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ISSUE 19

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

As the weather warms and the rains taper off, FoVG's Recreation Committee has been busy planning a series of summer events. Boat anchorage for members is available again at the beach, and soon you'll be seeing new information signs in the Preserve, the product of talented members of the Restoration Committee.

Be sure to put our Annual Membership Meeting on your July calendar for the 2nd.

In addition to annual reports, we are looking for a new director for the Board of Directors. We also hope you'll join us for a discussion of potential uses of Firehouse Plaza in the years ahead. The official launch of the Firehouse restoration will be on July 9th.

Ken Wikle
President, FoVG

PATTERSON POINT RESTORATION UPDATE

March was not only the end of the restoration season at Patterson Point Preserve, but it also marked the completion of our grant from the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District.

Received in 2009, the grant helped fund the acquisition of the Preserve and also provided money to develop the Master Plan and make headway on initial restoration efforts. Those efforts are paying off, with ivy no longer climbing the trees and the main path now lined with native understory plants.



Other changes include the removal of the large invasive plum tree, planting of an elderberry in its place, and a total reconstruction of the entrance utility area. With the recently added red-

wood chips on the main path (Thank you Katie Gibson and Kyra Wink!), you might think that restoration was complete, but we have a long way to go.

Just beyond the restored area is more than an acre of invasive ivy currently crowding out natives and just waiting for us to lower our guard. To forestall that, we have applied

for an additional SCAPOSD matching grant for \$35,000 to continue with a more extensive restoration effort over the next five years. The money would be used primarily for labor and plants, plus another

elderberry tree planned for next year. In addition, the PPP Master Plan is due for an update, and part of the grant would be used for that.

ANNUAL TOWN HALL AND DIRECTORS ELECTION

This year's Town Hall Meeting will be on Saturday, July 2 at 11:00 a.m. at the Firehouse Plaza. We've got a packed agenda, starting with the FoVG Board of Directors. Up for reelection are Ruben Garcia, Ken Wikle, Tim Cahn and Sukey Robb-Wilder. Dale Jenkins is not running again, and we thank her for her service and wish her well. If you would like to run for the vacant seat, please contact any nominating committee

member: Kyla Brooke, Roberto Esteves, Rich Holmer or Kyra Wink. Or, you can send an email to friends@villagrande.org expressing your interest.

Also on the agenda: finance report and budget for 2016-17; Recreation, Restoration, Membership and Estuary Committee reports; discussion of Firehouse restoration and Plaza use; and new FoVG Bylaws.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Terrace Trail Party Last year's party was so popular, the Recreation Committee is doing it again! On Saturday May 21, from 4:00-7:00, enjoy wine, appetizers and more at three venues on the uphill side of Moscow Road. Our hosts are Sue & Chuck Hammond; Grant Kalinowski & Peter Nguyen; and Tim Cahn & Minh Ta. This event is free to members and \$10 for non-members. RSVP to Andrea Buffa at (510) 325-3653 or andreabuffa2006@gmail.com

Annual Town Hall July 2 at 11:00 a.m., Firehouse Plaza

July 4 Celebration Yep.. it's that time of year; you know the drill by now. Come dressed in your most revolutionary garb or at least wear red, white and blue. Please join us for the 36th annual Villa Grande Independence Day Patriotic Celebration and Parade of the Minutemen and Minutewomen. We will convene at 4 o'clock in the Town Square and the parade will begin at 4:30 sharp, led once again by the Hub-bub Club. Starting this year, you are invited to bring along decorated carts, canoes and wagons. Let's Celebrate!

Firehouse Fundraiser To kick-off the fundraising campaign to fix the Villa Grande firehouse, Chris and Tom are hosting a party on July 9, just across the street from the firehouse. More details and a progress report will be presented at the Town Hall meeting on July 2.

The Grande Centennial Several buildings in Villa Grande are over 100 years old, and a very significant one - the Old Hotel - is turning 100 this year. To celebrate, a traveling feast is planned for August 20 that will visit four homes. All cen-



Party-goers at last year's Terrace Trail Party

tenarian homes will be honored, so if you would like yours to be included, email Kyla at Housematters@kbrooke.biz.

Ham It Up Talent Show One of the town's most popular events, the talent show, will once again be presented at the Firehouse Plaza on Saturday September 3. Mark your calendar and get busy on your talent.

Appreciation Beach Party & Full Moon Kayaking Experience kayaking on the River under a full moon on Saturday, September 17. Join us for FoVG's member and volunteer appreciation barbecue and sing-along party on the gravel beach.

Hike Through Willow Creek On Saturday, October 8, Ruben Garcia is leading a hike through the Willow Creek. Email Ruben at msf@igc.org for more information.

DISTRICT 5 CANDIDATES FORUM

On April 21, FoVG sponsored a forum for the 5 candidates running to replace Efen Carillo as our representative on the Sonoma Board of Supervisors. The candidates were presented a list of issues of interest to local residents and each was given a chance to respond.

The event was held at the Old Hotel, with about 45 community members attending. As a 501(c)(3) public benefit organization, FoVG cannot endorse candidates, but encourages everyone to become informed and vote on June 7.

FIREHOUSE AND PLAZA RESTORATION (CONT'D)

The old Villa Grande firehouse (still) needs some urgent care and attention. As described in the last Newsletter (#18), FoVG has already invested volunteer time and money on basic repairs. Since then we have acquired a permit from the County to stabilize the building and bring in electric service. This will allow us to add a dehumidifier and hook up lights for events at the Plaza.

After consulting professionals, we have determined that the cost of repair and improvements could be up to \$25,000. The Board has authorized \$12,500 to match donations for this project, and already members of the community have stepped up with more than \$1,500. We have also applied for a \$2,000 matching grant from the Russian River Com-

munity Trust of the Community Foundation of Sonoma. If you would like to contribute to this effort, please contact Roberto or make your tax-deductible donation through the crowd-funding page at villagrande.org/firehouse. A fundraising party is planned for Saturday, July 9, across the street from the firehouse.

There will also be a discussion at the July 2 FoVG membership town hall to solicit ideas on potential uses of the Firehouse Plaza. Some early suggestions include a stage for the talent show and community meetings, a barbecue, picnic tables and a dog park. Come to the Town Hall meeting on July 2 and give us your ideas for the use of the Plaza.

BYLAWS UPDATE

The FoVG bylaws were created in 2007 during our incorporation process. The board has been working this past year to revise them, and members will vote on them at the community meeting on July 2. Complete information at: villagrande.org/bylaws.

OH WHAT A NIGHT! EL NIÑO DAZE PROM REPORT

This year's FoVG winter party hit a high (school) level of sophistication as members and friends attended the "El Niño High Prom". A stretch limo whisked party-goers to the El Niño High gym (formerly the Barn at Casini Ranch) where the school staff, including Principal Christina, Boy's Vice Principal Mr. Wikle, girl's gym teacher Coach Wink and school nurses Pat Carlson and Maria Esteves did their best to keep the unruly students in line.



Thanks go to the Prom Committee, Nancy and Rick Lopes (pictured), Jim Beck, Kyla Brooke and Roberto Esteves for creating a night to remember. Highlight of the evening was the crowning of Prom King Rock Ross and Prom Queen Peter Nguyen with everyone else as first runners-up. Thanks to all who bought tickets and donated time and money to the cause. FoVG cleared \$1,700 for the evening.

PROPANE DELIVERY OPTIONS CLARIFIED

The propane discount program has been in operation for more than 6 years, saving FoVG members some serious money. The membership committee has been clarifying contract details with our supplier, Amerigas, that impact delivery options and subscribers now have a choice:

Will Call When your tank is down to the 20-25% mark, give Amerigas a call. They need at least 7, preferably 10 days' notice, so adjust accordingly. If you run out of gas, they can make a special trip, which costs \$100 weekdays or \$150 on the weekend.

Keep Full Amerigas automatically fills your tank on a regular delivery schedule. If they

misjudge and your tank runs dry, they will refill it right away and rebate \$25 for your troubles. You may end up without gas for a day or two, however.

With either delivery option, Amerigas will leave a receipt on the day of the delivery. If you are not present, the receipt will be placed near the tank, or you can let them know if you prefer a different location.

This past winter there were issues with both programs when our long-time driver Paco left the company, and it took a while for a new driver to learn the routes. Please let us know if you're having problems with your propane delivery at friends@villagrande.org.

BOAT ANCHORAGE ON THE GRAVEL BEACH

FoVG members can again apply to anchor their canoe or kayak to our chain on the gravel beach from May 28 to October 22. There are 16 spaces, and the cost is \$150. A drawing will be held on the beach at 12:30

pm on Saturday, May 21 if there are more than 16 applications. To apply, contact Roberto Esteves: friends@villagrande.org by noon on Friday, May 20.

VILLA GRANDE T-SHIRT FOR SALE



At our January prom, the VG High girls gym teacher, a.k.a. Kyra Wink, sported a T-shirt destined to become an instant classic. By popular demand, FoVG is producing the all-cotton T-shirt and will be selling it for \$15 at the upcoming 4th of July and Town Hall festivities. To reserve yours, send your sizes and quantities to friends@villagrande.org before June 15.

Membership Renewal Our membership year begins on July 1st, so please fill out the attached form and send it in, or go online and pay at villagrande.org/Membership.

CALENDAR

Terrace Trail Party
Saturday, May 21
4:00-7:00 p.m.

Town Hall
Firehouse Plaza
Saturday, July 2
11:00 a.m.

July 4th Celebration
Town Square
Monday, July 4
4:00 p.m.

Firehouse Fundraiser
Firehouse Plaza
Saturday, July 9

Grande Centennial
Old Hotel
Saturday, August 20

Town Talent Show
Firehouse Plaza
Saturday, September 3

Appreciation Party
Gravel Beach
Saturday, September 17

Willow Creek Hike
Saturday, October 8

Online at:
villagrande.org/calendar

ON THE WEB AT
VILLAGRANDE.ORG

WELCOME TO NEW NEIGHBORS

If you know of someone moving into either the Terraces or Mesa, please let us know at friends@villagrande.org. We have a wonderful "Welcome to the Neighborhood" basket waiting for them.

CALIFORNIA BLACKBERRY (RUBUS URSINUS)

Rubus ursinus is a wide, mounding shrub or vine, growing to 2-5 feet high, and more than 6 feet wide. The prickly branches can take root if they touch soil, enabling the plant to spread and form larger clonal colonies. In Patterson Point Preserve, these native berries are overrun by the aggressive non-native Himalayan blackberry (Rubus armeniacus).



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GRAVEL BEACH BENCH COMING

An FoVG member suggested that having a bench on the gravel beach would be a big help to some of our senior visitors. The board agreed, and a temporary bench will be installed for the summer season. Depending on its impact and use, it could become a regular feature. We welcome your feedback.

RIVER OTTERS

Have you seen any 3 foot long weaselly creatures in the river recently? Chances are they were river otters, which are making a comeback. For more information and a map of sightings, go to riverotterecology.org.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

July 1, 2016 - June 30, 2017

Renewal New

Circle one member category below:

BENEFACTOR	\$1,000	2 TICKETS TO FOVG EVENTS; UP TO 2 VOTING MEMBERS
PATRON	\$500	1 TICKET TO FOVG EVENTS UP TO 2 VOTING MEMBERS
HOUSEHOLD MEMBERSHIP	\$100	UP TO 2 VOTING MEMBERS; LIST NAMES BELOW
CONTRIBUTING MEMBER	\$50	SINGLE MEMBERSHIP
LOW INCOME	\$25	LOW INCOME

FIX FIREHOUSE DONATION \$ _____

TOTAL PAID: Cash/Ck/PayPal: \$ _____

Last/First Name of member/family members:

Mail Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Local Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Propane Discount: (circle) Yes No

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Please send check and form to:

FoVG, PO Box 28, Villa Grande, CA 95486

or online through Paypal at:

villagrande.org/Membership