

LIVING WITH NATURE:  
THE SETTLEMENT  
AND PROTECTION OF THE  
MARIN COUNTY LANDSCAPE

2018 CGLHS CONFERENCE



Hosted by **Marin Art & Garden Center**, 30 Sir Francis Drake Blvd., Ross, CA 94957

Friday, November 2 – Sunday, November 4, 2018

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## PRELIMINARY CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

### PRE-CONFERENCE, Friday, November 2

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1:00 – 3:00 pm      Frank Lloyd Wright's Marin County Civic Center  
Optional pre-conference tour

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Join us for a special docent-led tour of the Marin County Civic Center, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. The Civic Center is a national- and state-designated historic landmark and has been proposed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Wright's 770th commission, it is the last and one of the most important works by this internationally acclaimed architect, who died prior to its completion.

The Marin County Civic Center Administration and Hall of Justice buildings dramatically illustrate the kinship of Wright's architecture to the surrounding landscape. The long horizontal buildings gracefully link the crowns of three separate hills, and the circular theme is evident throughout the complex. The barrel-arched roof is of pre-cast concrete and is a blue that blends with the sky.

For more details and to download the tour app, go to [www.marincounty.org/depts/cu/history](http://www.marincounty.org/depts/cu/history)

The tour will conclude at the Anne T. Kent California Room, where Marin County Librarian Laurie Thompson will meet us to show us the collections documenting California history. Optional visit (by car) to off-site secondary location of the California Room, which is nearby.

*Please pre-register for this tour as space is limited!*

## CONFERENCE BEGINS: Friday, November 2

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5:00 – 7:00 pm      Opening welcome reception and presentation in The Studio, Marin Art & Garden Center (MAGC)

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Celebrate the opening of our 2018 conference with a cocktail reception in The Studio, a recently-renovated building designed by Gardner Dailey for the Marin Society of Artists in 1948. The Studio is the hub of arts and cultural events at MAGC and will also be the location of our Saturday talks. Joining us will be MAGC trustees and representatives of some of the resident groups that offer programs at the Center.

### **“Women Saving the Landscape – The Marin Art & Garden Center Story.”**

Featured speaker is Carol Roland Nawi, former State Historic Preservation Officer for California, who researched the history of MAGC’s founding and has contributed an article for the fall issue of *Eden*.

### **“The Indomitable Isabella Worn”**

Short presentation by Thomas Perry, a Worn family descendent and MAGC trustee, based on an article published previously in *Eden*.

*Guests are welcome; please pre-register.*

## Saturday, November 3

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8:30 am – 12 pm      Membership meeting and presentations at MAGC

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Registration and coffee

### **CGLHS Annual Membership Meeting**

Christy O’Hara, CGLHS president, will welcome us and give a report on the Society’s activities.

### **Presentations**

*(See Details and brief biographies of speakers at end of this document)*

- **State Historic Preservation Officer’s Current Priorities and Programs**

Remarks by Julianne Polanco, California’s State Historic Preservation Officer

Two presentations about the history of design in Marin will follow, on topics featured in the CGLHS journal, *Eden*:

- **“Helen Dupuy Van Pelt (1885-1972): A Quiet Pioneer”**

Presentation by Marlea Graham

- **“In His Own Backyard: Robert Royston’s Modern Gardens in Marin”**

Presentation by J. C. Miller, former associate of Robert Royston

The final piece of the morning program will address the history of conservation efforts in Marin, where pioneering tactics were used to assure the preservation of wild land as well as agricultural areas, and the conservation movement has influenced local and state-wide efforts.

- **Discussion of the History of Conservation Efforts in Marin**

Nona Dennis, retired environmental consultant and former president of the Marin Conservation League, will talk about the early years of the League and its work to save Richardson Bay, Angel Island, and Mount Tamalpais.

Robert Berner, former executive director of the Marin Agricultural Land Trust, will talk about the innovative techniques used to keep farmers on their land and keep open space open in West Marin.

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1:00 – 4:30 pm      Afternoon Tour

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**Mt. Tamalpais, Mountain Theater and West Peak**

Following a buffet lunch, we will board shuttle buses and join carpools for an afternoon outing to Mount Tamalpais, the signature peak of the Marin skyline and the center of the region's watershed. Generations have used Mt Tam as a place for recreation and entertainment, and the conservation of the mountain is an ongoing effort by the federal, state, and county agencies with jurisdictions there.

Our guided tour will include the historic Mountain Theater, a WPA project that is a beloved institution with a lively summer theater program that continues today. We will then go to a little-visited site, the West Peak, where a Cold War-era military installation is being re-imagined as a restored natural area. Along the way, we will have a birds-eye view of the entire Bay Area and learn about the critical ecosystems of the mountain.

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5:30 pm – 9 pm      Festive Dinner

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**Dinner at Lagunitas Country Club**

We will return to MAGC in time to freshen up before dinner, which is nearby at the historic Lagunitas Country Club. Built on the site of the "Pink Saloon," serving loggers and hikers in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Lagunitas Country Club was founded in 1901 and the current clubhouse was designed by architect John White (partner of Bernard Maybeck) in 1908. We will enjoy cocktails in the redwood grove and dinner in the main dining room, with after-dinner remarks by Fran Cappelletti, librarian of the Moya Library/Ross Historical Society, about the history of Ross.

## Sunday, November 4

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9:00 am – 12 pm      Private Gardens Tour

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**Private Gardens in Ross and Kentfield**

Our final morning will explore private gardens in Ross/Kentfield, each associated with a historic house and all avidly tended by their owners. We will meet at MAGC and carpool the short distances to each garden. Guests are welcome but please pre-register.

We will provide a bag lunch for you to eat at MAGC or en route to the airport.

The tour concludes at 12:00 noon.

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## Talks and Speaker Bios

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### ***"Women Saving the Landscape – The Marin Art & Garden Center Story."***

**Carol Roland-Nawi** has had a 40-year career in historic preservation. From 2012 to 2015 she served as the State Historic Preservation Officer for California, appointed by Governor Jerry Brown. Ms. Roland-Nawi's service in the public sector also includes working in the cultural resource divisions of the Department of State Parks and Recreation and the Department of Transportation (CalTrans). In the private sector, she worked as Senior Project Manager for the engineering firm Mead & Hunt and as a private consultant to a number of state and local jurisdictions. She holds a Ph.D. in American History from the University of California, Riverside.

Ms. Roland-Nawi has had a long interest in both vernacular and designed cultural landscapes. She has prepared resource inventories, histories, and National and California Register nominations for Henry W. Coe State Park, the Carrington Ranch Preserve in Sonoma County, and the Hoskins-Pleasant Ranch Historic District in Solano County. As State Historian, she prepared a state-wide historic context statement for depression era Civilian Conservation Corp landscapes in California State Parks. Her work on designed landscapes includes a history and evaluation of the Mary Burdell Victorian Garden at Olimpali State Park in Marin County, the Lovelace Garden in Montecito designed by Isabelle Greene, and, most recently, the Marin Art & Garden Center.

### ***"Helen Dupuy Van Pelt (1885-1972): A Quiet Pioneer"***

Helen Dupuy Van Pelt (1885-1972) decided to become a landscape architect at a time when vanishing few women were working in that field. She received formal training as an apprentice with the Chicago's O.C. Simonds & Co., also quite unusual for this period. Helen executed very few large-scale projects, putting most of her professional efforts into residential work. Unfortunately, such work is particularly susceptible to being lost over time, as large estates become subdivided and new owners prefer new styles. Thus, little of her work is extant today. Helen left no papers or plans for posterity, but diligent research has turned up at least the outline of a busy career covering work in the eastern states, Pasadena, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Albuquerque, New Mexico over a period of about 60 years. The focus of this talk will be primarily on Helen's years in the Bay Area, where, in addition to maintaining a viable private practice and raising two children, she was a founding member of the California Horticultural Society, the Marin Art & Garden Center and the Marin Conservation League.

**Marlea Graham** was editor of the Heritage Rose Group's quarterly *Rose Letter* for more than ten years. Having discovered during this period a love of playing history detective, and upon retiring after 20 years with the Oakland Fire Department, Marlea volunteered to serve as editor of the newly formed California Garden & Landscape History Society's journal, *Eden*, and continued that work for a little over thirteen years, from fall of 1997 through 2009. When not working in her flower garden, she still carries on with her research, writes occasional articles and gives slide lectures as requested.

### ***"In His Own Backyard: Robert Royston's Modern Gardens in Marin County"***

Over the course of his remarkable sixty-year career landscape architect Robert Royston designed award-winning landscapes across California and other western States, in Australia, Japan, and a

number of Asian countries. His work often took him to far-away places, but he always returned to his creative center, the home and garden he created in Mill Valley in 1947. For Royston, the garden, especially his own garden, was a laboratory, a place where he experimented with new ideas and where he developed many of the innovative ideas that would characterize his unique approach to landscape modernism. In this presentation we will look at a number of the early gardens that he designed in Marin County in the immediate post war period. We will also explore his own garden, a place that evolved under his hand for six decades.

**J. C. Miller** is a licensed landscape architect and writer with a deep interest in history. He is a partner at Vallier Design Associates, a landscape architecture and planning practice located in the San Francisco Bay area. He is the former Director for the Landscape Architecture Certificate Program at UC Berkeley Extension where he developed a curriculum and program for Historic and Cultural Landscape Preservation and Management. Mr. Miller continues to work academically, teaching an on-line course in landscape history for UCLA, lecturing, and publishing on California's mid-century landscape.

Mr. Miller is a co-author of *Modern Public Gardens: Robert Royston and the Suburban Park* and the forthcoming *Robert Royston, Landscape Architect* to be published by the Library of American Landscape History in spring 2019. His essay "A Modern Language for Landscape" was recently included in *William Krisel's Palm Springs: The Language of Modernism*. He has written biographical profiles for the *Pioneers of the American Landscape Design* series, and is a frequent contributor to California Modern magazine.