

Film on efforts to stave off development in Marin continues hot run in San Rafael

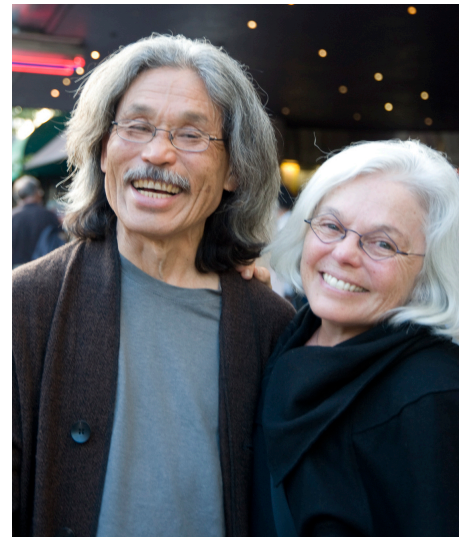
By Mark Prado Marin Independent Journal

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The story of the fight to keep large swaths of open space in Marin from development is now on full view at the Rafael Film Center in San Rafael, the work of two Marin filmmakers. "Rebels With A Cause," the work of Greenbrae filmmakers Nancy Kelly and Kenji Yamamoto, has received a strong buzz in and out of the film circles. The married couple is hoping to get it seen even more widely and will work for a national airing on PBS on Earth Day next year.

The powerful documentary details the battles fought locally by ordinary people who did extraordinary things to save lands from being subdivided and buried under tons of concrete, homes and high-rises. It opened June 7 at the Rafael for what was to be a week-long engagement and has been held over ever since. "These movies often spread by us getting the word out, but now that word is being passed on from people who have seen it," Kelly said. "We are delighted."

The movie features some of Marin's best-known environmentalists: Huey Johnson, Martin Griffin, Doug Ferguson, Phyllis Faber, Albert Straus, Bob Praetzel and the late Joe Mendoza Sr.



Editor Kenji Yamamoto and Director Nancy Kelly outside the Rafael after the REBELS world premiere.

photo: Seth Affoumado

"What we did then couldn't happen today," said Johnson, a Mill Valley resident, who helped keep the Marin Headlands free of large-scale development, an effort highlighted in the film. "The land that could be saved has been saved. Now the challenge is to protect it." With the backing of Gulf Oil, an East Coast developer got approval from the Board of Supervisors in 1965 for the community of "Marincello." The plan was to build high-rise apartments and homes to house 25,000 people on 2,100 acres in the Marin Headlands between forts Cronkhite, Barry and Baker and the city of Sausalito. But the project became embroiled in legal issues and after a court ruling against the plan. Marin supervisors said they would no longer support Marincello; Gulf Oil dropped its backing by 1970. Eventually the land was sold to the Nature Conservancy, where Johnson served as western director. Today it is part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

"We can't be seen as special, we all just dug in," Johnson said. Kelly believes the movie is resonating with people because they see the ability for ordinary citizens to make lasting change.

"People feel uplifted by the power to tell the government what they want," Kelly said. "That is powerful."

For more information visit: www.rebelsdocumentary.org