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Mill Valley, California

ELIZABETH (MRS. CALVIN) TERWILLIGER

An Interview Conducted by

Dorothy Slate

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ELIZABETH TERWILLIGER

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Mrs. Calvin Terwilliger (nee Elizabeth Cooper)

Born September 13, 1909 in Honolulu.

Resident of Mill Valley since 1957, of Marin County since 1947.

Interviewed June 1972 in her home at 308 Oakdale Avenue, Mill Valley.

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Introduction

Although Elizabeth Terwilliger is a true rarus avis, she is well-known to most Mill Valleyans.

A generation of school children has gone "tripping with Terwilliger," catching her infectious joy in the out-of-doors. Mothers and teachers have shared her weekly explorations of Marin County by bicycle and canoe. Retired people with leisure hours have followed her to discover wonders they hadn't had time to hear or see before.

With her deep freeze full of dead birds, her wide grin, her year-round tan and her big straw hat tied under her chin, this delightful lady has stamped her love of nature on our community.

Her enthusiasm for life is unalloyed. She finds every day exciting and Mill Valley "the most beautiful place in the world."

ELIZABETH TERWILLIGER

Dorothy Slate

We are talking today, June 28, 1972, with Mrs. Elizabeth Terwilliger, Bay Area environmentalist, whose interests encompass hiking, biking, canoeing, teaching and outdoor education. We are in her home at 308 Oakdale Avenue, Mill Valley.

What a lovely view you have!

Elizabeth Terwilliger

It's quiet, and you can look right out into the woods. You can't see Mt. Tamalpais, but you can see the trees and the little stream.

This house is one of the oldest in Mill Valley, and it's been remodeled by the different people who lived here. One of them decided, since this is California, that he would plant everything he ever heard of that grew in California. We have two date palms. There are orange trees, lemon trees, fig, pear, apple, walnut, many varieties of plum. There are grape vines and youngberry vines. There was an apricot tree. There are also non-natives such as fan palms, bamboo, magnolia and holly -- which doesn't belong in this shady area. Then we have the native redwood, buckeye, alder and bay.

Mrs. Slate

When did you move to Mill Valley?

Mrs. Terwilliger

About 15 years ago. We came to Marin County just after World War II.

Mill Valley is nice, because you can live out of the wind. I remember being in a class of Herman Hein's (he used to live in Mill Valley and was an outstanding landscape architect) when he told us, "If you move to Mill Valley, look around. Where you see grass, there's wind. Where you see trees, it's out of the wind."

We moved here because of the redwoods. These are

second growth, you realize, because years ago all the redwoods were cut down for lumber.

The other day I was out looking at the redwoods and saw something I couldn't explain. If you look at the base of a redwood tree and it looks kind of peeled off, this is usually where a deer has come. The velvet on their antlers gets very itchy, and they rub on the bark to get the velvet off. But this day I happened to look way up high, and the bark was off up there. I thought, "No deer could reach that high!" So I watched. Pretty soon a little California grey squirrel came down and with his four paws scraped off some of the bark, put it in his mouth, climbed back up the tree and took it to his nest. I thought this was kind of interesting; I had never noticed this before.

Mrs. Slate

He was using the bark to build his nest?

Mrs. Terwilliger

That's what he was doing.

When you go into the woods you can hear the grey squirrel scolding. [She makes the sound.] Then if you watch you can see him leaping from tree to tree.

One time I took a class with a professor from the East Bay. We were studying birds, and we would meet each Saturday in a different place. We were standing at the College of Marin one morning at 5 o'clock when he said, "The band-tailed pigeons and the robins sleep in Mill Valley, but they come out to the rest of the county to feed."

I thought, "I live in Mill Valley. Is this man from across the Bay telling me that band-tailed pigeons and robins sleep in Mill Valley? What does he know that I don't know, that I haven't seen?" Then I thought, "I'd better go home and open my eyes."

The following afternoon I had some Girl Scouts meeting at my house. I told them what the professor had said, so we watched. Sure enough, as we stood there, between four and five o'clock, here came the robins, right over our heads into the trees in back of us.

Down here on Walnut, and at several places in Mill

Valley, there are black-crowned night herons. Black-crowned night herons sleep all day. The minute the sun goes down, they say, "Quawk," and out they come, to feed all along the shore. A lot of people don't know this. As a matter of fact, one day one of the students who had been with me on some field trips phoned and said, "Mrs. Terwilliger, I'm down here by Egger's and I'm looking at a bird in a tree that looks like a Kiwi bird, but I know we don't have Kiwi birds; they're in Australia. What can it be?"

I said, "I'll be down in a minute. It's probably an immature, black-crowned night heron." And that's what it was. The young black-crowned night heron is just brown speckles, whereas the adult has a black body, a grey coat, a black cap, sort of a greenish bill, and greenish legs.

Not long ago we were canoeing under Richardson Bay Bridge, coming back into the Mill Valley harbor. The sun had gone down, the moon was beginning to come up, and the beautiful glow of the sunset was all around. In groups of threes and fours came the black-crowned night herons out to feed all night long along the shore with their "Quawk, quawk, quawk." A lot of people don't even know they're here in Mill Valley. They're in Sausalito, too.

The other day I was going on a hike. Usually we talk about the great horned owl. He says five notes. [She makes the call.] I saw two of these sitting on a wire. The first one made an owl's five-note call, but the second one opened his mouth and said, "Nyaa! Nyaa!" I don't know whether this was mother, objecting to where daddy wanted to go, or whether it was junior and his voice was changing!

Then I heard [makes call]. This is the barn owl.

If you're standing down by City Hall at night you can hear a little screech owl in the bell tower right above City Hall. He's hard to see, because screech owls are very tiny. (I have a specimen in my deep freeze, and

¹/Mrs. Terwilliger says, "So many people have big windows that birds fly into and break their necks, and these people bring the birds to me. These are the birds that go into my deep freeze. This way I can let the children hold the birds in their hands. By holding them in your hand, you get to see things you would never see otherwise."

they're very soft.) You can hear the racket every night, coming out of the tower over the Fire Department, and it's just a screech. This is why he's called a screech owl.

Around Mill Valley we have both jays. Many people call them all just jays, but there are two kinds. I tell my children, "Pretend you've painted your head black. Put your hand on top of your head and open your fingers to make a crest. Paint that black, too. Then paint two blue lines straight above your eyebrows, like this, and paint the rest of yourself all blue. Now you're a Stellar's Jay." Mr. Stellar was a German biologist who went with Bering to discover this side of America. Being the first one to see this bird, it was named after him. I tell the children, "Some day you'll find a bird -- or something -- that nobody else has ever found, and he'll be named after you."

If we put on our little blue hats, our white shirts and our blue jeans, with a grey backpack on our backs, then we're the California scrub jay. The scrub jays are the guardians of the woods. The minute you come in, they warn everybody that you're there. [Makes call.]

When you go down along the Mill Valley harbor, the killdeer is there. He's the guardian of the seashore, and when he sees you coming he calls out, "Killdeer, killdeer, killdeer." He is doing more than that. The killdeer has only three toes, so he can't build his nest in a tree. He lays his eggs right down on the ground -- but you don't know it because they match so perfectly. A killdeer egg looks just like a rock. When he sees you coming, he says to himself, "Oh dear, here come all these children, and they're going to step on my eggs. I've got to do something."

This is what he does: I have the children hold their arms out in a bent position, like this, and let one go limp. If you're walking down at the beach and see him, you say, "Look at that poor bird. It looks like he's got a broken wing. Maybe I should help him." But can you help him? No. What is he doing? He's leading you away from his eggs.

The other day when we had a first-grade class at the beach we saw two crows. We heard the killdeers crying and crying, so we knew the crows were eating

their eggs. I told the children the crows said, "We just have to have some scrambled eggs for lunch today."

Mrs. Slate

What is your favorite age group to take on walks?

Mrs. Terwilliger

Preschoolers, up through first, second or third grade. Even the fourth and fifth grade. Above that they get a little blasé.

Then there are the retired people, who now have the time to look and to listen. The wonders have been there all their lives, but they only now have time to look and hear. So this is fun.

In December, January and February you see flocks of cedar waxwings in Mill Valley. They're here in the winter, eating all the pyracantha berries. They are gorgeous! They have a beautiful black band across their eyes, and a delicate soft yellow belly, then a brilliant yellow band along the base of the tail. On the male there is a little bright red quill at the tips of the wings. When you go for a walk and you hear a squeak, if you look up you'll see a whole flock of cedar waxwings. They'll dive down to a pyracantha bush or a cottoneaster and have berries for lunch.

If you're walking in the woods and you hear [makes call] that sounds like a whisper, it's the tiny bush-tit, about the size of your little finger and all grey. They fly in flocks.

If you hear a squeak that's like a mouse but it's up high, it's another bird about the size of your little finger. Paint your finger all brown and give it a curved bill, then creep up the tree and stop, creep around the tree and stop. This is the little brown creeper. You know when a branch breaks off a tree and leaves sort of a knot? Well, the minute that little brown creeper stops, you can't tell him from the knot.

If you hear something that says [makes call], you look up in a tree and paint the back of the little bird grey and the front of it white, give it a bill that looks like your two fingers together like this, and it is a nuthatch.

With the children, we pretend we have a hummingbird in our hand. We pretend it's a mother hummingbird. She gets very tired sitting all day on the nest, so the daddy says, "I'll do a song and dance for you." So he goes zoom, zoom, zoom. Then he gets way up in the air, and he comes down ZOOM. I have the children do this, and next time I see them they say, "I saw a hummingbird, and he did just what you said."

Mrs. Slate

How many children do you feel is an ideal number to take on a field trip?

Mrs. Terwilliger

A classroom at a time is all right, with the teacher and some mothers along. What's interesting in having the mothers along is that a lot of the people here have come from other parts of the United States. California is new to them, and they don't know about the out-of-doors. I like the mothers to learn along with their children.

One of the things I like children to learn is about snakes. I come from Honolulu where we have no snakes. I had never seen a snake until I came here. I have the children hold up their first finger like this. I have them feel the finger, and it goes in a little bit at the first knuckle. Then I have them hold their little finger up like this and pretend it's a pencil point. In California, where we live, if you go for a walk and you find a snake whose head is like your finger and his tail is like a pencil point, you can pick it up. But wait a minute! I have everybody hold his fist like this. We pretend this is a snake's mouth and pretend our finger is a mouse. If you put the mouse in like this, he can get out, can't he? Does a snake have hands to eat with? No. So Mother Nature says, "I'll help you." So we change the shape of our hand so that it looks like a claw. Now we put the mouse in. Can he get out? No. So this means that all snakes have teeth, and all snakes can bite.

When you find a snake with a head like this and a tail like this, then you pick him up by the back of the head so he can't bite you. But nobody likes to be picked up by his head, not even a snake. So hold the rest of him in your hand until you see who he is. I tell this to each group I go out with, because knowledge dispels fear.

One day I had a first-grade class from Novato out at the wildlife refuge.^V I had told them this about snakes. The children were using the rest rooms after lunch when I heard a great screaming. I thought, "I've told them what they need to know; I'm not going to run." When I got up to the rest room, there was a six-year-old with a great big gopher snake in one hand, holding him tight with the other hand.

He said, "Gee, Mrs. Terwiggler, I did just what you said, but he's awful heavy!"

I was walking with a group one day, preschoolers and their mothers, and I had a pack on my back. I saw a gopher snake go by, and I said to one of the mothers, "Would you go get that for me, please? I can't because of my pack."

She looked at me aghast. "Who? Me?"

I said, "Yes, I've told you what you need to know."

"Well, uh, all right," she said, and she went after the snake. When she came back she said, "I did it! I did it!" That's why I say knowledge dispels fear. This is why I'm trying to teach the children the things they need to know about the out-of-doors.

I have my children hold up five fingers, because before we go for a walk in the out-of-doors in California, there are five main things we need to know that are poisonous:

1. We hold our hand like this, as though there's a hat on top of our finger. This is a plant that comes up every spring after the rain, a mushroom. Are we going to eat it? No.

2. I have them hold up three fingers, like this, and cut round edges. Shine it up, paint it green and red. This is poison oak. Are we going to touch it? No.

3. We hold up a finger like this, paint it green, put spots on it, a flat white blossom, a lacy leaf like a carrot. Pick that leaf, crush it, and smell it. It smells horrible! This is Mother Nature's way of telling

^VRichardson Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, run by the National Audubon Society.

you to leave it alone. It's poison hemlock. We break the stem and find that it's hollow. We may touch it, but we do not eat it.

4. We make a triangle of our hands like this. We put it on our belly and swing the triangle up, like so. We paint our two triangles red and the rest of us black. We live under a rock or a board. Who are we? A black widow spider. Are we going to kill him? No, because he has his job to do.

5. Hold your fingers on your jaw and feel your jaw. If you find a snake who has a jaw like yours and has rattles on the other end, who is it going to be? Mr. Rattlesnake. Are you going to pick him up? No. Are you going to kill him? No, because he helps us. What did he have for lunch? All right, if he didn't eat Mr. Rat and Mr. Mouse, what would they do to our food? They would eat it; then we'd be hungry. So if you see Mr. Rattlesnake, you're in his backyard. You go away!

These are five simple things that they immediately learn.

Mrs. Slate

Do we have rattlesnakes in Mill Valley?

Mrs. Terwilliger

Yes, they're on Mt. Tam, although I've been in the county 25 years and have never seen one.

We can learn so much from children. I learned from a nine-year-old that a gopher snake (which looks so much like a rattlesnake, but his head is like our finger and his tail is like a pencil point) can blow up his jaw so that he looks like a rattlesnake. The answer is in his tail. He can also make a rattling sound like a rattlesnake, but the answer is still in his tail because he has no rattles.

These are little observations that we use when we go for a walk. The outside is full of discoveries, and children love to discover things.

Mrs. Slate

Have any children or others that you walk with

become enough interested in the environment to make it a way of life?

Mrs. Terwilliger

There are several who have now finished college and are doing this sort of thing. I run into their mothers, who say, "You have no idea what an influence you have had on my son's career."

As a matter of fact, I talked to one boy who said, "I remember going with you on a field trip when I was in third grade. I've never forgotten it. I've just finished University of California with a degree in forestry. I've decided I want to learn how to work with children and teach them, so they'll have a knowledge of the out-of-doors."

You never can tell. You keep planting all these little seeds! I run into children all around, and they bring me things they have found -- things they want to know about -- birds or bones or rocks. In turn, I take these things into the classroom so that other children can see them.

All these things that the children bring me go into my deep freeze, so they stay in good condition. Some day maybe I'll learn how to do freeze-drying. I haven't learned that yet. A lot of things that have been in the deep freeze for years have dried up. I take them out and take them to the classroom, and once in awhile they get a little smelly. Then the children say, "Oh, those stinking birds." This isn't the impression I want to leave with the children!

I have now found a girl who enjoys stuffing birds and animals, so she has done a lot of mounting for me. I like to take mounted specimens with me. I don't like to say to a child, "Do not touch." In storybooks, children talk to birds and animals and are friends with them. But you go to the zoo, and you may not touch. You go to the National Parks, and you may not touch. By letting them touch the stuffed things, they get color, shape, size and texture, and they love it.

The other day I found a mother opossum with a pouch and five babies. I didn't have one in my collection, and I don't know that there is one in Marin County. As a matter of fact, the only way he could get here from

his home in San Francisco would be to swim or hitchhike! This girl is now stuffing these for me. I also have a weasel that I found the other day.

One of the rangers in Muir Woods called me not long ago and said, "I have a steelhead for you." So now, along with all the stuffed animals, I have this stuffed fish. Every year the steelhead come up into the streams, even into Mill Valley.

One mother said she saw a salmon up at the waterfall in Mill Valley. This was hard to believe, so I went later -- and there was a beautiful big salmon! We did canoe up the little creek in Mill Valley, and two steelhead swam right past us; it was very exciting. As you canoe up into Mill Valley, the perch leap right into the canoe. In all our creeks and saltwater marshes, the fish come in and lay their eggs. There is a food supply here. The steelhead come up and go back each year. The salmon come up and lay their eggs and spawn. Nother Nature never wastes a thing. The fish comes up and lays its eggs. Then Mr. Raccoon comes along and says, "I think I'll have fish for supper." Or Mr. Fox or Mr. Weasel will come, and he'll have fish for supper. It's fascinating to see the things that utilize what nature has provided.

To be in the out-of-doors is so exciting. You can stay in the house with your kids just so long, and then it's, "Out! Out!" But where are they going to go? Are they going to go out and throw rocks? Are they going to go and destroy? Or are they going to go and have the joy of discovering, of seeing things? When a child doesn't know how to create, he only knows how to destroy. How much better to give this child a sense of wonder, of delight and discovery.

To me, this whole area is exciting. I don't think there's any place in the world that can touch it. We have streams, we have redwoods, we have the bay, we have the mud flats, we have the ocean close by. We have grasslands, we have chaparral. You can hike up the hills into the chaparral area, and there you have the wrentit, with his perky little tail. You hear [makes call] and there he is, sitting on a bush.

His little cousin the bushtit, the whisperer, will be in the same area, in the bushes -- and more as you come down into the oak trees.

As you get into the oaks you can see tree trunks and logs with holes in them big enough for acorns. Who has made these holes? Mr. Woodpecker. We have many kinds of woodpeckers in Marin. I have a number in my deep freeze. I hold up one of them and ask the children, "Where is the red on this woodpecker?" They say, "On his head."

"Wait a minute -- what part of his head? Let's really look." (In other words, we don't always "see" what we're looking at!) The red is on the top of his head. Where is the yellow? On his throat.

If the woodpecker with the yellow throat and the red on top of his head puts acorns in the holes, what is his name going to be? Acorn woodpecker! The acorn woodpecker says, "Jacob, Jacob, Jacob." When he flies you can look up through his wings and see white windows in his wings. When you see these, you know it's the acorn woodpecker.

Then we see another tree or log, with tiny holes that an acorn wouldn't fit in. I show them another woodpecker. Where is the red on this one? On his head. What part of his head? Oh, on his face. Where is the yellow? On his belly.

Now let's look at the tiny holes again. What is the name of the liquid that comes up from the earth to feed the leaves? It's sap. This bird says, "I get awfully thirsty," so he makes the tiny holes to drink the sap, and he's called the yellow-bellied sapsucker. If you go down Catalpa Avenue, by Park School, you'll see rows and rows of holes where the yellow-bellied sapsucker has been getting a drink.

Across from the post office there's a telephone pole. One day I heard a peck-peck-pecking. I looked up, and sure enough there was an acorn woodpecker. He had moved in and had a nice little house right on the telephone pole.

One day I heard a different sound coming out of the pole. I looked, and the starlings had moved in; out had gone the woodpeckers. Not too long ago starlings were very rare in Marin County. We used to keep horses in Tennessee Valley, and one day I saw a flock of birds flying. I'd heard about starlings, but those were the first I saw. They fly as though there were an

invisible ring around them, as there is around an amoeba when you look at it through the microscope. When blackbirds fly, it's sort of ragged. But with starlings it's sort of "held together," orderly.

Now they have come into Mill Valley. They're in my yard, eating the cherries on my tree. I've seen them down by the marsh, lined up on a wire. One day I saw a marsh hawk come in to get a mouse for his lunch, down in the pickleweed area. A whole mass of starlings came off the wire and dove down on this hawk. Then they separated into two groups and dove alternately at the hawk until they drove him out of the area.

We don't have any bluebirds in Mill Valley. New-comers sometimes think they've seen a bluebird, but they're looking at a jay. In order to see the bluebirds in Marin County, you have to go a little higher up where we have grasslands, up toward the top of Mt. Tam.

Mrs. Slate

In addition to hiking, I know you do biking and canoeing. Which is your favorite?

Mrs. Terwilliger

The interesting thing about bicycling is that you get to use all your senses. As you ride on a bicycle you can hear, you can see, you can smell. You can stop easily and pick and taste and touch.

We moved here from Strawberry so the children could bicycle to school and I wouldn't have to drive them to everything. We were within easy bicycle range. This was fine until it was time for my daughter to go to high school. Then I got to thinking about bike racks. I knew there were racks at Park School and at Edna Maguire, but I hadn't seen any at Tamalpais High School. So I asked, "Where are the bike racks?"

"Well," they said, "we don't have any. Kids that age wouldn't be caught dead on a bicycle." I said, "Somebody must be riding bicycles to school. Where are they?" "Oh," they said, "they hide them in the bushes, because kids are always stealing them or breaking or cutting them."

I wanted my daughter to bike. I wasn't about to drive her to school for P.E. at 7:30 in the morning when she could ride herself; it was downhill all the way, at a nice gradual slope. So she did ride her bicycle one day -- and somebody stole a part off of it and she wouldn't ride it again.

I thought, "Something's wrong here; we'd better do something about this. I know there are other mothers whose kids have bicycles in their garages. Why don't we start an adult group bicycling?" So I said to the Audubon Society, "The third Monday of each month, let's go on a bicycle ride." And we did.

I thought, too, that if we put in a bicycle rack at Tam High we could do something about the situation. So I went to the principal, and then to the superintendent, and finally we had a bicycle rack! All that year, whenever I passed the high school I'd see two, maybe three, bicycles in the rack. But next year it was full of bikes. You see, the incoming class didn't know there had never been a bike rack there!

One day a mother in Sausalito said to me, "Do you know you can't bicycle legally from Mill Valley to Sausalito?" Sure enough, as you drive to Sausalito, right there by the Buckeye restaurant is a sign that prohibits pedestrians, cycles and so on (including bicycles) on the freeway. How else could you get to Sausalito without a car? Well, under the Richardson Bay bridge were the railroad tracks. But right there is a sign saying, "Private. Permission to pass revocable, etc." Then when you come out on the highway, the signs say, "Go back! Wrong way!"

All this meant that no child from Sausalito or Marin City could legally walk or bicycle to high school. Here's the Division of Highways, telling the parents to get their kids to school the best way they can, but they may not walk, and they may not cycle. I thought, "This doesn't make any sense. A child should be able to get to school on his own." I had passed that sign near the Buckeye for years, but it hadn't meant anything to me. I wondered why I had been so blind.

I went in to San Francisco to the office of the Division of Highways. There were three men at their desks. I said, "I've got a problem," and I explained to them. One of the men said, "I understand your

problem. I live in Terra Linda, and I can't get to San Rafael over Puerto Suello Hill except by car. We should have a bicycle lane."

I next went to the Division of Highways in Corte Madera. I asked them what the fine would be if I were to lead a group of students from Tamalpais High School on a field trip to the Golden Gate Bridge -- walking or bicycling illegally from the Buckeye restaurant to the Sausalito turnoff. They told me to call the courts in San Rafael. So I called. The lady who answered the phone said, "Mrs. Terwilliger, I know what you're talking about. I live in Sausalito, and my son goes to Tamalpais High School. He could bicycle to school very easily; it's level. But the law says no, so it costs me a dollar a day for his transportation."

I asked her what the fine would be, and she said it would be between \$15 and \$20, depending on the judge. I asked her who the judges were, and she named three, one of whom was Hadden Roth. Hadden Roth graduated from Tamalpais High School. His mother owns the Redwood Bookshop, and I've know her for more than 20 years.

"Dear Hadden Roth," I wrote. "I've known your mother for 20 years, and I understand you went to Tamalpais High School. Can you help us with this problem? According to the signs, no child from Sausalito can walk or bicycle to Mill Valley or Marin City."

He wrote to me and said, "Dear Mrs. Terwilliger: I just carry out the laws; I don't make them. Write to Bill Bagley."¹

So I wrote to Bill Bagley. His assistant answered me and said, "Put an overpass from Marin City." That wasn't the problem at all, so I thought, "He's not paying attention." I wrote to Max Rafferty² and to the Division of Highways in Sacramento. We heard from the Division of Highways, suggesting we take the problem up with the schools!

¹State Assemblyman from Marin County.

²Then State Superintendent of Schools.

Then I wrote to the railroad people, asking why we couldn't have a bicycle path alongside the railroad. They said, "Oh no, the insurance would be too high, etc."

Finally I wrote to the governor and explained it to him. Meantime we explained it to the Tamalpais High School District and the Mill Valley School District. I thought we might as well write to Washington, so we wrote to U. S. Congressman Mailliard and U. S. Secretary of Transportation Volpe.

Pretty soon we were going round and round in a circle and still weren't getting anywhere. Finally the bicycle people in the county got together and had a big meeting. We decided to meet once a month until something had been done about the problem of a bicycle path. Michael Wornum had gone in as the new county supervisor, and we asked him to wear a bumper sticker on his car and to help us work. Michael helped us, and Pierre Joske¹ helped us. Meantime I had written to Peter Behr² and asked him to help us.

We had a meeting, with speakers from the Golden Gate Bridge District and from the County; we had Peter Behr; we had Mr. McDevitt from San Francisco -- because by then San Francisco was waking up to bicycle paths. So we had many voices speaking.

Then Mary Mayer of Sausalito said she had a cousin on the board of the railroad. She talked to him, and he was finally convinced that we could put in a path from the high school to the Bait and Tackle Shop outside Sausalito. But just west of Tam Junction you have to cross the creek. Where would we put the bridge and how could we pay for it? Then it occurred to the Water District that they already had a pipe going across there, and they said we could put the foundations for the bicycle path bridge on their foundations. So we finally got our path put in that far.

At Tamalpais High School the County line stops and the City of Mill Valley begins. So that's where the bicycle path stopped! I appealed to the Mill Valley Parks

¹Marin County Director of Parks and Recreation.

²State Senator from Marin County.

and Recreation Department, and they said the Public Works Department couldn't do it. I appealed to the mayor, telling him we needed just this short stretch from the high school into Mill Valley. This was finally done; with the widening of Camino Alto the money was appropriated to put the path in there. So we now have our path, and everybody is gung-ho for it!

But we decided we'd like to ride our bikes across Golden Gate Bridge! In 1936 I was a student nurse at Stanford Hospital in San Francisco. My husband was an intern, and we used to ride our bikes across the bridge. I thought if we could ride 30 years ago, our children should be allowed to ride now. "Why aren't people allowed to ride on Golden Gate Bridge?" I asked. "Well," I was told, "somebody was hurt at one time."

I suggested we put a yellow line three feet in from the edge of the road, so that if anyone fell, he wouldn't get hurt. I met the bridge engineer and talked to him about this, and he agreed. So now on each side of the walkway is a three-foot yellow line.

We still had to break the barrier of riding across. So I scheduled an Audubon field trip for my bicycling ladies. (Anywhere from 50 to 75 people will show up when I schedule an Audubon field trip by bicycle.) We were going to Old Fort Point, underneath the bridge. We had an appointment with the historian there, for a conducted tour between 11:30 and 12.

We met at the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge. I went to the telephone and called the bridge office. I told them where we were and what we wanted to do. They said, "We'll be over in five minutes." Pretty soon their little three-wheeled cart arrived, and the driver said, "All right, let's go." We all got on our bicycles, and we bicycled to the other side of the bridge. We got down to Old Fort Point right on time for our lecture.

Mrs. Slate

After that you had no more trouble?

Mrs. Terwilliger

After that the bridge was opened to all bike riders for all time!

Mrs. Slate

One thing I want to talk to you about is Outdoor Education.

Mrs. Terwilliger

In 1963 I went to an Audubon Society convention in Asilomar. A man from San Diego was there was a group of young children, ages 10 and 11. He explained that the San Diego Schools had what they called an Outdoor Education Program to which their students went for a whole week, to live in cabins and learn about the out-of-doors. He said this had been going on for 20 years. I thought, "What have we been missing? Let's start that here."

It just happened that Bill Lovvorn, who was then principal at Old Mill School, had his Master's Degree in Outdoor Education. Several of the teachers were interested in the program. I went to the Mill Valley School Board and showed them a film of Audubon Canyon Ranch, explaining what the children were learning there and how beautiful it was. The school board decided to support an Outdoor Education Program for sixth-graders.

In the meantime, the Sausalito School District had received funds for their underprivileged children (a program administered by the County Schools Office), so their sixth-graders were also able to take part in an Outdoor Education school.

We had no place in Marin County that would house the children, so the County Schools Office found a place in Napa County -- Enchanted Hills, a camp run by the San Francisco Lighthouse for the Blind where their children go in the summertime. We called it Camp Lokoya, and the first outdoor classes were held there in the spring of 1964. In addition to cabins donated by the Lions' Club, Rotary and other service clubs, there is a huge dining and recreation hall. Teachers were the regular classroom teachers from the children's school, and they lived in a building that had been an old hotel in the days when stagecoaches went through.

Each cabin housed eight children and a counselor, who was a high school student. The children were responsible for setting the tables, serving the food, and cleaning up the dining hall after meals. There was a professional cook in the kitchen.

There was a lovely pond and several hundred wooded acres that we could wander through. This was a beautiful experience, and the children have never forgotten it. Just last Monday I was out at Pt. Reyes National Seashore, making a trip with a group to Chimney Rock. I found a flower I didn't know, so I went to Drake's Beach, where there is a little office that sells books on native plants, birds, fish, and so on. As I walked in, the girl in the office said, "Hello, Mrs. Terwilliger; I remember you. I went to Lokoya many years ago." Then the boy spoke up. He had been a lifeguard there. I keep meeting these children whose interest in the environment started years ago with the Outdoor Education Program. It's been going on in the Mill Valley schools for about eight years. We went to Lokoya for two years, but now we go down to Pescadero, in San Mateo County. We still don't have our own building.

This past year the school board thought they couldn't afford to send the children, but the parents were so enthusiastic about the program that they didn't want to drop it. They all pitched in and had a big show and sale and raised almost all the money. The school board said, "Well, if you're that interested, we'll manage the money somehow."

We were in Pescadero with the children one time when there was a holiday in the middle of the week. The day after the holiday we happened to take the children to a lovely county park that San Mateo has, next door to the Outdoor Education School. The children were appalled by the mess the adults had left. It was awful! Litter was everywhere. My belief is that unless we give our children this week in the Outdoor Education School where they will learn about the out-of-doors, there's no point in continuing to establish county parks -- or state or federal parks. It's not right for people to think, "Oh, let somebody else clean up." It's not fair. If these are our parks, we should learn to take care of them. This is why I feel Outdoor Education is so important.

An immediate problem right now is near Tamalpais High School. There's a small triangle of land at the far end, a tiny wilderness area. It has pickleweed, which shows that it's a saltmarsh area. There's some dodder, which is that brilliant orange plant that grows on the pickleweed -- it's called Old Goat's Beard. There's some dried salt, which shows that the tide

comes in there. There are salt grasses, which is part of the saltwater marsh. There are also two little ditches that come in with fresh water. There are cat-tails and a lovely weeping willow that's started to grow, as well as a pussy willow, which indicates fresh water. I have watched little fishes and whirligig beetles. The deer come down there to feed. I have seen seven snowy egrets standing there feeding.

Not long ago one of our city councilmen went to the school board and said, "We'd like to cover that land with blacktop so we can park 200 commuters' cars there." Now this is school property. For anybody to come in and take school property and blacktop it for a parking lot is wrong, especially when it can be used as a wildlife area that the Department of Science could study. Mr. Bennett, the biology teacher, said, "Of course we want this. It shows plant succession. It shows what grows in fresh water, what grows in salt water, what feeds here, who lives here."

There's a huge baseball field, a huge football field. There are tennis courts. There's a swimming pool. There are two gymnasiums. What is there for the Science Department? Just this lovely little triangle. My children went to Tamalpais High School, and for six years I passed that beautiful little marsh wilderness area. We all love it. Everybody in the neighborhood loves it.

At a meeting of the Tamalpais High School Board, one of the trustees said, "There's no more point in saving this little marsh than in saving that silly one by Middle School." I was floored! Just when you get one board of trustees educated to the importance of the out-of-doors and preserving the environment -- and your city council and your planning commission -- they change and you've got to do it all over again! I couldn't understand the peculiar attitude of these men, in this day and age when we're constantly talking about our environment and the importance of saving natural areas.

We went to BCDC.^{1/} Joe Bodovitz, head of BCDC, contacted Dr. Harvey, an environmentalist from San Jose, who came to look at the triangle. He said, "Well, it's

^{1/} Bay Area Conservation & Development Commission.

just an old marsh. It isn't that important." Mr. Bodovitz then contacted Dr. Joel Gustafson,[✓] who said he felt there was a better marsh over by the railroad track. To me, that's too far for the students to go, and nobody sees it. This tiny marsh at the end of the football field is something everyone sees every day as they go by.

I was down there a few minutes ago, and I walked around. I could taste the pickleweed; I picked it up, and I could taste the salt on it. There's a tough grass that grows there called salt grass. There is dock growing in the shade, which will later turn dark brown but in the beginning is lovely reds and greens. In the little stream is a beautiful yellow flower that looks like a brass button, so it is called Brass Buttons. Cattails were growing. It was cool and pleasant and there was a breeze, and you were comfortable.

I walked across the blacktop road to where I had parked my car, and the heat just radiated from the blacktop. If this whole area is destroyed and covered with blacktop, think of the heat it will radiate. They've already destroyed two beautiful marshes across the highway. To me it would make much more sense, if they want parking lots for commuters' cars, to put them under the bridge where there's no life anyway. Where there's no light there's no life. This afternoon I'm going to write a letter to the City Council and suggest this idea: Put the commuters' cars underneath Richardson Bay Bridge where it doesn't matter, but leave the triangle for the high school's Biology Department.

Mrs. Slate

What do you see for the future of Mill Valley?

Mrs. Terwilliger

I think people live in Mill Valley because it is a beautiful town. We have outstanding residents who are interested in seeing that we remain a beautiful town. The people who give their time to serve on commissions do so because they love Mill Valley. I think there will always be someone who will see that it remains like this.

[✓]Professor, Natural Sciences, California State University at San Francisco.

Mrs. Slate

If you were to leave Mill Valley, do you think others would take up the work you have begun?

Mrs. Terwilliger

Years ago, when we lived in Strawberry, I went back and forth to the Junior Museum¹ with my children. In this little museum they learned the six habitat areas that we have in the out-of-doors here: the bay, the ocean, the grassland, the chaparral, the woodlands, the stream.

The Junior Museum has several auxiliaries or guilds of mothers in all the towns. These mothers have been with me for years, and I believe they can carry on -- as well as the women in the Audubon Society who have been with me at our wildlife refuge on Richardson Bay and have learned all the things that I have learned from being there. I'm sure they will continue this work.

One thing I would like: As we are planning the development of our harbor, I would like a small building down there that would be a nature center so the second or third grade children could be brought from our classrooms to our harbor. We are preserving the pickleweed and the marshland adjacent to it. From the harbor up to East Blithedale is all marshland. We have a unique study area there, and to me it would be thrilling if we could have a small nature center. For instance, even one of the portable classrooms from Edna Maguire School could be brought down to the dock. We need a home for our stuffed animals. In case I leave Mill Valley, I won't need these animals elsewhere. They belong in this area.

Students from Middle School, Edna Maguire and the elementary schools could readily get to a nature center down by the Mill Valley harbor. There they could learn about our environment: what do we have here? Not just, "Oh, look at that white bird yonder." We need to know why he is here, what he had for lunch, what his colorings are, what he says, and when he comes out -- is he a night bird or a day bird?

¹Louise A. Boyd Marin Museum of Science, San Rafael.

Mrs. Slate

Unfortunately, all this costs money.

Mrs. Terwilliger

The thing is, the school board doesn't need the portables any more. I called yesterday to see what one would cost.

Somebody else said yesterday, "There are a lot of Quonsets coming back from Viet Nam, and they're very cheap. They're Army surplus. Why don't we get one of those?" I went to Colonel Hamilton, who used to be mayor of Mill Valley and is a retired Marine Corps officer, and asked him to please look into the price of a Quonset. He said he would.

We really need another portable or Quonset in which we can keep our sails, our masts, our booms and our life jackets so we can have sailing and canoeing classes. In Mill Valley lives Jean Nooney, who is a sailing instructor, and all this time she has been instructing the kids on dry land. The city owns a boat called the Pelican. It has been sitting on a cement stand over by Edna Maguire School. You really have to learn to sail a boat on water! If we had another portable or Quonset, students from the Middle School could come down to the harbor and learn canoeing and sailing. Our county is surrounded by more water than any other county in California. Therefore, I feel it's vital to get our children on the water. This is what I'd like to work toward.

Another thing I want to do is with bicycling: As you bicycle, you get to use all your senses, as I said. We should write a little book that tells what you hear and see and taste and feel and smell as you go along Marin bicycle paths. I think this would be a good contribution to bicycling, with a few illustrations on the side -- what to look for and what to listen for. So many people don't know about the plants that we have in the out-of-doors. This booklet would teach them how to tell poison oak at different times of the year -- winter, summer, spring and fall. How do you tell it from strawberry? How do you tell it from blackberry?

There's a lot of poison hemlock in the county. You could nibble on poison hemlock and not know it.

There's the rattlesnake that's poisonous. What are the other snakes that you see?

So many new people are coming into our county. If we had a book on what you would find -- when and where and also, seasonally, the wildflowers that are in bloom -- this would be beautiful.

Then we should tell what things you can touch safely, what things give you a sensation. For instance, when you touch the leaf of the hazelnut, it's very soft. You may eat the thimbleberry. It's delicious. This is a brilliant orange berry that just fits over the end of your finger. The leaf of the thimbleberry is also soft.

When you go along near a stream, you see a beautiful cerise five-petal flower. The vine looks sort of like blackberry but, instead, the berry is brilliant orange. When you go fishing you buy a jar of salmon eggs; this little berry is just the color of salmon eggs, but it's the size of a blackberry. If you're hot and thirsty, it's very tasty.

When you go for a bicycle ride and you're thirsty, look for a plant that has a reddish blossom about two inches long. The leaf is shaped sort of like an arrow-head. Pick this leaf and taste it. It's so sour it's as though you had poured vinegar on lettuce. Immediately you salivate, and you're not thirsty any more.

In the spring you look in damp areas and find a leaf that's perfectly round, with a little white flower coming out of the center. This is "miner's lettuce." Near it is another tiny green-leafed plant with a white flower on top; this is chickweed. Combine these two with the red top, and you have a delicious salad. The Indians used this. They put the plant on the ground and let the ants crawl over it. Ants give off something like formic acid, and this was their salad dressing. It's delicious!

It's fun to know what you can eat in the out-of-doors, and a lot of people don't know this.

Some leaves have sharp needles, and some have smooth edges. Some leaves are shiny and some are tough. Some leaves are thick and feel like rubber, and you wonder why.

Then you remember that some plants like dry feet. You get to know and recognize different plants. It's like meeting a friend. If you're in a group and you see somebody you know, you feel comfortable. If you look over a group and don't see anybody you know, you're not that comfortable. With the children, we go up and shake hands with the plants we know. "How do you do, Mrs. Hazelnut." It's fun, and you get a name that sticks. You get sight, color and sensation so that your whole system is in tune with the out-of-doors. To me this is beautiful.

I take groups from the Junior Museum on field trips every Friday to see one of our six habitat areas. Many of the Junior Museum families are from Mill Valley, and this way we learn where we can go in Marin County. So many people don't even know what we have here in Mill Valley. You could spend days wandering around Mill Valley! We have saltwater marshes, we have grasslands, we have oak and bay woodlands, we have the redwoods, we have fresh-water streams, we have the chaparral and all the birds that go with it. There's just so much that's exciting.

Last night we were sitting in our yard. We looked up, and here was a bat circling around and around. Then there was a hummingbird sitting on a little branch, going out to get honey from the fuschias, then darting out into open space for tiny insects, little gnats that were flying around.

We looked up and saw a flock of seagulls. Seagulls have a very slow flight pattern. I have the children say, "A seagull is never in a hurry." Then we heard a flicker. [Makes call.] The flicker has red shafts under its wings and under its tail and a white spot on its rump. He flies in an undulating pattern.

A young screech owl flew over our heads, and in a moment another flew over. Then we heard the [makes call] of the band-tailed pigeon, right here in the trees. We saw a great horned owl. He goes [makes call]. There was a chickadee nearby. He likes peanut butter, which I put out for him every day. He calls out, "Chickadee. Chickadee-dee-dee." You get so you hear all these sounds.

Suddenly a date was thrown down on the table, and we heard a rustle up in the palm tree. We looked up, and there was a California grey squirrel eating dates.

The beauty of Mill Valley is that it's set back here where it's quiet, and it's lovely. You're not worried about the climate; it's just the right temperature, and you can really enjoy the out-of-doors. Mill Valley is already air-conditioned by being so close to the water and by the fog that comes in. The minute you go over Corte Madera Hill and into San Rafael, it's hot! The minute you come back into Mill Valley, over Alto Hill, it's lovely.

If you canoe in the evening you see the black-crowned night herons come out to feed along the shore. They perch in all the big trees in Mill Valley, but mostly the bays.

There is a new bird in Mill Valley that's called a caracara. This is a South American bird that has apparently gotten away from somebody. He's been here three years now, eating whatever he can find. We first saw him down at the dock when we were teaching our sailing and canoeing classes. We couldn't find him in any of our bird books, until somebody found a book of birds of South America. His body underneath is a light tan. His back is a dark brown, with light tan circles at his elbows.

We watched him the other day, sitting on the railing of the ramp down at the dock. Some little barn swallows had built their nest under the dock, and they didn't want him there. They darted at his eyes, but he didn't pay any attention. Then a couple of crows came along and sat down beside him. This was too many birds for him, so he moved over to the top of a pole. He says, "Kee, kee, kee." No other bird in Mill Valley makes this sound.

Mrs. Martha Robinson, who has taught eighth grade at Edna Maguire School for many years, recently told me about a "Friends of the Environment" meeting at the school and asked me to come. There I met two young men who are teachers at the Middle School. One of them, Mike Kaufman, is interested in working with students who want to do things with their hands and learn about the out-of-doors. I asked him to meet down at the dock with Dr. Joel Gustafson and Mr. Asa Hanamoto, a landscape architect. Mr. Hanamoto's son had been one of our students in canoeing and sailing, and I thought, "I wonder if Mr. Hanamoto would help us make a plan for our harbor." I had known Dr. Gustafson for many years, and I thought

I'd ask these gentlemen if they would give their experience and help us create an environment, along with our harbor.

We walked around the whole area, talking about what could be done -- with the marsh, with the land that's there.

By having the children participate in this program, they will create; then they will not destroy. If someone were to come in and do all the creating, the other people would have had no part, and they would only know how to destroy. But by bringing in the children at Middle School (and there are going to be over a thousand students there) we can show them what we've got and then let them build and create so that it is their own. The adults will help with the plans, but the students will carry them out. The children will feel "This is ours, we want it, we want to protect it." I think we can do this.

To me it makes good sense for children to participate. Their strength is phenomenal, and they love to help. If you can keep them interested and make them feel they are a part of it, children like to do things. When you don't give them constructive things to do, they're going to destroy. I have found kids with guns down at the harbor.

There's no point in having school if you don't teach the children to live with the out-of-doors. They're going to grow up and have families of their own -- and what are they going to teach their children? What does the mother say to the child? "Outside, you!" What is the child going to do outside? Where is he going to go? He can't be watched every minute. Has the mother so trained him that he feels the out-of-doors is his to enjoy and protect? Does she know he will not destroy?

I think this can be done, and I believe we are doing it here in Mill Valley -- giving the children a sense of delight and wonder in the out-of-doors, and saving that out-of-doors for them and for their children. But it takes constant effort. You just win one battle and you have to fight another!

Mrs. Slate

Thank you so much. I really appreciate your giving me this time.