



President's Letter



Marianne Gawain

Laid Back Activism

Visitors often exclaim, "It's so beautiful here! But I guess you're used to it."

The fact is, I don't take for granted the privilege of living in Carmel Valley—and I'll bet you don't, either. November, the month of Thanksgiving, gives me a welcome opportunity to express my gratitude for our Valley home and its warm community.

Carmel Valley may have a laid-back vibe, but I am impressed by its residents' dedication to the rewarding, albeit challenging, work of civic engagement. Whether mobilizing spontaneously in response to a particular problematic situation or collaborating through one of our many non-profit groups to address ongoing needs, we are an active bunch. Of course, the Carmel Valley Association is at the forefront of much of the action, especially with respect to protecting the valley's beauty and livability through appropriate land use planning, but increasingly with respect to environmental stewardship as well. Be sure to subscribe to CVA's free weekly e-bulletin for updates on what's happening at CVA and in the valley's vibrant civic, non-profit and cultural sectors.

Thank you for your support and suggestions for CVA. Whether communicated in person or by email, your input inspires CVA's board and helps us set priorities. At CVA's fall picnic I enjoyed hearing from our dynamic and effective supervisor Kate Daniels as well as new Park District

continued on Pg. 2

MAGICAL PLANT FOUND IN CARMEL VALLEY

by Sandy Schachter and Mibs McCarthy

Mystic, mythic mistletoe: Yes, the Christmas decoration you stand under in anticipation of a kiss has more of a history than you might imagine. Most famously, in Norse mythology, it was the weapon that killed the beloved son of Odin and god of light Balder, whose mother had made all the elements of the earth and all living things except the mistletoe take an oath not to harm him. She had not asked the mistletoe because she thought it was too young to swear an oath. During an assembly of the gods, Balder's enemy the god Loki convinced the blind god Hother to throw a mistletoe twig at Balder, and it struck and killed him. This event was considered a terrible misfortune by the ancients.

Still, this little organism managed to overcome its nefarious past. "From time immemorial, the mistletoe has been the object of superstitious veneration in Europe," according to James Frazer, author of *The Golden Bough*, considered the most comprehensive account of world folklore ever written. The mistletoe was seen to have universal healing properties, extinguish fires, protect against witchcraft, and help women and livestock conceive (hence, the kiss connection). Frazer went so far as to argue that the mistletoe was actually the sacred Golden Bough, the miraculous branch found on oak trees that was worshipped by the Druids and other ancient Europeans. Virgil, in *The Aeneid*, also saw the mistletoe as the Golden Bough. It had an aura of invincibility because it does not touch the ground and was thought to be sent from heaven.

And you can find this magical plant right here in Carmel Valley!

Phoradendron leucarpum tomentosum: Santalaceae family. "Phora means 'thief' in Greek; dendron means 'tree;' leu means 'white,' and carpum means 'berry;' thus 'white-berried thief of the tree.' In Anglo-Saxon, mistel means 'dung' and



tan means 'twig;' thus 'dung on a twig,' referring to the fact that mistletoe often sprouts on branches where birds have left their droppings. Oak mistletoe is also known as Pacific mistletoe and, in Navajo, 'basket on high.'" (From Kate Marianchild's book *Secrets of the Oak Woodlands: Plants & Animals Among California's Oaks.*)"

For years, oak mistletoe has been maligned and considered a parasitic killer of trees. But now it is known to be an ecologically important native plant. It is a keystone species in the oak woodlands, meaning it is disproportionately important to other species relative to its abundance. If mistletoe is removed from ecosystems, one-third of the birds, mammals, and insects disappear, according to Marianchild.

It is easy to spot oak mistletoe in winter as rounded green clumps in the upper third of a tree. In evergreens, you can look for patches of unusually dense, off-color foliage. Oak mistle grows mostly on oaks, but also on California bay, California buckeye, willow, sycamore, manzanita, and others.

continued on Pg. 2



Help Hidden Valley and the work it does in our local community
NOW IS THE RIGHT TIME!
THANK YOU!

Please visit MCGives starting November 13th
montereycountygives.com/hvms



MCGIVES!
montereycountygives.com/hvms

President's Letter, continued from Pg. 1

General Manager Eric Morgan, but it was equally rewarding to talk with many of you. Over the past months CVA has acted on concerns you've expressed regarding unpermitted special events and short-term rentals, land use permits and liquor licenses, roadwork and traffic congestion, intrusive lighting and noise, fire risks, litter, and other concerns. Together we make a difference.

On behalf of CVA's board of directors, I extend gratitude and very best wishes to all for a joyous holiday season.



PLAN FOR FAMILY FUN FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

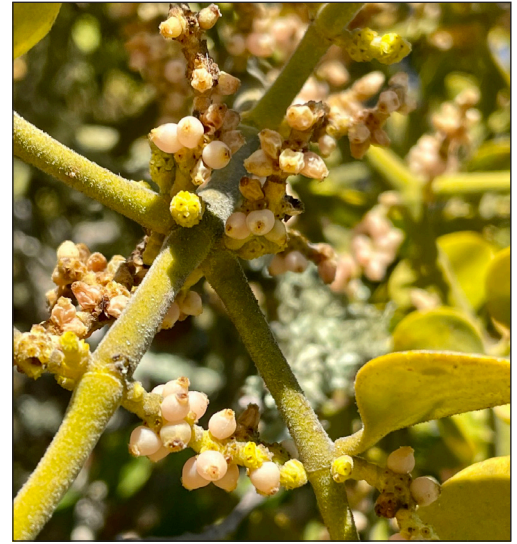
- ❖ Saturday Nov. 22
LIGHTS GO UP IN THE VILLAGE
- ❖ Wed. Nov. 26
CV Angel Project Community
THANKSGIVING DINNER
- ❖ Sat. Dec. 13
Angel Project Free
HOLIDAY STORE
- ❖ Saturday December 13
SANTA FLY IN

All events are by and for the Carmel Valley community. If you are able to help spruce up the Village, set up lights, or volunteer for the Santa Fly-In, contact Danielle Carlson via email daniellecarlson.01@gmail.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- Nov. 21st** (Friday) to get the village holiday lights out of storage and test them.
- Nov. 22nd** (Saturday) 10am to 1pm put the holiday lights up in the village
- Dec. 12th** (Friday) help set up for Santa's Fly-in
- Dec. 13th** Santa's Fly-in

Mistletoe, continued from Pg. 1

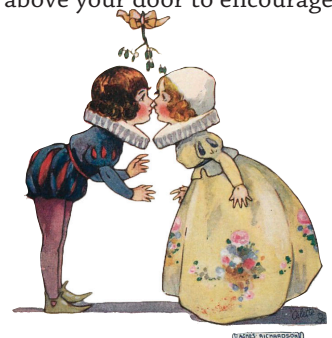


Monterey County Observations of *Phoradendron leucarpum tomentosum*, credit to the Calflora Database, a non-profit organization. 2025.

Mistletoe gets minerals and water from deep inside a tree and, thus, it is considered a hemiparasite, rather than a full parasite. It produces abundant, high-quality nectar, fruit, and leaves over long periods of time. Although birds and mammals find mistletoe's fruits and leaves edible, both are poisonous to humans. It spreads very slowly and it takes so little water and minerals from a tree that the effect on a tree's life is usually negligible.

The sugar and protein-rich berries from mistletoe provide food for at least twenty-eight species of birds as well and many mammals. The western bluebird's winter survival and family structure depend on the availability of oak mistletoe berries, says Marianchild.

Small mammals curl up in tight balls in the center of mistletoe masses in winter, insulated by the leaves. They love to eat the leaves which are sixty percent starch and sugar and nearly ten percent protein. But remember, all parts of the plant are poisonous to humans. Enjoy at a distance or hang it above your door to encourage a kiss.



©NANCY KILGORE

VACATION RENTAL ORDINANCES HELP SUSTAIN OUR QUALITY OF LIFE

by *Charlie Wahle and John Heyl*

Vacation rentals (VRs), aka short-term rentals (STRs), have been a policy lightning rod in Monterey County for over a decade, with concerns focusing on their impacts on local economies, neighborhoods, housing, and safety. Monterey County defines a vacation rental as “the use, by any person, of all or a portion of your Residential Property for a period of 30 calendar days or less.” Ten years in the making, the county’s new Vacation Rental Ordinances provide a rational governance system with specific and enforceable rules for how, when, and where VRs can be operated in our communities.

This article summarizes where things stand now and highlights information key to operating or understanding VRs in Carmel Valley. Future CVA articles will examine the effectiveness of the ordinance’s implementation by the county.

Who Cares, and Why? Differing Perspectives on VRs - Proponents of VRs cite financial benefits to their owners, including during special events when high demand can generate lucrative rental rates. VRs also contribute to the county’s tourism-based economy by serving transient renters. Many Carmel Valley residents, however, are increasingly concerned that the rising tide of VRs, especially un-hosted operations, will diminish neighborhood cohesion and degrade the valley’s treasured rural character, safety, and quality of life through increased light and sound pollution, and traffic and parking congestion.

Vacation rentals are becoming widespread in Carmel Valley, as depicted by the county’s map of known VRs with active or pending permits. Commercial websites advertising VRs reveal a growing number of additional VRs currently operating without official permits or tracking. The resulting incremental replacement of affordable long-term rental units by more lucrative VRs (legal and illegal) is transforming the valley’s neighborhoods and rental housing stock, one transient unit at a time. Unmanaged, this

accelerating trend will disproportionately exclude two groups our community deeply values and needs— young families and the local workforce.

Sustaining our quality of life, CVA has been engaged in the VR debate from the outset, often working in collaboration with LandWatch Monterey County. We participated in public hearings; submitted comments on draft rules and the EIR; shared data, summaries, and maps of VR trends; provided technical assistance and advice residents; issued calls to action; and communicated our members’ perspectives to the county. CVA continues to support small-scale homestay and limited vacation rentals in Carmel Valley, while opposing non-hosted commercial operations in residential neighborhoods. These goals are now reflected in the new VR ordinances, and CVA will continue to engage in their implementation.

Regarding legal challenge to the ordinances, the Monterey County Vacation Rental Alliance (MCVRA), a membership group representing vacation rental operators (owners, advertisers, and commercial managers), filed a lawsuit against Monterey County and California’s Coastal Commission to block implementation of the new VR ordinances. CVA supports the county’s VR ordinances and will submit an amicus brief to the court when appropriate.

The County Board of Supervisors approved the final VR ordinances for the unincorporated inland areas including Carmel Valley, effective October 14, 2024. Parallel rules for the unincorporated coastal zone became effective on October 25, 2025. These long-awaited vacation rental ordinances embody the community’s efforts to shape our future. Through an extensive and participatory public process, the county has crafted a VR governance system that balances competing needs while attempting to safeguard what we value most in our communities. Particularly important for Carmel Valley is the ban on commercial vacation rentals in residential neighborhoods, a long-time goal of CVA.

The new ordinances define three distinct VR categories with specific uses and requirements:

continued on Pg. 5

A Guide for Home Hardening

by *Kim Forrest*

CalFire’s updated hazard maps have included most of Carmel Valley into their “Very High” and “High” risk designation areas. We often hear the term “home hardening” here in wildfire country, which involves taking defensive measures on and around your house to help protect it from flames and embers. In this article, I focus on the house itself as the most critical link in this chain.

Unless you are familiar with construction costs, most of us have absolutely no idea what these home hardening costs are – which may stop you in your tracks. The simplest projects can seem overwhelming.

I gained personal experience and knowledge through taking some major home hardening measures for my own house over the past couple years. It is a 50-year-old house that had seriously degraded aspects – which were also the greatest fire vulnerability...and, of course (eye roll), the most expensive needs. The fact that they needed replacement anyway made the cost seem less painful.

Those major features were the very deteriorated deck (with dry rot – the insurance company was going to cancel my fire insurance) and the very aged board-and-batt siding. Following various sources of guidance – as well as my own instincts -- I also had the soffits boxed in, replaced all attic and crawlspace vents, installed hardscape

GARDEN CLUB GIVES

Rats, gophers, ground squirrels, moles, and voles descended on Carmel Valley this past winter and attacked landscaping and vegetable gardens with a vengeance. Gardeners have lost many of their usual vegetable and fruit crops, not to mention favorite landscaping plants. Carmel Valley Garden Club members met recently, regaling each other with personal tales about varmint attacks and measures they have taken to protect their gardens.

Ed Morrow, the club’s tomato guru who raises starts each year to sell at the club’s annual garden show prepared a slide show with helpful information. Last year thanks to rats, he lost his extensive grow bag tomato garden, which hung high on a fence next to his driveway. Judy Tschirgi, who raises a large succulent garden plus fruits and vegetables with her husband, Steve Hoch, presented the slide show.

Most rats are nocturnal although one woman

ning to Resist Wild Fire

around the perimeter, installed fireproof fencing, replaced the single-pane windows with double-pane with both panes tempered, and replaced wood doors with metal doors. The original character of the house was maintained – the changes are hardly noticeable, yet are aesthetic improvements. I feel driven to share my experience because I found searching for sound guidance, advice, and priorities extremely challenging and frustrating.

All of this was very expensive. Here, I present a range of home-hardening projects ranked by cost estimates as well as priority.

As a baseline for cost estimation, I used as a model a 2,000-square-foot rectangular house, one story high, with minimal windows and minimal complexity. Now, unless you live in a horse barn, shipping container, or a storage unit, most of us do not live in a plain rectangular box. But I am using this as a starting point for very basic cost estimation.

I listed potential fire-resistance upgrades from highest priority to lowest priority for fire risk reduction, and then by least expensive to most. I used the emphases provided in the Firewise poster entitled "Reducing Wildfire Risks in the Home Ignition Zones". Their priority descriptors were !!! for First Priority, !! for Second Priority, and ! for Third Priority. Cost estimates are for professional installation, not do-it-yourselfers.

Home Hardening Project	Priority	Rough Cost Estimate
Decks and elevated porches	!!!	
* Install 1/8" metal mesh skirting (est. 4' high, 200 sq. ft. deck)		\$2,500
* New fire-resistant 200-sq.-ft. deck (composite lumber, fiber cement, bamboo, etc.); metal railing		\$30,000
Fireplace chimneys	!!!	
* Install spark arrestor		\$500
Fencing	!!!	
* Minimum 5' of nonflammable fence/gate where attached to house		\$1,000
* Nonflammable fence (metal, masonry, fiber cement); est. 200'x 6' fiber-cement)		\$40,000
Siding	!!!	
* Use ignition-resistant materials (e.g., stucco, masonry, plaster, cement) Stucco (incl. demo)		\$50,000
* Hardie-Board board-&-bat with soffits/eaves boxed in (incl. demo)		\$90,000
Roofing, eaves, gutters; crawl space vents	!!!	
* Insert noncombustible material in openings/gaps (Spanish tile & metal roof edges)		\$500
* Install 1/8" mesh ember-proof screening (est. for 50 WUI-approved Vulcan Vents)		\$5,000
* Replace vinyl gutters with metal		\$10,000
* Box in soffits (replace angled under-eaves with flat surface to prevent up-draft accumulation of embers and heat)		\$10,000
* Replace non-WUI-compliant roofing with Class A fire-rated roofing		\$35,000
* Class A composite shingle		\$70,000
* Metal		\$70,000
Hardscaping	!!!	
* Install 5 feet of hardscaping (non-flammable) around perimeter of home		
* Decomposed granite with plastic bender-board (2,000 sq. ft.)		\$13,000
* Granite pavers on concrete/sand base with steel edging (2,000 sq. ft.)		\$65,000
Garages	!!	
* Apply weather stripping to door to help keep embers out \$300		
* Replace wood garage door with insulated metal door with weather stripping		\$5,000

As you can see, reducing fire risk for your home is not cheap. This summary is intended to provide a starting place for prioritizing your next steps in protecting your home and its contents. Please keep in mind that these are MY estimates only—and I am NOT a professional! Some are from my own experience, some are from talking to contractors, some are from internet searches. The most important point is to do something to improve your home's likelihood of surviving a wildfire.

TIPS ON VARMINT CONTROL

by Carolyn Rice

told friends about a Norway rat she saw jumping from a shrub onto her platform bird feeder in the middle of the day. Another man gave up on his hanging bird feeder as another daytime rat visitor traveled across his slatted wood sun break which shades his patio and descended on an enclosed bird seed feeder, contentedly feeding.

Three varieties of rats live in Carmel Valley—Norway rats, roof rats, and the native dusky-footed wood rats. All can decimate gardens and carry disease. Roof rats scamper on roofs and in attics at night. The Norway and roof rat look a bit different and neither species is native. Both are known to chew through car and house wiring. Good descriptions and photos can be found online.

Rats quickly reach maturity and can produce four to seven litters a year with eight to 12 pups each time. The dusky-footed woodrat is a

native rat also known as a packrat. Although most people find all rodents off-putting, some people think the woodrat has a cute look with its beady, black eyes and large and less rat-like faces than the Norway and roof rat. All range from browns to gray in color and while the roof and woodrats have some hair on their tails, the Norway has none.

Tschirgi's preferred method of ridding her garden of rats is to place a snap trap inside a rat bait box in an area where produce is being eaten in her garden or where she sees rat poop. She likes setting the traps inside the boxes to protect pets, children, or rodent predators. The rat snap traps have heavy jaws capable of causing serious injuries. Snap traps and bait boxes can be purchased at local hardware stores or online. Tschirgi and other club members discourage the use of rodenticide bait, as it harms other animals

Right, California vole, *Microtus californicus*. Below, burrowing mole, *Scapanus orarius* (not to be confused with molé).



who consume a mouse or rat that has eaten it and enters into the food chain of helpful pest predators such as owls and turkey vultures. She baits the traps with peanut butter and checks the traps daily, disposing the rodents on her property where some other animal quickly finds and eats it. The task is "never ending," says Tschirgi, who always wears gloves as all rodents can carry disease.

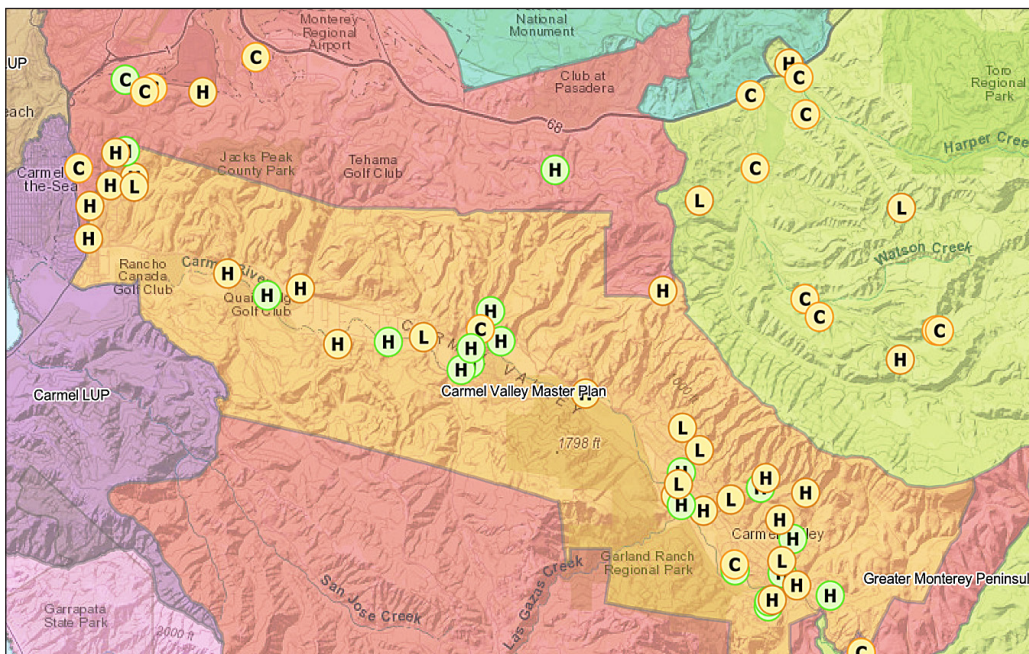
STRs, continued from Pg. 3

Commercial VR "allows the Owner or Operator to rent their house for an unlimited number of times per year as a Non-hosted Vacation Rental. A Non-hosted rental occurs when you are not present in your house during your guests' stay." [Prohibited in all residential neighborhoods of Carmel Valley]

Limited VR "allows the Owner or Operator to rent their house up to three times per year as a Non-hosted Vacation Rental." [Allows transient rentals during special events]

Homestay VR—"occurs when the Owner must stay in the house during their guests' stay. The home must be the Owner's Primary Residence." [Ensures responsible oversight]

The new County ordinances specify detailed requirements pertaining to ownership, management, approvals, fees, advertising, and enforcement for the three types of VRs across Monterey County. The rules are necessarily complex and cannot be accurately described here. Detailed authoritative information on the VR rules can be found at Monterey County HCD's Vacation Rentals Website—provides information about the ordinances and the process used to create them, including the ordinances, dashboard, frequently asked questions, a webinar, and updated maps of permitted VRs.



LandWatch Monterey County's website (www.landwatch.org) provides a thorough and user-friendly tabular summary of the new VR requirements.

Regardless of our individual views on VRs in Carmel Valley, the whole community has a stake now in ensuring that the new system succeeds. Here are some ways key groups can help.

Carmel Valley residents: Understand the new VR management system, pay attention to the VRs in your neighborhood, and share information about violations with HCD staff.

Current and prospective VR owner/operators:

Learn and comply with the new rules; encourage your guests, managers and advertisers to do the same.

County Department of Housing and Community Development: Hire, train, and empower new VR enforcement staff; proactively use available information and tools to track permitted and unpermitted STRs; intervene with non-compliant operations; and update public information.

County Board of Supervisors: Support HCD's implementation of the VR program, enhance online public outreach, periodically assess and enhance the system's effectiveness.

SERVING MONTEREY COUNTY SINCE 1956

- Septic Systems Pumped, Serviced & Repaired
- Sump Pumps Serviced, Repaired and Installed
- Trenchless Technology

- Sewer & Drain Lines Cleared
- Hydro-Jetting
- Televised Sewer Lines
- Grease Trap Pumping & Maintenance

STATE CONTR. LIC. #494738

Senior/Military/New customer/5% discount

PACIFIC GROVE • MONTEREY • CARMEL • PEBBLE BEACH
SALINAS • CARMEL VALLEY • SEASIDE • BIG SUR
www.psts.net 831-659-2465

JOIN US!

If you live, work, or own property in Carmel Valley, please support the CVA today!

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS	
SINGLE	FAMILY
\$35	\$50
\$50	\$75
\$100	\$150
\$500	\$750

**Clip and mail with your check to CVA,
P.O. Box 157, Carmel Valley, CA 93924**

The Carmel Valley Association is one of the oldest, largest, and most successful community organizations in Monterey County. We are entirely volunteer, with no paid employees. We work with residents, businesses, and government to uphold our mission.

CLIP
MAIL



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marianne Gawain, President

president@carmelvalleyassociation.org

Pris Walton, President Emerita
Charlie Wahle, Vice President
Sandy Schachter, Secretary
Andy Sudol, Treasurer

Paola Berthoin

Alex Brant

Kim Forrest

John Heyl

Mibs McCarthy

Marlene Martin

Eric Sand

Bob Siegfried

Jamison Watts

Jeff Wood

• Janet Brennan, Advisor

• Luana Conley, Advisor,

Newsletter Production Manager

• Rich Fox, Advisor

• Karin Strasser Kauffman, Advisor

Contact the Carmel Valley Voice:

cvvoice@carmelvalleyassociation.org

Banner photo of September fog in
Robles del Rio by Luana Conley

*****ECRWSSDDM*****

Local
Postal Customer

CELEBRATING 76 YEARS AT CVA'S ANNUAL PICNIC



Carmel Valley Association's 76th year was celebrated at our annual picnic at Carmel Valley Trail and Saddle Club on Oct. 12. Thanks to La Vieille Ferme and its importer Vineyard Brands for generously donating wine. Music was by Rick Chelew, and entertainment by Rachel Smith, the Bubble Diva.

Speakers and Q&A followed a delicious buffet lunch catered by Woody's of Monterey Regional Airport. We heard about top Valley concerns from Supervisor Kate Daniels and the restoration of Palo Corona Park from Eric Morgan, General Manager of Monterey County Regional Parks. Among our notable attendees were Sheriff Tina Nieto; U.S.Representative Jimmy Panetta; and Monta Potter, Ward 5 MPRPD director.



Photos by
Mibs McCarthy
and
Luana Conley



Woodys

Three Locations to Experience Chef Tim

Heated Patios for Outdoor Dining
Locally Sourced Ingredients
Off Site & On Site Catering
Chef Driven Menus

Life's Hard, Let Woody's Make It Easy



Open Daily
831.373.1232
9:00a-9:00p



Wednesdays - Sundays
831.624.1854
Lunch & Dinner



Closed Wednesdays
831.620.7371
11:00a-3:00p