



Artwork courtesy of Bernard Healy (1932-2021)

**President's Message**

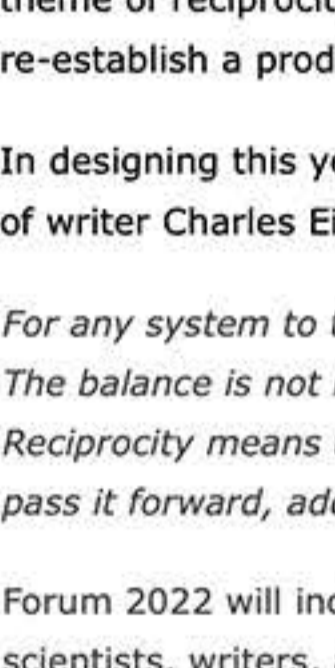
**MILESTONES AND MIRACLES:**

They don't come around often in our lives, but when they do, they present us with an opportunity to celebrate, congregate, and contemplate our good fortune. In 2022, EFM hit a milestone of 50 years. Miracle and hard work by its members and Board — the organization has thrived and adapted over time. On May 15, we celebrated these 50 years.

It was inspiring that our founder Marty Griffin was able to attend, along with three of our founding teachers: Phyllis Faber, Nona Dennis, and Kathy Cuneo. The Mill Valley Community Center was packed. Attendees were treated to a fabulous buffet of organic foods, wines, cookies, and a delicious carrot cake.

Attendees enjoyed catching up with each other and meeting new members. The Keynote speaker Mia Monroe, of the National Park Service, delivered a vibrant message. Kim Rago, EFM's Executive Director, spoke about current programs and adapting to the changes during the COVID years. I spoke about the history of EFM.

We are grateful to all those who attended, sponsored, or donated. An event like this is the result of a lot of hard work and planning. Thank you to the 50th Anniversary Committee (Marty Blum, Kim Rago, and Barbara Ball) for everything they did to make the event successful. A great big thanks to all the many volunteers who helped out that day!



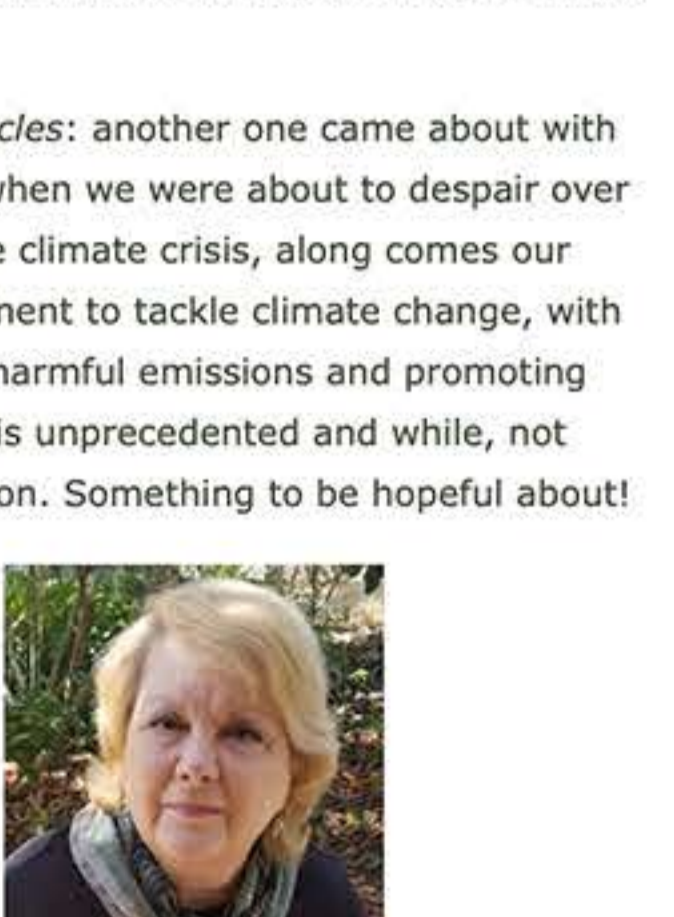
Keynote speaker Mia Monroe from the National Park Service. Many of you have been treated to her naturalist walks at Muir Woods.



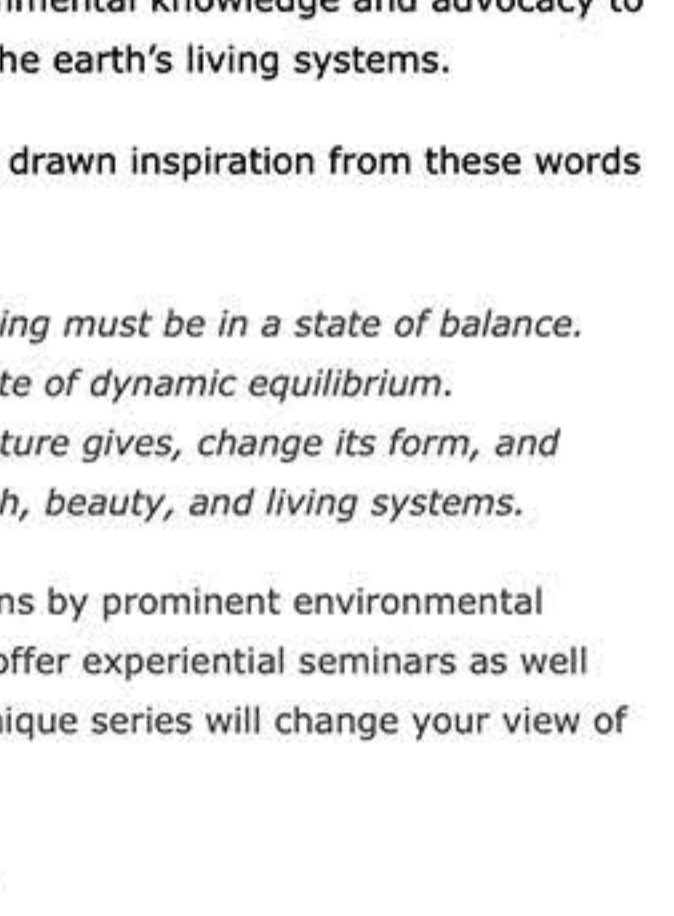
Marty Blum and her committee created the centerpieces for each of the tables from Renee's Garden Pollinator Mix. Photo courtesy of Deborah Young.



"Blum's Blooms": Marty planted her centerpiece!



Mill Valley Community Center: setting for the 50th Anniversary Celebration: Susan Rusche telling the history of EFM.



EFM Founder Martin Griffin stands shoulder to shoulder with founding teachers Nona Dennis, Phyllis Faber, and Kathy Cuneo at the 40th Anniversary.

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Over fifty years, EFM continued its twin missions:

- Education
- Advocacy Training

We have adapted as Marin and the world have changed. The pace of change accelerated rapidly in the past few years because of the pandemic, the climate crisis, and a growing awareness that environmental issues are inextricably linked to systemic socioeconomic and racial inequality. With the pandemic putting a halt to in-person trainings, EFM leveraged the accessibility of online platforms and updated its signature advocacy training programs to help advocates work effectively with social media. We do anticipate in-person field trips again in the future.

More on the theme of *Milestones and Miracles*: another one came about with the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. Just when we were about to despair over the lack of any progress on addressing the climate crisis, along comes our Congress, passing the largest ever investment to tackle climate change, with roughly \$370 billion dedicated to curbing harmful emissions and promoting green technology. This historic legislation is unprecedented and while, not perfect, is a major step in the right direction. Something to be hopeful about!

**Susan Rusche, President**



**FORUM 2022**

**The Reciprocity of Earth's Living Systems**

Forum 2022 is just around the corner! This year we will be focusing on the theme of reciprocity, or how to use environmental knowledge and advocacy to re-establish a productive balance among the earth's living systems.

In designing this year's program, we have drawn inspiration from these words of writer Charles Eisenstein:

*For any system to thrive, giving and receiving must be in a state of balance. The balance is not rigid or static; it is a state of dynamic equilibrium. Reciprocity means that we receive what nature gives, change its form, and pass it forward, adding to the world's health, beauty, and living systems.*

Forum 2022 will include virtual presentations by prominent environmental scientists, writers, and advocates. We will offer experiential seminars as well as our popular in-person field trips. This unique series will change your view of the natural world and your place in it.

**Save the date for our upcoming event:**

**Housing Equity & Transformative Justice**  
**Tuesday, October 11 at 7:00 pm PST via Zoom**

Speaker: Margaretta Wan-Ling Lin, UC Berkeley Lecturer and Executive Director at [Just Cities](#).

**Stay tuned for further details soon. We look forward to seeing you in the coming months!**

**Transitions**

**Anne-Christine Strugnell**, Communications Director, left the Board to attend graduate school in creative writing.

**Arlin Benavides** moved into the position of Program Director.

**Kim Rago** stepped down from her position of Executive Director to become Membership Director.

**Kirsten Nolan** moved into the position of Executive Director, from being Secretary.

**Marty Blum** assumed the position of Secretary.

**Many, many thanks to all of them for everything they have done for EFM.**

**A familiar face: Kirsten Nolan, EFM's new Executive Director**

At EFM's 50th Anniversary event, Kim Rago announced she was stepping down as EFM's Executive Director and returning to the board as Membership Director. Fortunately, her successor was found in a familiar face: Kirsten Nolan is an EFM Master Class 45 graduate, former board member, and active in many environmental organizations around Marin.

Kirsten has more than ten years of professional experience in environmental non-profits including program management, strategic communications, and community development. She earned her B.A. in Environmental Planning and completed the Bioneers' Cultivating Women's Leadership Program and CVNL's Excellence in Leadership Program.

*"I've always felt like an earth protector. I still have a polar bear pin with the word "protect" across it I picked out from the Whole Earth Festival when I was five. One of the first things I did when I moved to Marin 8 years ago was research active environmental organizations in the area; Environmental Forum of Marin came up over and over again. I was impressed by its mission and the opportunities it created to engage with community members who also shared my interest in sustainability and passion for protecting the natural world. I'm honored to serve the community as EFM's newest Executive Director."*



Kirsten Nolan, left, and Kim Rago, right, celebrating at EFM's 50th Anniversary event in May.

**Introducing EFM's Program Director: Arlin Benavides**

Arlin earned a BA in Urban Studies from UC Berkeley. He has worked on transportation and data analytics research and assisted in the development of grassroots community projects. He recently retired from the position of Equity Planning and Outreach Manager at the Multicultural Center of Marin. He has been involved EFM's Advocacy Series in the Canal as an Advocacy Coach since 2021.

*"My fondest memories of my father are the stories he's told me, about growing up in Jucuapa, a region at high-elevation on the hillside of a volcano, and cultivated coffee plantations as a family.*

*I felt inspired by that this year and I decided to work at a Cafe for 6-months to learn about the art of being a Barista, with the hope that I'd gain a deeper connection to my ancestors, plants, and to cultivate a practice to intentionally serve all kinds of people.*

*I love being curious and learning from the experiences and insights of others. This is partly why I devotedly pursue environmental work. But the reason why I work for EFM is because I strongly align with its mission and admire its capacity to migrate to provide resources and training to all people, especially people who migrated to the United States and are eager to create and make a contribution to improve systems and ameliorate injustice.*

*This is precisely the attitude and essence that is emanating out of previous training sessions with participants from [MarinCAN](#), [Voces del Canal](#), and the [Multicultural Center's Canal Resilience Community Council \(CRCC\)](#)."*



Arlin with his barista co-workers

**Environmental Education in Action**

The inspiration for the 50th of Forum 2022 came from Mia Monroe's presentation at EFM's 50th Anniversary Celebration. With a soft yet resounding cadence, Mia spoke about the Monarch butterfly's marvelous migration and the opportunity available to all of us to steward our community's biodiversity and living systems.

This message even crossed language barriers. It touched the hearts of activists from *Voces de Canal* (Voices from the Canal), a grassroots committee focused on community organizing. These women inspired EFM staff to organize a field trip to Muir Woods for Spanish speakers.

On August 19, a group of Marin residents arrived at the monumental forest and participated in the Community Science-Learning Program. For many, this was their first visit to Muir Woods. They heard and shared stories, identified native plants, and explored nature trails-connecting with each other and this sense of place.



August field trip to Muir Woods: for many participants, this was their first experience in the awe-inspiring setting.

**Put this event on your calendar:**

**MARIN GREEN HOME TOUR**

**Wednesday & Thursday October 19 & 20: 6:00 - 8:00 pm**

How are Marin residents adapting their homes to combat climate change?

Join this free, two-day virtual tour of 10 homes in Marin County and see what Marin residents are doing to

- combat climate change
- improve air quality
- generate clean energy
- save water
- move toward a safer, healthier, greener, and more resilient future.

The tour features new homes, remodels, retrofits, and low-cost, low-tech, DIY solutions for homeowners and renters. Short presentations by experts, links to relevant businesses, and useful resources and rebates are included

**EFM is a proud to be a sponsor of this event.**

[Register today!](#)

**EFM Notebook by Susan Holloway:**

**What is the best way to conserve water?**

As you are certainly aware, California is in the middle of a serious drought. In this dire situation, individuals and communities need to cut back radically on water consumption.

By now we've heard about ways to conserve water in daily life. But how do you know how much you are using when you take a brief shower, for instance? Is it still too long? And how do you know if other family members are sneaking long luxurious baths when you aren't around? More seriously, what if you have a water leak? Most of us receive a water bill every two months, so you may spring an underground leak that goes undetected for weeks until a gargantuan bill comes in the mail.

In this [Notebook post](#) I tout the benefits of getting a gadget that will provide specific information about how much water your household is using minute by minute! It will also let you know how much you have reduced your consumption relative to previous periods. It will detect leaks and notify you immediately. It's inexpensive, easy to install, and super-easy to use.

**Say hello to the Flume Smart Water Home Monitor!**

**What is the Best Way to Conserve Water?**

**New Post on EFM Notebook**

[www.MarinEFM.org](http://www.MarinEFM.org)

**EFM Membership 2023**

[www.MarinEFM.org](http://www.MarinEFM.org)

**JOIN US NOW**

EFM's new Membership Director, Kim Rago, will be launching the 2023 renewal campaign soon.

When you join or renew, your membership will remain current until the end of December 2023.

Meanwhile, catch up on our activities in 2021-22 with the [Annual Report and the newsletters](#).

**EFM Board and Staff**

**Kirsten Nolan**, Executive Director

**Susan Rusche**, President

**Karen Mendelow Nelson**, Vice President of Education

**Barbara Ball**, Treasurer

**Norma Fragoso**, EFM Ambassador

**Marty Blum**, Secretary

**Maggie Fillmore**, Newsletter Editor

**Arlin Benavides**, Program Director

**Gayle Marsh**, Graphic Design and Website

**Susan Holloway**, Author of EFM Notebook

**Leah Faw**, Social Media Coordinator

**Terri Thomas**, Director of Ecology

[www.MarinEFM.org](http://www.MarinEFM.org)

