

April 2015
ISSUE 17

FRIENDS *of* VILLA GRANDE NEWSLETTER

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OUR MISSION

- ☑ RESTORE AND MAINTAIN PATERSON 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

It's the start of bird nesting season so we have packed away the shovels and tarps from another winter-long effort to restore the Preserve. An article summarizing the extraordinary efforts of the restoration volunteers and our paid stewards follows.

We have negotiated a new contract with Amerigas, providing three more years of propane discounts for FoVG members. A series of strategic planning sessions have resulted in some organizational changes. We have established a Membership

Committee to deal with member development and benefits, including the propane contract. A Recreation Committee will now focus on more "fun" events for members and the community throughout the year.

Please join us at the upcoming membership meeting on July 5 to help guide us in developing the organization in 2016.

Ken Wikle
President, FoVG

PATTERSON POINT PRESERVE RESTORATION UPDATE

The 2014-15 restoration season saw real progress, focusing on the trailhead and eastern boundary. After the restoration plan was presented at last July's community meeting, work commenced in mid-September with the end of the bird nesting season.

Over 21 cubic yards of ivy and invasive blackberries were removed, and where the weeds and grasses were too dense, volunteers sheet-mulched the area to stop their spread. Along the eastern boundary, meticulous detangling work successfully separated the invasive plants from the natives. The boundary area was then planted with native shrubs and trees

which, when full-sized, will provide a dense green living wall of valuable bird nesting habitat.

In the utility area, panels constructed from recycled redwood stakes and tree branches were installed to screen the trash bins, portable toilet and tool box. In addition, new information panels and a donation box are being prepared for installation before the start of the summer season.

Elsewhere on the preserve, work continued on removing invasives, especially on the trail towards the rocky beach. In all, volunteers spent over 400 hours working this past season!



Male common merganser in breeding plumage on the Russian River

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL AND ANNUAL MEETING

Since our fiscal year begins on July 1st, now is the time to renew your FoVG membership. There are several ways to renew, starting with the membership form on the back of this newsletter, which can be handed to Roberto Esteves or sent to

the address listed there. We will also be taking membership dues beginning at 10:30 a.m. before our annual membership meeting at 11:00 on July 5, or you can renew online using PayPal at: villagrande.org/Membership.

A REMEMBRANCE OF VILLA GRANDE BY WARREN PAYNE

This is the first in an ongoing series of stories of the early days in Villa Grande by the ones who were there. If you have a Remembrance you would like to share, please email: friends@villagrande.org.

John Fredrick Heinbockel built the "Here 'Tis" house at 21899 West Street in the late 1920s. His son Wayne, the youngest of three boys, and his wife Martha inherited the house and subsequently purchased the adjacent property from a Mr. Varney. That lot, which sits between the "Here 'Tis" and the current Villa Grande post office, included three conjoined cabins and was called the "3-in-1", and is currently owned by Don Test.

Wayne and Martha lived in Alameda and would spend many weekends at the "Here 'Tis" and "3-in-1" maintaining the places by day and relaxing in the afternoons and evenings. Their daughter Marilyn (my mother), married my father George Payne in 1955. My siblings and I spent many weekends as young kids with our parents and grandparents in Villa Grande - it was truly a magical place for us.

One of my fondest memories is of my grandmother, Martha, giving me and my younger sister, Janice, spare change after barbecue dinners so we could go to the Villa Grande store to buy candy and ice cream bars. Often times I would buy a toy balsa airplane instead, which usually ended up stuck high in a nearby redwood tree! -Warren Payne



FOURTH OF JULY SPEECHES, PARADE AND POTLUCK

The annual Independence Day celebration will be held at the usual time and place again this year: Villa Grande town square at four o'clock in the afternoon. Wear your most revolutionary garb and be prepared to rouse the rabble over the tea and tax policies of our British overlords. The program will include community singing of patriotic songs and merriment of all types for children and adults alike.

Afterwards the minutemen (and women) shall proceed to the river shore, whence a brief cannon report will show the Brits (and Duncans' Mills) that we are not to be trifled with.

With the marching and firing done, we shall repair to the Old Hotel carrying comestibles of the *Pot Luck* variety to share with fellow patriots. Come one, come all!

CANOE AND KAYAK ANCHORAGE

Once again this summer FoVG is offering space to tie up your canoe or kayak on the gravel beach. The season starts May 15 and ends October 15, and with space for only 16 boats, a drawing will be held on Saturday, May 2 at 12:30 on the beach if there are more applications. The fee is \$150 for the summer, which is payable by May 15th.

Along with the fee, there is a waiver to be signed that details terms and conditions, available at: villagrande.org/anchorage.

To apply for a tie-up, contact Roberto Esteves at friends@villagrande.org or 707 865-9558 before noon on Friday, May 1st.

*Go ahead and "like" us like we like you on Facebook at villagrande.org/Facebook.
Or just search for "villa grande" in your Facebook search box.*

MASKED BALL FUNDRAISER DIVERTIMENTO

The winter fundraiser for 2015 was a smashing success, with 55 vaguely Venetian revelers enjoying food, drink, music and dancing at the old Villa Grande store. Masks were de rigueur, and there were some extraordinary examples on display.

A river canoe was repurposed as a canal gondola, and the dining fare included authentic Venetian cicchetti as well as American appetizers.

In the photo, Leah and Linda Fishwood are being ferried to the party by gondolier Marcy Beck.

Photo: Katie Gibson



RECREATION COMMITTEE SPRINGS INTO ACTION!

The new Recreation Committee is planning lots of events guaranteed to be fun, starting with the Terrace Trail Party. Set aside June 13, late afternoon, for a progressive party

involving several homes on the Villa Grande Terraces to eat, drink and make merry. Check your inbox for full details as they become available. And that's just the start...

SEEKING CANDIDATES FOR FOVG BOARD

FoVG is inviting members to serve on the Board of Directors. The Board consists of up to 11 members, serving staggered two-year terms. Right now we have 9 directors, 4 of whom have terms expiring this year. The complete list is available at: villagrande.org/Board_of_Directors.html.

The election will be held during the membership meeting on July 5 at 10:30 a.m. at the Villa Grande Firehouse, and the newly-

elected directors will serve through June 2017.

If you are interested in serving, or just want more information, please contact one of the Nominating Committee members: Sukey R o b b - W i l d e r 7 0 7 - 8 6 5 - 2 4 7 0 sukeyw@yahoo.com, Ruben Garcia 415-745-5833 ruben@igc.org, or Dale Jenkins 707-695-3442 dale.jenkins50@yahoo.com, before Friday, June 5.

BOB FIRTH 1931-2015

It is with sadness that we note the passing of Robert Doyle Firth on March 15th. Many of you knew him and his wife, Ellin Firth, as the owners of the "Here 'Tis" cabin on West Street. (Photo on facing page.) Bob's occupation was engineering, but he was also

an artist, a seasoned traveller and an amateur astronomer. In lieu of flowers, the family requests any donations be made to: Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak Street, Oakland, CA 94607, Attention: Development Office.

SMILE, SHOP AND DONATE

Amazon.com has developed an easy way to donate to the charity of your choice through its new Smile website. You use the same Amazon login you already shop with, but first go to their site: smile.amazon.com.

When you shop there, 0.5% of every purchase you make is automatically donated to the charity of your choice. To make sure

Amazon sends your contribution our way, just click on the "Supporting" selection near the top of the web page and when prompted, type in "Friends of Villa Grande". Then continue your shopping from the "smile" site just like you normally would, and FoVG will benefit from any purchases you make! Thank you for your consideration.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Summer 2015

Boat Anchorage Signups

Final Day

Friday, May 1, Noon

FoVG Board of Directors

Nominations Due

June 5

Terrace Trail Party

- Save the Date -

June 13

Independence Day

Parade & Potluck

4:00 p.m.

July 4

FoVG Membership
Meeting

Firehouse Plaza

10:30-Noon

July 5

PPP Restoration

Work Days

Saturdays, 1:00-4:00

Beginning September 15

Online at:

villagrande.org/calendar

ON THE WEB AT
VILLAGRANDE.ORG

FIREHOUSE LOOKIN' SPIFFY

With some help from Matlock Roofing, and lots of volunteer paint and fixup hours, the VG firehouse is now waterproof and quite stylish. We are investigating upgrading the foundation and asking for community input on possible uses for the building. Come to the Membership Meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday, July 5 at the Firehouse to hear more.



EHRHARTA ERECTA (ERECT VELDTGRASS)

A pesky weed that is native to South Africa, but has migrated to Villa Grande. It goes to seed in the spring, spreading quickly with the wind and eventually crowds out other plants. Sheet mulching helps to keep it under control, along with lots of hand weeding.



Photo: Forest & Kim Starr

FOVG MEMBERSHIP FORM

July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016

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/Membership