



Rancher Jim Jensen holds a lamb at the Jensen Ranch. Photo: Paige Green.

# Modern Shepherds

## An Ancient Tradition Going Strong in Marin

“We are all descendants of shepherds,” says Marin sheep rancher Marcia Barinaga.

It’s true that shepherding is one of our most ancient traditions. Historians have traced domesticated sheep back to somewhere around 10,000 B.C. in Mesopotamia. Sheep are also thought to be one of our first domesticated animals. Shepherding is in all of our blood.

Fast-forward to West Marin today and this shared heritage could explain the broad appeal of the county’s sheep-dotted hillsides. This landscape and climate happen to be perfectly suited for raising grass-fed sheep.

There’s another reason sheep have thrived in this region for more than a century—your support of MALT’s work to protect a thriving community of family farms. “Without protected farmland, Marin’s sheep ranches might not exist today,” says MALT’s Executive Director Jamison Watts.

As of this year, MALT has protected 22 ranches that incorporate sheep into



Local wool yarn. Courtesy of Fibershed.





Bill and Eileen Jensen Ranch. Paige Green.

## Modern Shepherds *...continued from page 1*

their production and land management practices.

Sheep also happen to be one of the most useful animals around. They not only supply us with milk, meat and fiber, they are well-adapted range managers with a light hoof on the land, providing weed control, fire fuel reduction and fertilizer.

### Sheep's Milk Cheese

One sheep ranch is the MALT-protected Barinaga Ranch. Marcia raises a small herd on the 818-acre ranch she shares with her husband, Corey Goodman. Marcia's flock consists mostly of East Friesian dairy sheep for milk that she makes into her coveted Basque-style artisan Barinaga Ranch cheeses, Baserri and Txiki. She also raises sheep for sheepskins, wool and meat that she sells directly to consumers from her website and to notable Bay Area restaurants.

Marcia's shepherding heritage goes back many generations to Spain's Basque country, where her grandparents were born. After they moved to America, they started a sheep ranch in the Midwest. Even today her Basque relatives are cheesemakers. They were overjoyed, she says, when she became a shepherd herself.

"They told me, 'The life of the *baserri* is the good life. It's not a wealthy life, but a good life.'"

### Local Meat

The MALT-protected Jensen Ranch is near the town of Tomales. The family raises sheep primarily for meat. Lamb is a traditional food during the spring and enjoyed by many during the Easter and Passover holidays. Fortunately, because of our Mediterranean climate, lamb is available to us locally throughout the year. Echoing the sentiments of Marcia's Basque relatives, fifth-generation rancher Bill Jensen and his son, Jim, say they raise sheep for the traditional way of life and pride in producing a quality product every year.

"It's a lifestyle, not a fortune," says Bill. "It's the freedom to make your own decisions and schedule."

Today Jim, who is not only a rancher but also MALT's Stewardship Field Associate, is excited about the future of sheep ranching throughout the county. While today his family raises lamb for meat and wool on the commercial market, he's thinking about ways the family might be able to diversify its operation. This includes the possibility of selling more products locally and directly to consumers and restaurants, and employing the flock for the landscape benefits and ecosystem services they provide.

### Fiber

Joe Pozzi, a fourth-generation rancher who raises sheep and cattle on this MALT-protected ranch near the town of Valley Ford, shares the Jensens' passion for raising sheep. In addition to marketing his 100 percent grass-fed lamb directly to local markets under his Pozzi Ranch Lamb label, he has developed a market for local wool. For more than 20 years, Joe has been selling his and other like-minded ranchers' wool directly to natural bedding manufacturers. The coarse wool is perfect for bedding products because it is naturally fire retardant, and it regulates body temperature by keeping you warm when it's cold, and cool when it's hot.

Recently, Joe's partner, Amy Chesnut, launched the Sonoma Wool Company, which makes and sells practical home products, such as dryer balls and dish drying mats, made completely of locally grown Pozzi Wool®. "Wool is an amazing fiber," says Amy. "It's strong, flexible, durable, absorbent, and its cell structure provides both insulation and breathability. I don't know of a synthetic fiber that can match all of these qualities."

Maybe a sign of things to come, two small businesses have entered the wool business and are banking on an increase in local wool. A small wool mill has begun in an old barn behind the Valley Ford Mercantile store in the historic West Sonoma town, just north of the Marin County line. The fledgling operation started by Casey Mazzucchi and Ariana Strozzi turns raw wool into felt for uses such as artisan clothing.

And Fibershed, a local fiber advocacy and education organization, is working to bring back the market for sustainable fibers, including local wool. The organization even has a vision for building a wool mill in the state. Today, California is one of the largest wool-producing states, explains administrative director Dustin Kahn, and Fibershed would like to help build an infrastructure to keep the processing local.

"The trend is shifting, and ranchers are seeing the value in fiber," says Kahn.

At the end of the day, whether it is wool or lamb, Joe Pozzi says it's rewarding to connect local growers with the people who appreciate their local products.

"We're trying to bring value back to the ranchers in the area so that they are compensated for what they do and produce," says Joe. "It's a great feeling to see people enjoy what we've created here on the ranch."

## Where to Buy

**Barboni Ranch:** Lamb sold at Bay Area Whole Foods Markets

**Barinaga Ranch:** [www.barinagaranch.com](http://www.barinagaranch.com) and Tomales Bay Foods

**Fallon Hills Ranch:** [www.fallonhills.com](http://www.fallonhills.com)

**Pozzi Ranch:** [www.pozziranch.net](http://www.pozziranch.net) and Whole Foods Markets throughout Northern California

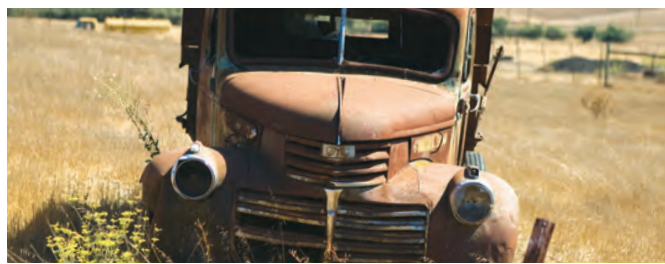
**Sonoma Wool Company:** [www.sonomawoolcompany.com](http://www.sonomawoolcompany.com) and Bay Area Whole Foods Markets

**Stemple Creek Ranch:** [www.stemplecreek.com](http://www.stemplecreek.com) (sells local lamb from its own ranch, the Jensen Ranch and others)

**Thornton Ranch:** [www.bleatingheart.com](http://www.bleatingheart.com) (sells sheep's milk cheese)

**Tomales Farmstead Creamery:** [www.tolumafarms.com](http://www.tolumafarms.com) and Tomales Bay Foods

**Valley Ford Mercantile & Wool Mill:** [www.valleyfordwoolmill.com](http://www.valleyfordwoolmill.com)



## DONATE YOUR CAR, SAVE FARMLAND

MALT has partnered with CARS, a car donation management program used by nonprofits across the United States, to allow you to turn your old vehicles into cash to protect farmland.

To find out more, go to  
[www.malt-cardonations.org](http://www.malt-cardonations.org)  
or call 415.663.1158.

## Ranches



## Rolling Hills

### *landscape art show and sale*



### Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup> & Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup> Druids Hall, Nicasio

Celebrate and mingle with a group of California artists who have been painting and sculpting on MALT-protected ranches and farms for the 17th Annual Ranches & Rolling Hills art show.

#### Preview Lunch

In the spirit of plein air art, we invite you to join us for a lunch in the field, across a walking bridge over a creek behind the gallery. This popular lunch is always lively and fun, and will be accompanied by music. It also gives you first opportunity to preview and purchase art.

Saturday, May 17, 11 a.m.–2 p.m. \$150 per person  
Reservations are required. Space is limited.

#### Public Art Show

Saturday, May 17, 2–5 p.m.  
Sunday, May 18, 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Equator Coffee and local organic lunch by The Farmer's Wife will be available for sale. This year, local artists will help kids create masterpieces of their own.

OIL PAINTING BY JON FRANCIS: LAZY AFTERNOON





## Penelope Gerbode Legacy Giving Circle Member

Marin-based philanthropist and environmentalist Penelope “Penny” Gerbode knows farms.

Although she grew up in San Francisco with her well-known adoptive parents, Martha Alexander and Dr. Frank Gerbode, she spent the first years of her life on a dairy farm in Yorkshire, England. She fondly remembers riding on the back of her father’s tractor as he plowed the fields, and churning fresh cream into butter with her mother.

**“I feel the farms of yesterday and today are the backbone of a community.”**

The Pacific Heights home where Penny grew up proudly flew a green flag with a peace symbol on it, which distinguished it from its neighbors. It was here that her farming roots met a strong land conservation ethic. Her mother Martha, who founded the Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation, is known for her support of many significant land conservation efforts, including working with The Nature Conservancy to protect the Marin Headlands (where Gerbode Valley is named in her honor) and protecting Alcatraz Island from development. She also funded Save the Bay in its early days.

Penny began making trips to Marin as a child during the summers, and she remembers watching the Highway 101 corridor develop rapidly. In 1971 she moved to Marin, and a year later returned to Yorkshire to visit the farm from her early childhood.

“Nothing had changed; even the name of the farm was the original one,” she recalls. “It was powerful to have that confirmed. It’s still a working farm.”

Like that in Yorkshire, the farming tradition in Marin has endured because of people like Penny who want to see family farms, the local food they produce and their natural beauty protected from inappropriate development. Local farms, she says, benefit the community through providing fresh, healthy food. They also benefit the environment through reducing the pollution and carbon emissions resulting from its long-distance transportation. She generously supports MALT through annual gifts and has also included MALT in her estate plans.

“I feel the farms of yesterday and today are the backbone of a community,” says Penny. “Stepping onto a farm is stepping back into a really good time of the past, of families working together, and that reminder of our heritage provides an important service for communities.”



## Jennifer Ramsey Phyllis Faber Monthly Giving Member

Each summer when she was a child, longtime MALT supporter Jennifer Ramsey spent two “wonderful” weeks on her

grandmother’s farm in Eastern Washington. The farm grew wheat, and she lovingly remembers the time with her relatives there. The long, hot summer days were spent playing with her cousins in open fields and along railroad tracks, swimming in Lake Coeur d’Alene and riding in the combine as it harvested wheat. She also spent time with her aunt sewing, cooking and helping in the vegetable garden.

This place was a part of her family, she says, even though she didn’t live there. And the farming life left a lasting impression on her.

Today, Jennifer works in San Francisco and she lives in Marin.

Although she spent her early childhood here, it wasn’t until after college that she returned. When she did, she says, it felt like “coming home.” Marin’s heritage of family farms and the open landscape are what she says make it feel that way.

“I love the diversity of the terrain, the hills, the open space, the water, the little towns. And I love that all of this is located in proximity to San Francisco,” she says. “Even when I drive and see the open green hills, it lends this feeling of calm and I feel very fortunate that I can live here. I never want to take it for granted.” Jennifer has supported MALT’s work for 24 years because, she says, “I just need to.”

“It’s important for all of us to have a bigger picture of where we come from and how we all survive,” she explains. “Farmland contributes to our greater well-being.”



Paolo Vescia



Paolo Vescia



Courtesy of Avedano's

### Meat, Knife & Fire: A Sustainable Summer Grilling Workshop *June 7*

Join *New York Times*-celebrated Avedano's San Francisco butcher shop and Stemple Creek Ranch for a tasty hands-on cooking workshop on the ranch.

Avedano's co-owners Tia Harrison and Angela Wilson and fourth-generation

rancher Loren Poncia will teach guests how to select, cut, season, tie, grill and carve grass-fed beef and lamb. We'll also learn about sustainable ranch practices as we sample our handiwork along with local cheeses, farm fresh salad and hand-crafted Tomales AppleGarden Farm hard cider. Everyone will take home a cut of Stemple Creek beef to cook at home and practice their new skills.

**Time:** 2-5:30 p.m.

**Place:** Stemple Creek Ranch, Tomales

**Cost:** \$175 MALT members/  
\$200 nonmembers

*Preregistration required*

**What to Bring:** Hiking shoes and layered clothing

**Age Appropriate:** 21 years and up

**Guest Limit:** 25



## Field-to-Fork Supper Series



Michael Woolsey

### Summer Supper *June 28*

Celebrate summer with a hike and farm dinner on the stunning Thacher Ranch, which MALT is working to protect right now. We'll take a hike around the ranch with MALT's stewardship staff, then enjoy a fire-cooked meal overlooking the original mid-1800s homestead. Music and libations will accompany the locally sourced supper. Register for the event to find out more about the chef and field-fresh menu details. This promises to be an unforgettable evening on the ranch.

**Time:** 4-9 p.m.

**Place:** Thacher Ranch,  
Chileno Valley

**Cost:** \$225 MALT members/  
\$265 nonmembers

*Preregistration required*

**What to Bring:** Hiking shoes and layered clothing

**Age Appropriate:** 21 years and up

**Guest Limit:** 50



Michael Woolsey

### Italian Harvest Supper *September 13*

Gather on a ranch for hands-on Italian burrata cheesemaking with master cheesemaker Louella Hill of the SF Milk Maid. Afterward, we'll pour a glass of vino and sit down to a harvest supper cooked onsite by Italian chefs Andrea Giuliani (Piazza d'Angelo) and Donato Scotti (Desco, Donato Enoteca, La Strada). The West Marin ranch location is a surprise to be announced this summer.

**Time:** 4-9 p.m.

**Place:** Surprise location to be announced to registered guests

**Cost:** \$225 MALT members/  
\$265 nonmembers

*Preregistration required*

**What to Bring:** Layered clothing

**Age Appropriate:** 21 years and up

**Guest Limit:** 50



*Visit [www.malt.org](http://www.malt.org) to join us at the table; seats are limited, so sign up early.*





Debbie Wilson

### Vintage Car Drive to Thornton Ranch *October 12*

Vintage-car enthusiasts, grab the keys to your favorite classic and join CNET host Brian Cooley for a narrated country drive to Tomales for a “meet-up” on the stunning MALT-protected historic Thornton Ranch. Gary Thornton, a fifth-generation rancher and collector, will display a dozen vintage trucks, tractors and implements dating from 1917 to 1950. While at the ranch we’ll enjoy local cheeses, refreshments and a box lunch from Cowgirl Creamery while hearing stories about this historic ranch.

**Time:** 10:30 a.m.–2 p.m.

**Place:** Starts at Cars Dawydiak, 5830 Paradise Dr., Corte Madera. Final destination: Thornton Ranch, Tomales

**Cost:** \$45 MALT members/\$55 nonmembers/\$15 kids under 12  
*Preregistration required*

**What to Bring:** Cool vintage car

**Age Appropriate:** All ages

**Guest Limit:** 50



Michael Woolsey

### MALT Day at the Pumpkin Patch *October 19*

Pick an organic pumpkin, make your own cheese, taste local Marin wine and beer, pick up locally sourced sandwiches, salads and burgers from The Farmer’s Wife and Stemple Creek Ranch and let the kids go crazy with crafts at MALT Day. Beautiful Nicasio Valley Farms Pumpkin Patch sets the scene for this fun family day.

**Time:** 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

**Place:** Nicasio Valley Farms Pumpkin Patch

**Cost:** Free and open to the public

**Age Appropriate:** All ages



Paige Green



Courtesy of Stubbs



Paige Green

### Campfire with Owls *October 25*

Mysterious, graceful, strong and wise—it’s no wonder that the owl has figured prominently in mythology and folklore throughout history. The Hungry Owl Project will share these legends with us alongside live owls for a truly close encounter.

We’ll gather around a campfire on the hills of MALT-protected Stubbs Vineyard and keep warm with hot chocolate for kids and a Stubbs Vineyard wine tasting for adults.

**Time:** 6:30–8 p.m.

**Place:** Stubbs Vineyard

**Cost:** \$30 MALT members/\$40 nonmembers/\$10 kids under 12  
*Preregistration required*

**What to Bring:** Layers of clothing, flashlights

**Age Appropriate:** 6 years and up

**Guest Limit:** 50



Visit [www.malt.org](http://www.malt.org) today to become a MALT member and save up to 25% on MALT Hikes, Tours & Tastings. Sign up for MALT’s free monthly eNews and be the first to know about events.

# MALT welcomes new board members



Michael Woolsey

## Janine Guillot

Longtime MALT supporter Janine Guillot was elected to MALT's Board of Directors in 2013. Janine has spent more than two decades in operating, risk management and finance roles in financial services. From 2010 to 2013, she served as chief operating investment officer for the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS), one of the world's largest pension funds. Before joining CalPERS, she served as chief operating officer for the fixed income and European businesses of Barclays Global Investors, a global asset manager. She enjoys hiking, traveling and cooking. She lives in San Francisco and Tomales. "I am honored to join the MALT Board. MALT plays an important role in preserving farmland. Thanks to MALT, we have access to so much wonderful, locally produced food."



Rebecca Patton

## Rebecca Patton

MALT welcomed Rebecca Patton to its Board of Directors in 2013. She comes to MALT with significant experience in conservation. After 20 years in Silicon Valley's private sector, Rebecca joined The Nature Conservancy in 2001 to pursue her lifelong interest in conservation. As a Regional Director she oversaw conservation programs in many parts of the world, from China to Peru to the western United States, and developed a deep appreciation for the importance

of community-based conservation. Then, as the Chief Conservation Strategies Officer she led TNC's global policy and science initiatives. She is on the boards of several other conservation organizations, and in her free time, she also enjoys hiking adventures. She lives on the San Francisco Peninsula and in Inverness. "We deeply love Marin and Point Reyes," she says. "I joined the board to support MALT's work to protect these irreplaceable landscapes for agriculture."

## Membership has its benefits



Michael Woolsey

Special members-only events are MALT's way of saying thanks to those who generously donate to protect farmland. MALT's annual member hike, this year at Barboni Ranch, is a particular favorite.

To register for the event, and find out more about becoming a member, please go to [www.malt.org/member-events](http://www.malt.org/member-events) or call Annual Fund Manager Noelle Moss at 415.663.1158 ext. 312.

### Special Event: Barboni Ranch Hike June 14

Hike this beautiful, ecologically diverse sheep and cattle ranch that was protected with your support in 2013.

**Time:** 10 a.m.-2 p.m. (rain cancels)

**Place:** Barboni Ranch, Hicks Valley

**Cost:** Open to current members at the Sustainer level (\$100-\$249) or higher. *Preregistration required*

**What to Bring:** Water, picnic lunch, hiking shoes, layers

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## A RIDE TO BENEFIT MARIN AGRICULTURAL LAND TRUST

**Saturday, July 12, 2014, 8 a.m.–3 p.m., Nicasio Valley Farms**

Join a community of local food and farm supporters for this special ride in the West Marin countryside. The 40- and 60-mile rides begin at the MALT-protected Lafranchi Family Dairy. Farms and ranches along the routes will host SAG stops. The ride will end in MALT style, with a farm-to-table lunch. Lagunitas beer and a refreshing summer MALT "mocktail" will be served with lunch. Three Twins delicious ice cream will complete this local feast.

To learn more about the event and to register, go to [www.malt.org/tourdemalt](http://www.malt.org/tourdemalt)

Marin Agricultural Land Trust is a member-supported, nonprofit organization created in 1980 to protect Marin County farmland. Some of the Bay Area's most highly acclaimed dairy products and organic crops are produced on farmland protected by MALT agricultural conservation easements, which total more than 46,000 acres on 72 family farms and ranches.

To learn about Marin's working farms and ranches and the food they produce, visit:  
[www.malt.org](http://www.malt.org)