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ISSUE 9

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

The last newsletter announced that we had received approval of our Land Management and Restoration Plan for Patterson Point Preserve. However, a question was raised whether the Plan had adequate environmental review.

We are pleased to announce that after an additional review by the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and Sonoma's Permit & Resource Management Department, the Patterson Point Preserve Plan was granted a "Notice of Exemption." This states that our restoration of the pre-



serve and the addition of minor improvements, potentially including fencing, boat storage, or a seasonal porta-potty are exempt from a more detailed study. The Notice was submitted in August and the restoration of the Preserve can now be implemented as planned beginning September 17, and continuing every Saturday thereafter.

Rich Holmer

President of the Board of Directors
Friends of Villa Grande

PATTERSON POINT RESTORATION ONGOING

With the bird nesting season over for the year, we are inviting the entire community to come and remove ivy at the Preserve every Saturday morning. The restoration effort has just restarted after the summer hiatus, and we would like to make significant progress before the rains come. This is your chance for fun and aerobic exercise without gym fees.

In addition to the ivy removal, we will be replanting native species and watering some areas to stimulate the sprouting of native

seeds. We start at 9:00 a.m. and finish at noon. There is something for everyone to do even if you cannot pull ivy.

Be sure to wear sturdy shoes, long pants and a long-sleeved shirt, as the terrain is uneven and there may be pockets of poison oak. Don't forget your water bottle, and if you have a green recycle bin, please bring it along too!

Come and help restore our Preserve.

PROGRESS REPORT: RETIRE THE DEBT CAMPAIGN

Thanks to fundraising events and individual donations, FoVG raised more than \$30,000 in 2010 to retire the debt that we incurred to purchase Patterson Point Preserve in 2009. By the end of this year, we will have paid \$35,245 of our \$60,000 debt, leaving a balance of \$24,755.

We thank all who have participated in our fundraisers and helped us achieve this milestone only two years after purchasing the Preserve. We will continue to accept donation for our "Retire the Debt" campaign, matching your contribution dollar for dollar from a special fund set aside for this purpose.

VILLA GRANDE POST OFFICE CLOSING?

The US Postal Service (USPS) is attempting to cut costs by closing 3,850 post offices, including ours in Villa Grande. The preliminary USPS proposal was posted on 9/17 and is now available for your review online at:

villagrande.org/postoffice.

Several residents have sent letters and made comments protesting the proposal. Congresswoman Woolsey has joined others in Congress to oppose the closing of the rural post offices. The potential closure raises several issues:

1. The proposal mentions services may be provided by "the rural and contract carriers". Villa Grande does not currently have home delivery and is not served by a rural contract carrier.
2. "The community name will be maintained for customer addressing and the Zip Code is not expected to change," according to the proposal, but it also lists as a disadvantage "A change in the mailing address."
3. The closest alternative post office with enough available PO boxes is Monte Rio, at Northwood. Unlike the Villa Grande post office, with PO boxes available day or night, the Monte Rio building is open only from 6:15 a.m.-6:00 p.m. weekdays and from 6:15 a.m. to noon on Saturday. On Sunday there is no access to the boxes.
4. Northwood is 2.5 miles from Villa Grande, which can be challenging for those unable to drive. Sonoma County Transit bus line 28 makes four round trips daily, each taking 50 minutes. Walking at a brisk pace would take about an hour and a half, over dangerous roads without sidewalks, and while dodging cars on the Monte Rio curves.



5. The proposal states "The Postal Service concludes this proposal will not adversely affect the community..." Community members are encouraged to read the proposal and draw their own conclusions.

The Post Office is requesting input on the effect these recommendations will have on you and the community, plus any other comments you may have regarding the proposal. Write to them directly at:

Rosemary Fernandez
District Manager, US Post Office
PO Box 885050
San Francisco, CA 94188-5050

In addition, the Villa Grande website lists our elected representatives and their addresses, should you wish to contact them.

NEW PROPANE DISCOUNT PROGRAM FOR FOVG MEMBERS

The contract with Ferrellgas to supply propane at a discount to FoVG members ends on December 31st of this year. To renew their contract, Ferrellgas, wanted FoVG to restrict service to just the area between Russian River Avenue and Moscow Road, excluding Starrett Hill and Moscow Road itself. The FoVG Board sent an RFP to local propane providers, and four responses were reviewed at the Town Hall meeting on September 18.

The consensus winner from that meeting is Northern Energy, and the FoVG Board approved the contract at its

October 1 meeting. The service area starts at the river and goes to the top of Starrett Hill, from Main Street to Casini Ranch along Moscow Road. The Monte Cristo area across from Patterson Point is also included.

So long as enough FoVG members participate (more than 20), the price per gallon of propane will be significantly less than under the current program. If you would like to participate in the member-only propane discount program, please email to: friends@villagrande.org or call Roberto at 415-282-1800.

Follow FoVG on Facebook at villagrande.org/Facebook

REPORT: VILLA GRANDE HISTORY DAY

In what was one of our best events ever, raising over \$4,100, Villa Grande History Day on May 29th celebrated the town's history, homes and people. The day started with Roberto's home serving as a history center, where the Russian River Historical Society scanned personal photographs into a digital archive. Several long-time residents including

Henry Nelson and Bill and Joanne Murray shared stories of life in Villa Grande over the past 75 years.

Docents and owners hosted tours of seven buildings, the Town Plaza (Firehouse) and Town Square. A highlight was ice cream sodas in the Old General Store. The day ended with a cocktail party and silent auction at the Old Hotel.



At the History Center, Bill Murray regales history buffs with stories of olden days.

REPORT: HAWAIIAN SHIRT GOLF & LUAU

Twenty-nine golfers in Hawaiian attire hit the links and later joined 50 more party-goers for the first annual Hawaiian Shirt Golf and Luau on September 17th. The golf tournament was held at Northwood Golf Club, amidst the redwoods, with perfect weather. The luau and dancing held forth at the appropriately decorated General Store,

where the Hawaii Four-O band got things cooking with help from event organizer and sit-in vocalist Greg Sampson.

Best Hawaiian Shirt award went to Mai Tai maestro Margarita Solar Novak. A great time was had by all, and we raised more than \$2,000!



Golfing, partying and singing, Villa Grande Hawaiian Style

Renew your FoVG Membership for 2011-2012 online: villagrande.org/Membership

**ON THE WEB AT:
VILLAGRANDE.ORG**

TREASURE CHEST SALE 2011

Thanks to the incredible efforts of Erin, Jay, Ellin, Kate, Susan, Marcy, Rich, Wanda, Peter, Natalie, Sukey, Nancy, Rick, Vinnie, Jon and Kyla, we netted over \$3,300 at the Third Annual Treasure Chest sale. Special thanks to clever Ellin, who identified some of the donated flatware as sterling silver, which we sold separately for \$640!



UPCOMING EVENTS:

PPP Restoration Work Parties
Every Saturday
(unless too wet)
9:00 a.m. - Noon

Save the Date: Winter Party
February 18

Online at:
villagrande.org/calendar