

October 2015  
ISSUE 18

# 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**

Friends of Villa Grande is an all-volunteer, community-based non-profit organization. In addition to the Board of Directors, which is elected annually, there are committees that advise the Board and plan the activities of the organization. Members serve at the pleasure of the President on a calendar year schedule and it's time to add new members for 2016.

**Restoration Committee** Creates the annual restoration plan and budget to ensure restoration of Patterson Point Preserve adheres to the conservation agreement we have with Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District.

**Membership Committee** Welcomes new residents and members and plans member services including overseeing FoVG's agreement with Amerigas for discounted propane service.

**Recreation Committee** Dedicated to having more fun. This year the committee sponsored the Terrace Trail party in June,

the Member & Volunteer Appreciation Beach Party last month and is now planning a series of pop-up winter house parties. "A Night at the Prom" subcommittee headed by Nancy and Rick Lopes is planning the retro fundraiser for January 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**Estuary Task Force** Monitors and reviews the Sonoma County Water Agency's ongoing Estuary Management Project (keeping of the mouth of the river at Jenner closed), water quality (including the blue-green algae bloom this year), and follows issues related to wastewater management as it affects the Preserve.

**Firehouse Task Force** Facilitating the restoration of the old firehouse.

We welcome your interest in serving on any of these committees. Please contact me before December 1<sup>st</sup> at 707 865-9000 or email to: [wikle@usa.net](mailto:wikle@usa.net).

Ken Wikle  
President, FoVG



Common mergansers having a tête-à-tête on the Russian River gravelbar.

## **FOVG BOARD SEEKING TREASURER**

Victoria Wikle is stepping down from the FoVG Board, leaving the position of Treasurer/CFO open. The Board is seeking new candidates for the position, which has the primary responsibility of overseeing the management and reporting of the organization's finances. Duties include working with committees to

create an annual budget, overseeing the organization's financial policies, monitoring income and expenditures, and preparing financial reports for the Board and relevant agencies. Please contact Ken Wikle or email: [friends@villagrande.org](mailto:friends@villagrande.org) for more information.

## VILLA GRANDE HISTORY: THE TERRACE RAILROAD

You've probably heard of the broad gauge railroad which traveled on River Road, and possibly even the narrow gauge railroad that came up from Occidental, both of which ran down Moscow Road on triple rails. But have you ever heard of the Villa Grande railroad that ran along Monte Rio Terrace? Bob Breuer, along with his brother, Rudy, and other family and friends hand-built a private railroad in the Terrace hills.

Before 1931, Rudy and his parents vacationed in Villa Grande, renting cabins for the summers. Rudy was an insurance broker, so when he purchased his cabin on Mesa Grande Terrace he wanted to make sure he was well above the flood zone. Rudy's parents had bought the tracks and a flat-car carriage for \$10 as surplus from the old Cazadero narrow gauge railroad after its demise in 1933. The little railroad was used



by neighbors to amuse the children and was also setting for FoVG member Rock Ross' silent film *Stupor Mundi*, shot in 1999.

Soon after that, residents complained about a leak in the storage water tank high on the hill. According to family historian, Nancy Streeter, (whose mother, Betty Breuer, was Rudy's daughter), the water department was slow to respond to the leaky tank and the resulting landslide damaged the railroad tracks beyond repair. An alternative tale says the slide was a the result of a resident's clearing trees to create a marijuana growing area on the hill. Either way, it is ironic that the railroad was destroyed by a flood of water high up on the hill!

If you have stories of the early days of Villa Grande, please share them with an email to Roberto Esteves at [friends@villagrande.org](mailto:friends@villagrande.org).

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## FIREHOUSE AND PLAZA RESTORATION

The sagging Villa Grande firehouse and its adjacent plaza are in need of love and attention. The firehouse was built in 1915 near the long-gone Villa Grande railway station. Before the Monte Rio Fire District was created in 1920, the firehouse held two pump carts, but since then the building has been mostly abandoned. Two years ago, FoVG obtained a free lease from Sonoma County in exchange for maintaining the building, and we put on a new roof and applied three coats of paint. Unfortunately, the foundation is collapsing into the adjacent stream bed and its floorboards are separating and are beginning to decay.

The Firehouse Committee, headed by Ruben Garcia, has investigated the cost to replace the foundation, repair the

floor, install electricity and buy a dehumidifier. The goal is to preserve the building for its historical value and also use it to store FoVG supplies. The Committee estimates a maximum of \$25,000 would refurbish the building for another 100 years, give or take.

Supervisor Efren Carrillo suggested that the County deed the entire property to FoVG and have the Plaza become a community park, so we are pursuing that path. In the meantime, we are planning a fundraising campaign and are seeking anyone who can help raise the needed funds either with a lead grant or a matching pledge.

For additional information, email to [friends@villagrande.org](mailto:friends@villagrande.org)

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## APPRECIATION BEACH PARTY

Along with FoVG members and volunteers, the end of the beach season was celebrated at an Appreciation Party hosted by the Recreation Committee. A full moon and Tiki Torches on September 26 made for a festive party arranged by chief party planner, Kyla Brooke, and attended by more than 60, who enjoyed wine (thanks to Chris Resler and Kristina Spencer), barbecue (courtesy of FoVG) and side dishes provided by volunteer chefs.

A highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Croix de Lierre (the Ivy Cross) to honor the extraordinary restoration efforts and fiscal management skills of Victoria Wikle, who has been the chair of the Restoration Committee, Treasurer of FoVG, plus head cheerleader and tireless worker for the weekly restoration work parties.

Following the presentation, some members sang folk songs around a fire pit, while others kayaked and canoed under

the glorious moon. The Recreation Committee will be planning more events, and if you're not seeing these invitations, please drop your email address to [friends@villagrande.org](mailto:friends@villagrande.org) so we can get you on the list.



## NIGHT AT THE PROM: EL NIÑO DAZE

Coming up next year is the prom we've all been waiting for. This winter, our annual Friends of Villa Grande fundraiser "El Niño Daze" will be a (re)creation of your high school dream prom, with no vice principal hovering over the punch bowl. Squeeze into your tux/strapless gown and polish up your pumps/oxfords to compete for Prom King or Prom Queen (not both!) while diggin' the hits from your decade, as spun by DJ Makelt Rain.

We'll be going back in time on January 23, 2016 from 7-11 p.m., location TBD. Tickets are \$75 per person, and include appetizers from Simply Scrumptious with a glass of

prom punch. A cash bar will also be available. Register online here: [villagrande.org/elninodaze](http://villagrande.org/elninodaze)



## NEW SEPTIC RULES UNDER CONSIDERATION

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board is proposing a change to its Basin Plan that affects septic systems on properties in our area, including Villa Grande and Monte Rio. Three proposed options have arisen from a study that attempts to define the total maximum daily load (TMDL) of pollutants allowed to enter the Russian River without causing degradation of the water quality. Very briefly, the options are:

Option 1: Install supplemental treatment on your septic system to reduce bacteria in the wastewater. Homeowners in the Hacienda area testified that they have estimates of \$19,000 to \$45,000 to do this. Monthly monitoring of the septic system by the property owner and quarterly monitoring by a "service provider" are also required.

Option 2: Connect to a sewer system within 10 years of adoption of the regulations.

Option 3: Permitting of the septic system under a Local Agency Management Program (LAMP). What constitutes a LAMP and who will run it are vague and it is difficult to assess the costs and regulatory impacts associated with this option. Annual inspections are also mandated.

Of course we applaud the efforts to clean up the river, but we believe that the regulations proposed for septic systems are overly restrictive and not supported by the findings of the TMDL study. A full copy of the proposed Basin Plan amendment is available at: [tinyurl.com/VG-septic](http://tinyurl.com/VG-septic)

There is a public hearing on **November 19 at 8:30 a.m.** at the North Coast Water Board offices. Notice of the meeting is posted at the Villa Grande post office as well as here: [tinyurl.com/nrbwxi](http://tinyurl.com/nrbwxi)

Estuary Committee, Friends of Villa Grande

## WINTER POP-UP PARTY PLANNERS WANTED

If you would be interested in hosting a Villa Grande pop-up party, such as a wine tasting, a charades competition or an impromptu potluck, please let our Recreation Committee Chair, Kyla Brooke, know at

707 481-0098 or [housematters@kbrooke.biz](mailto:housematters@kbrooke.biz).

As parties are organized, we'll send out announcements through our electronic newsletter with the details.

Go ahead and "like" us like we like you on Facebook at [villagrande.org/Facebook](http://villagrande.org/Facebook). Or just search for "villa grande" in your Facebook search box.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Septic Rules Hearing**  
5550 Skylane Blvd.  
Suite A, Santa Rosa  
Thursday, November 19  
8:30 a.m.

**FoVG Committee Applications Due**  
December 1

**El Niño Daze Prom**  
Location TBD  
7:00-11:00 p.m.  
January 23, 2016

**PPP Restoration Work Days**  
2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays  
1:00-4:00  
Through the Winter  
El Niño Permitting

**Dues Reminder**  
FoVG Membership  
is from July 1 to July 1.  
Please send your check  
for 2015-16 or online at:  
[villagrande.org/Membership](http://villagrande.org/Membership)

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

ON THE WEB AT  
**VILLAGRANDE.ORG**

**READY FOR THE DARK**

A cool thing introduced at the Appreciation Beach Party was the FoVG insignia flashlight+lantern which is being offered to members for \$10. The top pops up to provide area light, or keep it down to use as a flashlight. Running off AA batteries, they're just the



thing for the next power outage or winter flood, and they can be had by emailing friends@villagrande.org



**COAST REDWOODS (SEQUOIA SEMPERVIRENS)**

Patterson Point Preserve has 22 second growth redwoods, about 150 years old. Because the river floods so often, our environment is labelled alluvial riparian which is relatively rare for redwoods. Despite the river proximity, redwoods collect 30% to 40% of their moisture from fog.

Photo: Steve Harper

**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](http://villagrande.org/Membership)