Is Airbnb Gutting Bolinas? Local Turns Detective to Track Vacation Rentals
Sam Harnett  
KOED Radio  
Feb. 5

Steve O'Neal lives with his three kids and wife in Bolinas, on the ocean, just north of San Francisco. It's his dream location to raise a family.
"We're next to this progressive, urban city," O'Neal said. "Yet we're in the middle of a nature park." But there's one big problem: all the empty homes. O'Neal's neighborhood is filled with vacant houses. Out of the roughly 350 homes, he estimates only 20 or 30 have someone living in them on most weekdays.
'It's like the aliens had come and abducted everybody except for a couple of houses.'

'It's like the aliens had come and abducted everybody except for a couple of houses," O'Neal said. "Stinson has really become a short-term rental community." Stinson Beach and Bolinas have always been popular vacation destinations, but O'Neal says now with services like Homeaway, VRBO and Airbnb, there are more short-term vacation rentals than ever before. And he thinks that's making it even harder for local families to find housing for themselves.

Communities around California share O'Neal's concern that websites like VRBO and Airbnb are allowing landlords to turn long-term housing for locals into short-term vacation rentals for tourists. However, it's difficult for communities to get a clear picture of the extent and impact of these rentals. Short-term rental services don't publicize all of their data, and local governments are not usually given access to the addresses and names of people renting out their homes. San Francisco is in outlier. After a four-year legal battle, the city got the companies to give them a list of hosts. San Francisco has hired staff now to oversee the short-

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BOLINAS COMMUNITY CENTER
14 WHARF RD  BOLINAS, CA
MUSIC BY EPICENTER SOUND
DOORS OPEN 8PM // COVER $25 (C.O.D.)

SUNDAY
FEB. 10TH
MINUS ONE & POETRY
3-9 PM

POETRY
Clark Coolidge
Paul Hoover
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John King
Cathrynn Shea
Tribute to Don Alberts
Carl Macki
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MJoy
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14 WHARF RD
BOLINAS, CA 94924
415-868-2128

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415 868 0911

STAR ROUTE FARMSTAND
Cool Coastal Greens and then some!
Friday 12 - 5 PM • Roadside In Our Field

BOLINAS: At 8:51 p.m., a man in a blue raincoat was waving at passersby outside town.

TODAY’S HEARSAY
Brought to you by Steve Heilig, William McGovern, Jeffrey Manson, All Who Are Reporters, and two dogs.
COVER ART: “Memory of Sunday Night’s Concert, by Stuart
KEN & SAM LEVIN
Window Cleaning
415.663.9669
West Marin's Best

HAPPY HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

February 6:  Stephen Lerner
            Jeffrey Coleman

February 7:  Ed Fishman
            Cory Briner
            Rachel Gertrude
            Claudia Thompson

February 8:  Christina Peterson
            Kora McNaughton
            Alex Clark

February 9:  Catherine Joyce
            Barbara Fitzgerald

February 10: Nona Chorney
            Evie Thompson
            David Spindell
            Merlin Gaspers
            Dawn Schoenherz
            Jimi Thomas
            Nina Bellak
            Canyon Bernal
            Christian Bates

SOUND OF WAVE IN CHANNEL
Stephen Ratcliffe's "sound of wave in channel" is the fifth
in a series of 1,000 poems written in 1,000 consecutive
days (1.1.13 - 6.26.16). He and TNS host Steve Heilig will
discuss this newest epic and his career in poetry, with
readings from his work.

Wednesday, February 20
3:00 pm - 4:30 pm
At Commonweal. Free; Donations accepted.
451 Mesa Road • Bolinas
Information & registration: tns.commonweal.org

NEW PAINTINGS BY JUDY MOLYNEUX
BOLINAS GALLERY
FIRST 2 WEEKENDS IN FEB. ONLY

...a socially-acknowledged
nature-loving town because by like
loving the water out of the tidal to like to
the blueberries like the bears b'not hair
a juice and water from. Whales. The tides and the water out of - it's not
beauti...
Ken Botto lived and worked in Bolinas, California. Using his own backyard as a workspace, he photographed outdoors, constructing table-top "studios" on which he created and manipulated his set-ups. These miniature tableaux were assembled from his remarkable toy collection, unique props, and found objects.

"A hopeless collector," Botto wrote in a 2000 biographical statement, "and like an urban anthropologist, I have spent much of my life rooting and sifting through the debris of our culture. Objects found through this process serve as catalysts and vehicles of possibility when reconstructing the environments that I set up to photograph."

Armed with his "funky 1973 Nikkormat" he relied on natural light and used reflected mirrors to produce illuminated and atmospheric effects. All images were created in the camera with neither digital nor darkroom manipulations. Botto created over 35 series, each containing anywhere from 9 to 153 images. Much of the work comments on cultural contradictions and absurdities of everyday life. Although he dealt with a myriad of themes, his focus was centered on illuminating our cultural identity by critiquing and satirizing the planetary and human condition.

Botto received his BFA from California College of Arts and Crafts and his MFA from Claremont Graduate School. His color photography has been widely exhibited and is in the permanent collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the Museum of Modern Art, New York; and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

"I'm dealing with artificial, fake objects. They are fabrications. I'm trying to get beyond the objects of course. I want to stretch the believability. We know these are miniatures, but at the same time the scene looks bigger than it is. It's bigger than life. I'm trying to say something about how we see ourselves through these objects."

---Ken Botto interviewed by Paul Karabinis, Telling Stories, The Jacksonville Museum of Contemporary Art

Submitted by Linda Samuels
term rentals. Other local governments have turned to outside companies, like Host Compliance, to gather data on the short-term vacation rentals.

In Stinson Beach and Bolinas, Steve O’Neal took the job on himself. O’Neal used to live in San Francisco. He made money in real estate and with a telecom business during the dot-com boom. After traveling and living around the world, he and his wife decided Bolinas was the most ideal place to raise his kids. But when he moved here a year ago, he discovered one problem: The number of families was dwindling rapidly.

Stinson Beach vacation rentals listed on Airbnb.
There are now just 85 kids in the area’s one K-8 elementary school. As recently as 2000, there was double that number. You can also see the decline in residents at the post office. There used to be a waiting list for P.O. boxes. Now 200 of the 700 boxes are empty. O’Neal worries the towns are entering death spiral territory, where some families leave not because the school is bad or the housing unaffordable. To quantify the number and effect of short-term rentals, O’Neal had to become a detective.

The first place he visits is Google Earth. He looks at pictures of houses and tries to match them with online listings. He then confirms the addresses by driving by the places himself. Finally, he checks public records to see if the owners are local.

When O’Neal finished gathering all his data, he found that 130 homes were being rented by people who didn’t live in the community. That is substantial he said, considering there’s only 1,000 households in all of Bolinas and Stinson, according to the most recent U.S. census data.

O’Neal said he has no problem with people renting out a room or in-law for extra income. He’d just like to see limits on how many entire houses are rented to vacationers instead of locals.

“It’s kind of a failure of society to have all this housing and nobody in it,” he said.

A map of available vacation rentals on Airbnb.
Airbnb disputes that it’s having a big impact on local rentals. A spokesperson for the company said, “vacation rentals have been a part of Stinson Beach and Bolinas for decades,” and that “short-term rentals have created supplemental income for families.”

This kind of detective work is actually being done by private companies in cities and counties across the state and country.

Host Compliance works with over 100 local governments and hires dozens of “desk detectives” to gather information on rentals. The private company even helps collect taxes and writes notices on county or city letterhead to send to those who violate local regulations. Ulrik Binzer is the CEO of Host Compliance. He said the company is filling a niche for communities that don’t have the resources to do this oversight themselves. A town or county may not have the money to hire people for an “Office of Short-Term Rentals,” like San Francisco established. With some 4 million short-term rentals across the country, Binzer said there is plenty of oversight work to do.

Around California there’s been controversy over the short-term rental services and regulations to limit them. Both Los Angeles and Del Mar, north of San Diego, have enacted contested regulations. In South Lake Tahoe, voters recently passed an ordinance to ban all short-term rentals outside of a designated tourism zone, but some property owners filed a lawsuit against the ordinance and there is pressure to delay implementation of the new rule.

Even when regulations do get passed, enforcing them can be another hurdle. San Francisco passed rules in 2014 that didn’t work. The city’s not registered. But the majority of hosts did not register, which made enforcing the laws difficult. Only in 2018, after much litigation, did the city start to register the city a list of registered hosts.

O’Neal is a fan of the San Francisco laws, and would like to see similar ones enacted in Bolinas and Stinson. He hopes the data he collected will rally community members behind the idea. But some people who are renting out entire houses for most of the year are worried they’ll see a decline in income.

O’Neal thinks it’s a worthy trade-off if it means more housing for local families. He knows of at least a half-dozen families who are losing their rentals and can’t find another place to live in Bolinas or Stinson Beach.

“I mean it’s paradise here; we just need to get the people back,” O’Neal said. “So we need to open up the housing market to get that to happen.” Living in paradise isn’t worth raising his kids in isolation.

**BOLINAS:** At 11:56 p.m. a neighbor made a noise complaint. A deputy discovered an adult party at an Airbnb with “several women taking a bath.”

**The Briones Lions Club is Seeking Nominations for The 2019 Frank Wells Award**

The Frank Wells Award honors those outstanding individuals, of all ages, whose voluntary contributions have made a positive difference in the communities of Stinson Beach and Bolinas.

The Briones Lions Club is now seeking nominations for this year’s eleventh annual **Frank Wells Award** for public and community service.

The Recipients of the Frank Wells Awards are selected among the residents of Stinson Beach and Bolinas for whose efforts benefit others, without expectation of recognition or reward, who emulate the selfless character, devotion to good works and high principles of Mr. Wells, and who conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the Lions Code of Ethics.

Last year’s winners were Jack Siedman, Robin Ahlgren, and Evan Wilhelm. Previous winners include: Dr. George Flynn, Carol Bennett, Mike Atiken, Mark Butler, John Washington, Roger Kovach, Tommye Jarvis, Jan Broek, Phil O’Brien, David & Bobbi Kimball, to name a few.

**To Make Nominations**, please do one of the following:

1. In a Letter, include:
   - Your name and phone number.
   - The Person that you are nominating, their contact information and a brief description of their voluntary efforts (300 words max.).
   - Send to: Frank B Wells Award
   - C/O Matt Lewis
   - PO Box 731
   - Bolinas, CA. 94924

2. Or Email: mlewisccon@icloud.com
   - In the Subject Line enter, “Frank Wells Award”
   - Include the same information as described above.

**Deadline for Nominations** is February 25, 2019

For more information, please call me at: 415-860-2004

Winners of the Frank B Wells Award to be honored at a dinner event with the Briones Lions in March.

Thanks,

Matt Lewis, President
Briones Lions Club
BCLT Board Meeting Agenda
2/7/19, 6:00pm - 8:30 pm
(Open Session starts at 7:00 pm)
At the Bolinas Community Center
(The BCLT is a membership organization. Our meetings are open to members and anyone can join. If you are not already a member you can join for $10 at the door or at any other time.)

1. Closed Session (6:00 pm for the Executive Committee and any Board Member who wishes to attend).
   a. New Projects
   i. Leases
   b. Confidential communication concerning:
   i. Tenants
   ii. Donors
   iii. Potential New Board Members
   iv. ED Salary
2. Open Session (7:00 pm)
   a. Approval of the agenda
   b. Approval of the minutes from 1/10/19
   c. Public comment (for items not on the agenda)
   d. Managing Directors Report
      i. Website
   e. Executive Directors Report
      i. Fundraising / Event update
         1. March 2 – Home event #2 at Commonweal
         2. May 18 event – Only in Bolinas event at the Peace Barn
         3. Donor Tree
         4. Homes from the Heart (Formerly revolving fund)
            a. Accounting – no update
   ii. Grants
      1. WMF, County / Federal/ MCF/CHD – no update
   iii. Projects
      1. 430 Aspen
         a. Fence discussion
      2. Overlook
      3. Aspen lots
      4. Tacherra property – Green technologies
      5. Septic program
   iv. Gas Station update
   f. Financial update - Jeff Clapp
   g. Board work
      i. March 23 - Community Meeting
      ii. Review Building in Bolinas
      iii. Strategic planning for community engagement
         1. Review of community letters
      ii. Future planning
      iv. Board email communication
      v. Discussion of Board expansion
      vi. Discuss Advisory Committees (Finance, Low-income, New Project planning, Latino).
      vii. Schedule meeting for Bylaw review
   h. Other

HUBBY JENKINS – TONITE AT FARMSTAND!

A member of Carolinas Chocolate Drops and a banjoist and guitarist steeped in the old time blues, ragtime, country music, and gospel of the rural South, Hubby Jenkins is a singular artist with "a passion for reinterpreting traditional American music" (Mother Jones), tracing the African-American experience since the reconstruction.

Born in Brooklyn and inspired by the troubadour style of Bob Dylan, Jenkins began his love affair with Delta blues after hearing the music of Bukka White and Skip James as a teenager, and honed his skills as a performer busking on the sidewalks and subway platforms of New York City before setting out as an itinerant artist, traveling the country and playing on street corners, coffee houses, nightclubs and house parties. Jenkins joined the Carolina Chocolate Drops in 2010 and embarked on a series of international tours that included an epochal meeting with Dylan when the Chocolate Drops opened for him, bringing Jenkins career full-circle. He contributed his artistry to the acclaimed string band's GRAMMY-nominated 2012 Nonesuch release Leaving Eden and continues his work with them, also appearing on mandolin Rhiannon Giddens’ solo releases as well as 2014’s Van-Colorad Songs by former Chocolate Drops member Layla McCaullay.

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Sheathing books makes you feel good.

Bolinas Book Exchange

Come to our first-ever community sheathing!!
Sunday Feb 10, 1am-1pm.
In gratitude we offer free coffee and a special treat.
How to contribute to the Hearsay News in person
Come to the office at 270 Elm at Maple, behind the BPUD office on Mon’s, Wed’s and Fri’s between 9:30 & 10:30 am to have your article appear the same day, and until 11:00 am for classified ads.

Ad forms are also available anytime in the small mail box next to the Hearsay door. You can fill out the form and have your ad billed to you, or you can enclose payment (please note on your ad if you are paying cash in case they become separated) & drop into door slot.

LOST & FOUND

LOST: SET OF KEYS MAYBE DOWNTOWN or sewer pond path. Call M’Gee 415-308-6211. THANKS.

FOUND: KEYS-ON WHARF ROAD NEAR BCC post box key and house key-turned into post office.

MG 1-4-19

Classified ads that are free
As a public service, the Bolinas Hearsay News will print ads in the categories LOST & FOUND, FREE and RIDE SHARE at no charge. Maximum approx. 20 words, it will run at least one week, often longer.
Drop your ad through the slot in the door at our office on the left side of the PBUD building at 370 Elm Street.
Or email to 868hearsay@gmail.com

ANNOUNCEMENT

ALANON MEETING WEDNESDAYS 6:30
St Aiden’s Church Brighton @ Park Ave

MA/X
S E R V I C E S

AIRPORT? HOWARD DILLON HAS A 2010 SUBARU
Outback for all Bay Area (& beyond) destinations.
Many local refs 868-2144

HD X

WINDOWMAN: REPAIRS SINGLE AND DOUBLE PANE
windows, sliding glass-door rollers, screens. Reasonable.
No extra charge for West Marin. Sean 415-699-6204

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Heavy-duty tractor. Mowing / backhoe / rototiller / disk ing /
plowing / post-hole drilling. Don Murch -921

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FIREWOOD • HYDRAULIC LOG-SPLITTING • HAULING
Dump Runs, Cow Manure, Recycling, Humane animal removal
– Skunks, Raccoons & Yellow Jackets. Carl Henry 868-1782

CHX

TREE SERVICE
Fine Trimming • Hedges • Remov als • Brush Chipping
Insured #676377 Steve Ryan 868-1584

SRX

ECONOMICAL DUMP RUNS, BRUSH LOADS,
metal recycling, mowing, chain, etc.
30 years serving Bolinas! Chris-1993

CG X

LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION
DESIGN • INSTALLATION • REPAIR–
27 years in Bolinas. Carey Cherney
868-0411 cherney7@bogglobal.net

CCI/30

West Marin Branch
Library Hours

Stinson Beach:
Mondays • 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Tuesdays • 1 to 9 p.m.
Fridays • 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Bolinas:
Mondays • 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Wednesdays • 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Thursdays • 1 to 9 p.m.

Point Reyes Station:
Mondays • 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Tuesdays • 2 to 9 p.m.
Fridays • 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Inverness:
Mondays • 3 to 9 p.m.
Tuesdays • 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Good for one item from the freebox.