

# POINT REYES LIGHT

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**Bicycle Tim**, a "working homeless" who lived in Bolinas for 30 years, hung himself in the community center Tuesday morning. His trademark bicycle is parked outside. Photo by Justin Nobel.

## Bicycle Tim dies, Bolinas grieves

by Justin Nobel

"Bicycle Tim" Walsh, a Bolinas man originally from Canada who considered himself part of the "working homeless" and made money collecting cans he piled in bags toted on his trademark bicycle, passed away on Tuesday morning.

Tim, who had a drinking problem some friends believe led to his death, hung himself in the main hall of the Bolinas Community Center, a building where he had once worked and slept. He was in his mid-50s.

"He was a hard worker," said his friend Joe, "but in the alcoholic life, you drink

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## Park plan ripe for renewal

by Justin Nobel

The Point Reyes National Seashore is nearly a decade overdue on their General Management Plan (GMP), a document intended to guide all park policy.

The Seashore was established in 1962 and completed a GMP in 1980. Work on a second one began in 1999 but proceeded slowly. The last formal statement to the public about the plan was in 2004. The park's website still says a draft will be ready by the spring or summer of 2007. Meanwhile,

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**Lion dancers parade for the Chinese New Year**

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**When did it get unsafe to walk to the corner store?**

## Apple moth's twist tie cure

by Jacoba Charles

The light brown apple moth, a tiny but destructive pest that threatens over 2,000 types of plants, has been detected in Marin - including two moths found near Muir Beach.

"It's known as the 'light brown everything moth,' because it attacks cypress trees, redwood trees, forest canopy, even ornamental plants in the yard," said Steve Lyle, spokesperson for the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). "It stunts new growth, consumes grapes, and makes other fruit unmarketable and in some cases inedible."

The moth, which was first detected in the United States last year, has been confined to nine counties in California. Roughly 90 moths have been trapped in Marin, and about 17,000 have been found throughout the state.

The pest is native to Australia, but spread to New Zealand over a century ago, Lyle said. They invaded Hawaii ten years ago, but they pose a lesser threat to crops there than in California since they prefer to live in the island's mountains.

If unchecked, the United States Department of Agriculture estimates they

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### Extended Sheriff's call /3

>> A helicopter lifted an unresponsive person out of Bolinas on Thursday. The process took an hour and 15 minutes.



A class in aerial arts led by Joanna Haigood met at the Bolinas Community Center Tuesday evening, unaware of the morning's sadness. Photo by Justin Nobel.

## >> Tim

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forever. It helps recall the good old days when everyone was laughing together. In this corner of the woods, old hippies hold onto that."

"It didn't look like he had been drinking much lately so I don't know what sent him over the edge," said Flower Fraser, of Seashore Realty, where Tim did small errands such as taking out trash and cleaning. Recently, he emptied gunk from drainage ditches, deposited during last month's storms.

"I was just absolutely floored when he did this," said Fraser. "I'm going to really miss having someone who wants to come over and see us."

Tim spent many afternoons on the bench outside with a pina colada Popsicle purchased from the video store next door.

Bicycle Tim was born in French-speaking Canada and came to Bolinas roughly 30 years ago. Few know much about his early days. He had several sisters back in Canada but never talked much about home and never went back.

He was a fixture downtown, where he pedaled a black mountain bike with a basket in front. Worn cloth pouches were attached above the wheels and a cart with a torn side of canvas towed from behind. He used a metal garbage snatcher with a red handle to pick up litter. In recent years, unless it was lost, which it was on several occasions, he was rarely seen without his "skunk hat," a black and

white cap sown together by a taxidermist from the actual animal.

He was briefly involved with a local woman, and together they had a daughter, now a young adult.

Tim came into some money some years ago after a car collided with him while on his bicycle. He used it to purchase a small plot on the Mesa. He built a shed to live in but the county refused to let him stay there. On many nights, he slept in an old camper van.

"I was a good friend of his from a long time ago," said Joe, a Bolinas resident who works at the recycling center and says he has known his own share of nights spent in cars, and much worse.

Joe sat glumly at a metal picnic table beside the puddled parking lot behind the community center. He wore wool socks, several fleeces and a turquoise bandana that covered steely grey hair. Under a cerise cirrus sunset, he told his friend's sad but spirited story.

"He was an alcoholic," said Joe. "He would put away a six-pack a day. Then he sobered up. But alcoholics just continue thinking that alcohol is going to solve their problems."

Tim preferred Budweiser, in a tall can, warm. "Some of the aluminum cans he collected," said Joe, "were the same ones he drank."

His dog Razz resembled a coyote and was often at his side.

"Razz was cool," chimed a man in dirty blue jeans and a hoody with a cigarette in his mouth, seated across the table from Joe.

Tim listened incessantly to a police scanner, and he taught Razz to respond to the name Robert Adam Zebra Zebra.

"In the old days you listened to the police blotter to learn what they were up to," said Joe.

Tim held a variety of jobs throughout town. He cleaned the community center, collected cans and tinkered.

"He was a very, very competent bike repairman," said Joe. "I was impressed with a lot of his skills."

He loved nature and acquired a home-schooled knowledge of science garnered from years outdoors. "He could have taught classes," said Joe, "on how raccoons and rats moved."

Razz brought Tim great joy but several years ago was run over by a car. Tim quit drinking but then started again, only to quit again, only to start again.

"He used to get drunk and fall in a ditch and his face would turn colors," said Joe, "but he hadn't done that in awhile."

"He sometimes went cold turkey," he added, "then would wind up with the paramedics."

"What happens after 20 to 30 years of this shit is your health starts failing," said Joe. "The respect you're looking for is from people other than drunks. There are people who make the transition and those who don't, it's easy to get completely introverted and lost. Almost everyone gets stuck at one point, but for an alcoholic it's even harder. They go back to that time that seems to be the best, which is when they were most loaded."

"It's a strong lesson for me," mused Joe, with a heavy brow and sea green eyes, "though I haven't figured out yet what it is."

"It's a really good story," he added, "because it's an important moral lesson for this town."

What might that lesson be?

"You have to develop a very strong character," he said, "and the less money you have the stronger you have to be, because you are slowly being lifted out of economic participation. You have to weather the storms and make it through a winter on your own, because there will be some lonely months when you're not talking to anyone."

"It's such a shame," Joe added. "He just couldn't handle it; he was physically strong, emotionally weak."

Inside the community center, where only that morning Bicycle Tim had slipped from the world, four children, unaware of the day's sadness, spun through the air on objects hung from the ceiling.

"Joanna, I need inspiration," said a barefoot boy, who hung by his knees from a hula hoop.

Joanna Haigood, a professional dancer who teaches an aerial arts class every Tuesday evening at the community center, was quickly at his side.

Paper red lanterns left over from the Chinese New Year lined the rafters and the jazzy aria of Astor Piazzolla flooded the room. A girl in a purple shirt and floral print pants grasped what looked like a window frame and spun like Dorothy in some dreamscape twister.

"Use your legs," said Haigood to the boy on the hoop. He swung through the sphere and suspended himself upside down. Gravity sagged his shirt and stood his brown hair on end. Smiling, he scanned his teacher for approval.

"Beautiful!" she said.

*A service is planned, but a date has not yet been set.*