Anne (415) 868-1618.

Wednesday, January 22
Hal Nathan from Inverness will speak about his non-profit work in Guatemala, Burma and Indonesia during the regular breakfast meeting of Rotary Club of West Marin from 8-9 am in Toby's Gallery. Guests welcome. Breakfast is $10. RSVP Anne (415) 868-1618.

Thanks!!
Anne
Anne Sands
President Rotary of West Marin, 2018-2020

Sunday, January 19
KWMR PARTY retirement of Lyons Filmer and installation of Jeff Manson as new program director., Dance Palace, Pt Reyes Station, 3-5PM

Capturing moments that defined 2019

12.01 Garnett Silver-Hall (center), a senior at Tamalpais High in Mill Valley, practices for his youth wheelchair basketball league at the James Kenny Recreation Center in Berkeley. Jessica Christian / The Chronicle

San Francisco Chronicle

Ken & Sam Levin
Window Cleaning
415.663.9669
West Marin's Best
Ram Dass on Being a Patient

STEVE HEILIG

Ram Dass is one of America’s most renowned spiritual teachers. Born Richard Alpert, he received his Ph.D. in psychology from Stanford University and taught there and at Harvard University before going to India and receiving the name Ram Dass (“Servant of God”) from his guru. He has long been involved in many charitable service organizations, particularly those devoted to providing healthcare for underserved populations. Among his many books are Be Here Now (currently in its fortieth printing), How Can I Help, and Compassion in Action; his newest book is Still Here: Embracing Aging, Changing, and Dying (Putnam, 2000).

Steve Heilig: You suffered a stroke a couple of years ago, which left you severely paralyzed and virtually unable to speak. What do you recall about the experience of the stroke itself?

Ram Dass: It came upon me as I was lying in bed and trying to think of an end to my book on aging. I was trying to think of myself as an old, old man, bedridden. Some cultures are better at this—they have a kind of “kit” in Japan that puts on your body some weights, and earplugs, and other things to give you a look at what it might feel like to be really elderly. So I heard a phone call come and I got up out of bed, and my leg gave way and I landed on the floor. I didn’t know it was a stroke; I thought I was still in my fantasy. Next I knew, there were about ten firemen looking down at me, as someone had come by and called emergency services. An ambulance took me to the hospital, and there I was: “Stroked.” But I still didn’t know what was happening to me.

SH: Did you have any kind of premonition of it coming?

RD: No, but one very interesting thing was that the very day of the stroke, I had been writing a list of things I’d be afraid of happening to me as I aged, and “stroke” was the last item on that list before it really happened.

SH: Do you remember a point when you really became aware that you’d had a stroke, and were now paralyzed?

RD: Well, in a way I was fine once I knew what had happened. The scenery had changed—to a hospital—but I felt fine at the time. As it went on, the head of one of the hospitals said, “I come into your room, and feel peaceful. And I don’t feel that anywhere else in this hospital.”

SH: You certainly have had dramatic improvement, both in general physical and in verbal capabilities. I heard you speak to our hospice group some time ago and you spoke of the difficulty of going from being a renowned teacher to a disabled person. Was all of your study and teaching prior to the stroke helpful? You once wrote a leading book about meditation, for example.

RD: Meditation itself was not helpful, but the spiritual “seasoning” I’ve had helped tremendously. The stroke has given me a “witnessing” perspective. The ego, one of my identities, functions in Greenwich time, gets strokes, dies, and so on. The second identity is my soul, which is not held in regular time, and doesn’t die or get disabled. The stroke pushed me into closer identity with my soul. Being “disabled” is the least of my suffering. I’m not very identified with my body now. The most suffering would be my ego: “Oh, I’ve got this sickness, this pain, people are infantilizing me but I am dependent on them…” I once wrote a book titled How Can I Help? Now I was asking, “How can you help me?” Because from the minute I awake and through the night, I need someone around.

SH: Did you ever ask yourself “Why me?” Here you were this revered teacher, and doing all this good work in the world. . .

RD: I had to look at it this way: My guru, Neem Karoli Baba, has love and grace for me, and compassion, but I had to ask, “Why would he turn off his grace for me?” And the stroke, as it turns out, is itself a form of grace. It’s a heavy-handed form of grace, but it’s still grace. So next I just had to figure out how that was so. And, see, all my life has been in trying to open people’s hearts. And now, even people who don’t like me open their hearts! They may be doing so on the basis of pity, but pity can be good stuff in that way.

SH: How did you relate to your caregivers, the doctors and nurses?

RD: The “roles” of clinicians may not be who they really are. They keep their distance—I really wanted to be friends, but most of them didn’t! The problem with professionals was that I was only my body to them. But the reason that one senior doctor saw me as peaceful was the stroke put me outside of the power struggle in this country. I didn’t care how accomplished or famous I was because it just wasn’t relevant anymore. Sometimes it takes a lot for us to learn. But the doctor saw that.

SH: Were you able to communicate what you felt you needed from them?

RD: This was interesting. I had spent so much of my life focused on helping—which is a kind of power and ego trip itself in our culture, you know. Now I got to look at the motives of helpers, from the viewpoint of the helper—I saw people come to me out of duty, or because “I’m a compassionate person,” or because “I’ve got bills to pay.” Some caretakers were so fixated on why they were doing it that they couldn’t hear what I really needed from them.

SH: My conviction is that we can’t really understand someone else’s pain and suffering unless we’ve been in their exact situation, and maybe not even then. And you’ve said you had a lot of pain, which we know often goes under-treated. . .

RD: Yes, but I came to see pain as a worthy adversary to my spiritual practices.

SH: Were there certain therapies or approaches that were particularly helpful?

RD: Oh boy, we’re going to get into trouble here. I ended up using marijuana, for pain and spasticity.

SH: Did you encounter resistance on the part of your doctors or others, even here in California where such use is supposedly legal now?

RD: Oh, yes. Some doctors wouldn’t sign a recommendation on this because they were afraid of the federal government. Others advised against it.

SH: Did they offer a better alternative?

RD: They gave me pain pills that I didn’t try, but that wiped out my whole consciousness.

SH: So even you have encountered obstacles in this regard. Other patients have been arrested here for this, but maybe you are too famous to risk arresting—it would be very bad publicity for the government.
RD: You're probably right. But that doesn't make me feel very good for all the others.

SH: There's also a fear among many doctors that if they prescribe "too much" of some perfectly legal prescription pain medications, they will risk investigation and trouble as well.

RD: Oh God, I know, and this business of "We can't give this drug, or so much of that drug, to this dying patient" is just unbelievable, and frightening, and such a sad situation. It makes me feel sorry for the medical community as well.

SH: Speaking of sadness, I wonder if you, in your darkest hour, have ever wanted to give up and say, "That's enough, I want out."

RD: Not really. You know, I've been in the "death business" for decades. And it was funny to watch the doctors and nurses and some others deciding how soon I should die. I was busy looking at the water pipes on the ceiling, with not one thought that I was going to die. I usually sit at the bedside of dying people, and in my mind the whole thing is spiritual. Here I was being different, but I knew it wasn't time yet. And anyway, the soul doesn't die along with the body.

SH: Do you have an opinion on the "assisted suicide" issue? Many religious traditions condemn the practice, and it's hotly debated, including by disabled activists who oppose it.

RD: As long as it's truly a conscious choice to get away from this place, or to the next place, if the motivation is good, we can't judge it. It's up to you, it's your life and your death. I think that most people in an equanimous state call for their own death, how it will transpire. And the tools of living willed and other written documents are so valuable in that way.

I'd like to create a kind of "Varanasi West" setting for people to die in. Varanasi is the holy city in India where people go to die and be burned in the Ganges River. Here, when people go into a hospital, and even in many hospices, all the "cues" are to "Come on back!"—pictures of the children, doctors running around, and all that. We need to give dying people something to look forward to! I spoke to the national association of hospice ministers, and told them, "You're letting yourself be ruled by the doctors." Because the doctors still call the shots.

SH: Literally.

RD: (Laughing). Yes. The hospice is a different place, or is supposed to be, and the hospice people should be at least as powerful as any doctor. Varanasi West would be like a monastery or ashram where people still go to die, but gain spiritually in the process. It would take a special staff, as well as special patients. I tried to set up such criteria with a hospice once but was told, "No, it's first come, first served for patients, and we can't screen physicians for anything other than competence."

SH: Well, this is still pioneering territory, and there is still the widespread perception in medicine, and in our culture as a whole, of death as some kind of "failure."

RD: Yes, and that "death as failure" concept is one of the most harmful things in our culture. Death is just the next step. And that can be a kind of grace too.
New hat for Trump supporters

DRAFT ME FIRST

Slipping across the pavement
dark with rain
stained with gasoline and oil
Water layers blend the scene
into a seamless liquid dream.

It's exactly as it seems
simply standing in the rain
happiness and stain
rock and roll background.
- Steve Quirt

"This your first reelection campaign, kid?"

WED JAN 8

THU JAN 9
Epiphany is one of the oldest Christian feasts. It was celebrated since the end of the second century, before the Christmas holiday was established. It is commonly known as Twelfth Night, Twelfth Day, or the Feast of Epiphany. It means "manifestation" or "showing forth". timeanddate.com
How to contribute to the Hearsay News in person

Come to the office at 270 Elm at Maple, behind the BPUD office on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 9:30 & 10:30 am to have your article appear the same day, and until 11:00 am for classified ads.

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