

April 2013  
ISSUE 13

# FRIENDS *of* VILLA GRANDE NEWSLETTER

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## OUR MISSION:

- ❖ RESTORE AND MAINTAIN PATTERSON POINT AS A RIPARIAN PRESERVE FOR LIMITED PUBLIC RECREATION USE
- ❖ PRESERVE THE HISTORIC AND UNIQUE CHARACTER OF VILLA GRANDE
- ❖ ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE GREATER VILLA GRANDE COMMUNITY

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Our restoration work for the 2012-2013 winter session on Patterson Point Preserve is finished, and we're now looking forward to another summer of fun on the river. The summer season will kick off during Memorial Day Weekend with our third tour of historic homes and gardens of Villa Grande, capped off with a riverside cocktail party and silent auction at the historic Octagon House on Moscow Road.

Thanks to your positive feedback regarding the portable toilet and boat anchorage programs, we'll be offering both again this summer.

Rich Holmer

President of the Board of Directors  
Friends of Villa Grande



## **HOMES AND GARDENS OF VILLA GRANDE TOUR**

What better way to start the summer than by taking a docent-led walking tour of some of the homes and gardens of Villa Grande? The event is on Sunday, May 26, and will feature stories of the past and characters of this charming village.

The walking tour will end with a short shuttle ride to a no-host cocktail party and

silent auction at the 130 year old Octagon House on Moscow Road, described on page 2.

Tickets are \$20 for adults, and kids under 16 are free. We're limiting this event to 60, so reserve your ticket now online at: [villagrande.org/tour](http://villagrande.org/tour) or by calling 707 865-9558.

## **THE BOAT ANCHORAGE PROGRAM IS BACK!**

The boat anchorage program has been renewed for this summer by the Friends of Villa Grande Board of Directors. Fourteen lock-up sites will be available on the gravel beach this year. For \$125, current FoVG members may attach their canoe or kayak to the secure chain on the beach from May 25 to October 26. If demand is high, a waiting list will be established to fill any slots not fully paid for by May 15.

To learn about the program's rules and to sign up, contact:

[friends@villagrande.org](mailto:friends@villagrande.org)

One additional space has been reserved, to be auctioned off at the May 26 cocktail party and silent auction as part of the Homes and Gardens of Villa Grande tour described above.

## THE HISTORIC OCTAGON HOUSE OF MOSCOW ROAD

The Octagon House was built in 1889 on Moscow Road by Mr. McLachlan, an architect from San Francisco. He designed a similar structure, the McElroy House on Gough Street in San Francisco, now a national historic site.

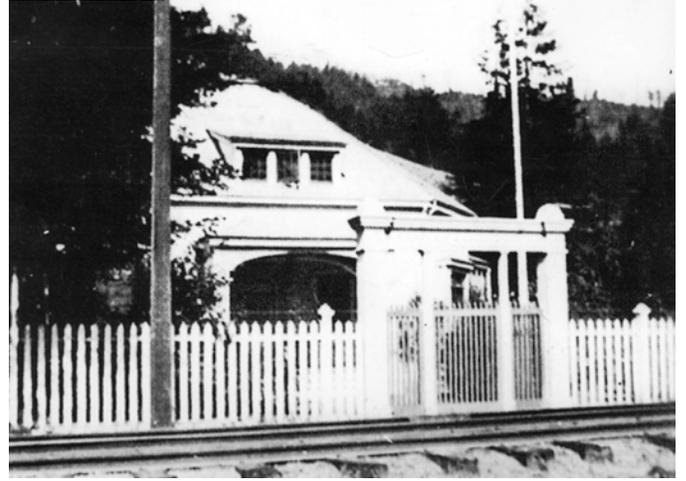
Although the heartwood redwood used to construct McLachlan's Victorian cottage was undoubtedly obtained locally, many of the other materials were brought by ferry and rail from San Francisco, as were the artisans hired to construct the house.

The McLachlans used the house as a summer getaway for approximately 35 years, hosting parties for their friends traveling from San Francisco for galas on the river. Revelers would take the ferry to San Quentin Station, board the narrow-gauge train heading to Duncans Mills and then disembark the train directly in front of the house. Boating was always a popular amusement for guests and a boat-house was located on the property.

Later, McLachlan's cousin and spouse, John and Elizabeth Prior, summered in the house for another 30 years. The Priors owned a business in San Francisco making yacht sails, bags and anything canvas, and they placed awnings on the building to protect it from the hot summer sun.

Mary Robert Griesbach was the home's third owner, from 1965-1994. She and her husband added two corners and a back porch to the original octagon shape and enclosed a side porch to create a windowed sunroom. They also built an "in-law" unit on the footprint of the old boathouse and installed a big bathroom and small bedroom in the attic of the main house.

Since 1994, the owner has been Christina Harrison, the first owner to live in the house full-time. Among other



*Octagon House - When the Train Ran Past*

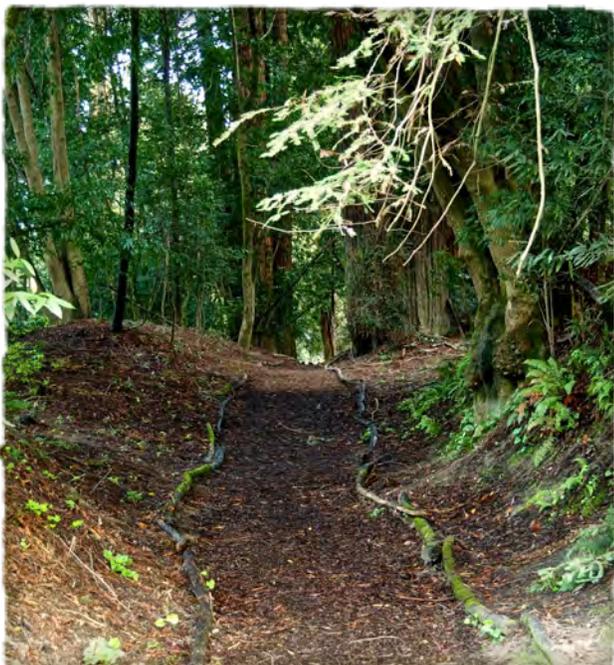
talents, Christina is an antiques dealer, and she has focused on preserving and restoring the home to its original Victorian style.

The Octagon House gardens were originally designed by horticulturist John McClaren, a crony of McLachlan's and best known as the man who created Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. The house's garden paths and many of McLaren's original trees and plants still grace the yard, but diminishing sun – due to the growing redwoods – has changed the makeup of plants in the garden.

To see this amazing house and garden and hear stories of its past, sign up for the Villa Grande Homes and Gardens Tour to be held on Sunday, May 26, either by calling 707-865-9558 or clicking on [villagrande.org/tour](http://villagrande.org/tour)

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## PPP RESTORATION WORK COMPLETED 2012-13



The birds are back and the restoration work on Patterson Point Preserve for the 2012-13 season is now complete. If you have not been on the Preserve for a while, you may notice some significant changes.

Near the entrance, the invasive ivy, plum saplings and Chinese dawn redwoods have been removed and a temporary demonstration area has been created to inform visitors about native plants and bird nesting environments. The area along the main path, previously infested with ivy, is now dotted with redwood sorrel and ferns that will fill in over the next few years. The ivy above the sand beach has been removed and replaced with more sedge plants, the roots of which were used by the Pomo indigenous people for basket weaving.

Plans for restoration work starting this fall will be discussed at the community meeting on July 6; all are welcome!

We appreciate the effort that our community volunteers have put into the Preserve throughout the cold winter months. Thank you!

## STEP BACK IN TIME - WINTER DINNER REPORT

"This was the best fundraising dinner you've done" was a comment shared by many in attendance at the sold-out January 26 dinner that turned the Villa Grande's Old Hotel into a living recreation of its heyday as a dining destination.

Catered by Christina and "Simply Scrumptious;" the appetizer, dinner and dessert buffets appealed to every palette.

After-dinner entertainment featured a comic cello recital by Mario LaMorte, a Robert Burns poetic recitative in honor of his birthday by Rich Holmer, an "Evil Sisters" duet by Roberto Esteves and Rick

Hopkins (you had to be there) and a mad-cap appearance by the hotel's founder, Herman Blossfeldt, as channeled by Kyla Brooke and Wanda Holmer.



*2013 Semper Virens Award Recipient - Victoria Wikle*

A special presentation of the silent movie, "Stupor Mundi," created by local film producer Rock Ross, was complemented with live sound effects and accompaniment by the evening's pianist, Peter Master. An old-time sing-along, hosted by Kyla, Rock, and Ron Bosch, wrapped up the evening's entertainment. The 2013 Semper Virens Award for outstanding volunteer service was awarded to Victoria Wikle for her tireless work in leading the restoration of Patterson Point Preserve.

In addition to a "grande" time enjoyed by all, the event

raised \$1,868.

Special thanks to the hosts, Jon Box and Kyla Brooke without whom this special dinner could not have happened.

## 2013-14 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The renewal of your Friends of Villa Grande membership for 2013-14 is now due. To renew, please fill out the form on the back of this newsletter and mail it with your check to

FoVG, POB 18, Villa Grande 95486 or go online at:

[villagrande.org/membership](http://villagrande.org/membership)

**ATTENTION PATRIOTS: REPORT TO THE TOWN SQUARE ON JULY 4TH AT 4:30 SHARP FOR SPEECHIFYING, PARADING, SINGING, RABBLE ROUSING AND CELEBRATING OUR INDEPENDENCE FROM KING GEORGE!**

## COMMUNITY MEETING & BOARD ELECTIONS

You're invited to the sixth annual FoVG membership meeting and Board of Directors election at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, July 6 in the Town Square.

The agenda includes presentations and community discussion of the Patterson Point Preserve restoration plan for the next year, upcoming fundraising events and a plan for a survey of the Preserve's boundary.

The state of FoVG, including a budget update, will also be covered. Then the floor will be open for community discussion.

Four current members are running for reelection to the FoVG Board: Kyla Brooke, LMFT, Real Estate Agent; Roberto Esteves, Retired Librarian; Richard Holmer, Retired Sonoma County Manager; and Kyra Wink, RRCP, Healthcare Professional.

In addition, there is one open seat, and all FoVG members are eligible to run, so throw your hat in the ring! If you have accounting or finance skills, you're especially encouraged to run, as the Board has an Assistant Treasurer slot to fill.

To run for the Board, please contact [friends@villagrade.org](mailto:friends@villagrade.org) before June 15.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Summer 2013 Boat Anchorage Applications Final Day**  
May 15

**Historic Homes and Gardens Tour**  
2:00 p.m.  
May 26

**Deadline for FoVG Board Member Applications**  
June 15

**Independence Day Celebration**  
Town Square  
4:30 p.m.  
July 4

**FoVG Annual Meeting**  
Town Square  
11:00 a.m.  
July 6

Online at:  
[villagrande.org/calendar](http://villagrande.org/calendar)

Go ahead and "like" us like we like you on Facebook at [villagrande.org/Facebook](http://villagrande.org/Facebook)

ON THE WEB AT  
**VILLAGRANDE.ORG**

**SEEKING "TREASURES" DONATIONS**

Here's a reminder that when you're doing your Spring cleaning and come across treasures you no longer need - think of us. We seek donations of good quality collectibles, kitchen goods, or other "unique" salable items for our upcoming fall treasure chest sale.



Old electronic equipment, computer accessories and bedding don't sell, so please don't give us those items.

Donations are tax deductible so give Roberto a call at (707) 865-9558 if you have questions or want to arrange for a pick-up.

**ACER MACROPHYLLUM (BIGLEAF MAPLE)**

This large, round-topped tree with dark green lobed leaves and smooth silver-gray bark is found in Patterson Point Preserve. A fast growing native with good fall color, bigleaf maple likes sun to partial shade and occasional to regular water. Seeds and flowers are eaten by several birds and it is deer resistant.



**FOVG MEMBERSHIP FORM**

July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014

RENEWAL  NEW

BENEFACTOR	\$1,000	TWO FREE TICKETS TO ALL EVENTS
PATRON	\$500	ONE FREE TICKET TO ALL EVENTS
FAMILY MEMBERSHIP	\$100	LIST NAMES BELOW
CONTRIBUTING MEMBER	\$50	SINGLE MEMBERSHIP
DISCOUNT MEMBER	\$25	LOW INCOME

ADDITIONAL PATTERSON POINT PRESERVE DONATION (\$1-\$1 MATCH) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL PAID: Cash/Ck/PayPal \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Name of member/family members: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Local Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send check and form to FoVG  
 PO Box 28, Villa Grande, CA 95486  
 or online through Paypal at  
[villagrande.org/FOVG/Membership](http://villagrande.org/FOVG/Membership)