

# Health

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Perhaps it is because of these experiences I delve further into this subject, to explore it more deeply, to step into a much-needed role: that of being fully present in the face of dying.

Yesterday, I learned of the death of a sweet friend. He was 80, had lived a long, colorful life, and was fortunate to be at home among the people who love him most as he passed. My heart feels the pang of this loss. In the last several weeks, three people came to me after losing their beloved dogs. One of these touched me so deeply, my tears flowed out mid-session. When we are in relationship with others or when we are serving them, our human side must lead. How can we be fully engaged otherwise?

Two weeks ago I went to a daylong retreat led by Joan Halifax Roshi, a woman who has devoted much of her life to the importance of conscious awareness around dying. She teaches how we can evolve ourselves beyond the current reflex of avoidance to a place of having what she calls a

“Strong back, Soft front.” Most of us have this reversed. Our hearts are quite armored and guarded, our backs are slumped and weak.

We can practice being present with a soft front to benefit those passing, those who have just lost someone close to them, and to deepen our wisdom around our own passing. The question is how? How can we put into practice something we know very little about? We begin by being aware of the desire to escape or avoid the inevitable. We can be more aware of our discomfort around this very normal human condition. We can recognize the inclination to say rote things such as, “I’m so sorry,” instead allowing our human side to lead.

When we allow our human side to lead, we have no choice but to have a soft front. We must give the dying or their loved ones the gift of having our full presence with them, not in fear and anguish, but with compassion. This is no easy task, but if you can enter a room with no expectations, setting your own fears aside for a time, with no attachment to the outcome, then you’ve got it. If your arms are crossed over

your chest and your purse is hanging on your shoulder, keep practicing.

We are not taught to honor the aging, to bear witness to the suffering of those we love, or to be with death with a strong back. We must learn to do this on our own. So the next time you have the opportunity, go in with a strong back and a soft front. Be fully present in that atmosphere of death, whether it be your own loved one or the loved one of someone you know. When you say something, speak from your heart, leaving behind the canned clichés we know so well. Stop thinking you don’t know what to do or what to say. You aren’t being asked to walk barefoot across hot coals. You are being asked to listen to your soft front and go with that.

Dr. Christina Grant is a holistic healer and spiritual counselor who helps people attain well-being, greater insight, and peace in their lives. Her writing is published nationwide. To leave a comment or contact her, go to [www.christina-grant.com](http://www.christina-grant.com).

# McCall In Marina

by Council Member Dave McCall

## Protect, Preserve, Progress

At the recent International Festival of the Winds, I had a great time passing out carnations to celebrate Mother’s Day, seeing many friends, making some new acquaintances and celebrating the “international” diversity of our city.

I saw kites darting and shooting in the blue sky above, and it reminded me of the darts thrown and the pot shots taken at recent Marina City Council meetings as issues are shifting more than ever on the basis of partisan politics. That’s part of politics, of course, but lately it has become more difficult to recognize who is who in the council chambers.

As one resident said at a recent council meeting, she saw people who would normally be on the “right” or conservative perspective sitting on the “left” side of the chambers, and the “right” appeared to be supporting a move a sales tax on the November ballot.

Yes, as a councilman, I also see partisan viewpoints shifting in the wind. I guess it’s an election year, but I think we need to step back – as elected officials for all of the residents and businesspeople of Marina – and take in the interests and needs of the entire city.

I truly believe that some of us want what’s best for our great city regardless of political persuasion and interest. These decisions must be non-partisan. I can only hope that when a citizen marks his or her ballot to elect a candidate for City Council he or she does so knowing that the Marina City Council members will act in a non-partisan manner.



We, as council members, need to provide true leadership, without catering to party politics. We are facing critical issues, which we need to solve, and some of those solutions may have to be presented to voters for final approval. I hope that Marina residents tell me as these discussions progress what they feel is best for the city.

I believe we need to Protect our families and children by providing a safe and secure city. We need to Preserve our way of life and our diversity of culture – more than 40 languages as well as English are spoken in Marina homes – by maintaining the basic services our city provides. And, I believe in Progress, to make sure our city is financial stable and can continue to provide for our future generations.

Dave McCall  
Marina City Councilman

Please note the following clarification to the crime statistics in my last column:

For the record: there were a total of 5,458 crimes reported in 2009 in Marina. In the first quarter of 2010, there were 2,203 crimes reported, or 40 percent of all of 2009.

Of the most serious crimes – homicide, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, theft, vehicle theft and domestic violence, there were 359 crimes reported in 2009, and, the first quarter of 2010, there were 218 crimes reported, or 61 percent of the total for all of 2009.

now as people did then. Basically, things that I often view as ancient history really aren’t that far in the past. History repeats itself and all that so sometimes it makes me worry. Are humans still that into being unbelievably cruel? We are obviously as into war as ever... although I doubt that will ever be leached out of our DNA. In fact, I’m thinking that the fu-

ture may eventually hold us being incredibly bland humans but still cruel in our very own ways. Okay, that was kind of an odd article and I think I will end it by my explaining how I’ve decided that the future is already preparing itself to be the future as envisioned in Demolition Man. Schwarzenegger is already governor, Wesley Snipes is a convicted felon (okay, not for

being a psycho serial killer but still... convicted felon, I think. LOL), and Taco Bell is slowly making its way towards being fancy, schmancy (have you seen the newly renovated ones? Definitely getting trendy...), and so that’s my theory. One of these days you will have to wear ball gowns and tuxedos to dine on nachos bell grande.

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# Marina Rotary Kula Kasino Night



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