

October 2018
ISSUE 24

FRIENDS *of* VILLA GRANDE NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE

- PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
- PPP ENTRANCE
- MEASURE U ENDORSED
- WINDMILL HOUSE
- PPP UPDATE/STRAW
- ITTY BITTY PARTY
- FOVG PRIVACY POLICY
- PROPANE REFILLS
- TOWN HALL UPDATE
- TOWN SQUARE CLEANUP
- PIPEVINE CATERPILLAR
- PARKING STUDY

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

Another great summer of fun has ended and we are moving into fall and winter. It's a beautiful time in Villa Grande and time also for reflection.

I'm pleased to welcome a new Board member, Kelsey Sheofsky. Kelsey moved to Villa Grande a couple of years ago and brings a wonderful new perspective and business acumen to the organization.

She joins the outstanding team on the board of Kyra Wink, Vice-President; Roberto Esteves, our tireless Executive Director; Tim Cahn, Treasurer; Sukey Robb-Wilder, Secretary; and Ruben Garcia.

Working with the Board is Leah Norwood, the Chair of the Restoration Committee. The article on page 2 reports on recent restoration activities and gives news of a grant Leah helped secure for Patterson Point Preserve work by FoVG's newest partner, Point Blue.

I'd like to thank Andrea Buffa for her work as Recreation Chair and Community Meeting and Specific Issue organizer (not a real title,

only a virtual one). Andrea and Greg Sampson have together been researching how other communities handle beach parking issues. We look forward to an update this winter.

I'm pleased that FoVG continues to address our community's needs. This newsletter highlights two of the efforts: Emergency Response and Parking. We have also been supporting a push to more clearly identify both the historical and current Villa Grande boundaries, to reduce confusion by first responders and delivery services.

Feel free to reach out with questions, concerns or applause. The FoVG Board meets the First Saturday of the month, from 10:00-noon at the Old Hotel, 21849 East St. Villa Grande and all are welcome to attend. Thank you all for being part of our amazing community!

With gratitude and respect,

Kyla Brooke
President FOVG
707.481.0098

PATTERSON POINT ENTRANCE ENHANCED

We have stunning new pillars to mark the entrance to our beautiful preserve. The design was prompted by driftwood delivered to us by the 2016 flood. Thanks to Natalie Robb-Wilder, Linda Fisher, Kyra Wink and Rich Holmer for the foresight to haul them



up from the river. After the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District approved our concept, the design was carried out by Natalie and Jim Beck with help from friends and family. Thanks to the whole team!

MEASURE U GOOD FOR VILLA GRANDE

The FoVG Board of Directors has endorsed Measure U on the November 6 ballot. The measure will improve the Monte Rio Fire Protection District's ability to respond to fires and emergencies in the lower Russian River area, including Villa Grande and Patterson Point Preserve.

The measure will fund not only equipment, but will also provide for 24/7 staffing at the firehouse for the first time. A similar measure in 2016 - before the Napa and Sonoma wildfires - missed passage by just 8 votes.

Vote YES on Measure U

More information: tinyurl.com/VGmeasU

WINDMILL HOUSE

Among the architectural treasures of Villa Grande is the lovely riverside home known as the Windmill House. Built in 1911, the house probably started out as a single-story cabin with painted burlap for wallpaper in the bedroom. The original structure was possibly just the size of the current kitchen, approximately 12' x 12', with later additions increasing the size to 28' x 24' including the closed in porch on the river side.

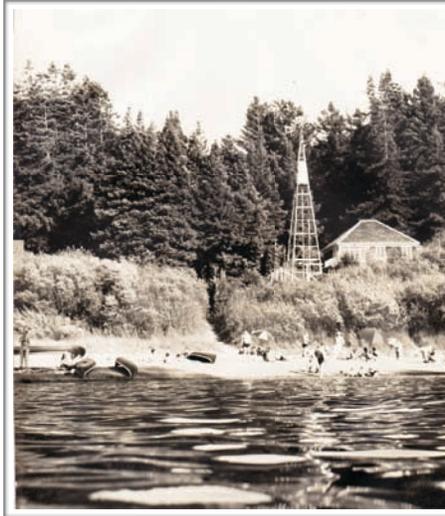
Current owners Leah Norwood and Linda Fisher added another 12' x 6' for a kitchen remodel, which uncovered newspaper used as insulation (dated 1908) and a 300-pound ceramic stove pipe in the original kitchen wall.

A large windmill was constructed alongside the house in 1920 by a Mr. Burmeister. Since there was also a pumping station nearby that had an electric hookup, it's assumed that the windmill supplied water to Villa Grande until water service began with Citizens Utilities Company. The windmill was dismantled in 1977 and given to a camp in Cazadero.

At an unknown date, the house was raised about 10 feet, upstairs dormers were added to the roof, and a carriage house constructed at the front of the property. Jute coffee bags were used for insulation of the downstairs area. The new first floor was originally

used as a garage, but later a family of potters had their pottery wheels in that area.

For years, the Villa Grande beach was in front of the Windmill house, with access via the end of 5th street, and Patterson Point was the second, lesser-used beach. Every year, a windbreak was constructed on the beach, paid for by revenue from the weekly whist games played by the ladies of the town. After 1988, this large beach disappeared, leaving Patterson Point as the only community beach.



Of course, being next to the river, the house sustains occasional flooding, specifically when the river is above 47 feet at the Guerneville bridge. A photograph of the house during the 1964 flood shows at least 10 inches of water inside the house. Twenty-seven inches of water came into the house in the 1986 flood, according to Ruth Costello, who sold the house to Linda and Leah in 1987.

Through all the additions and updates, the Arts and Crafts details of the house have been maintained, and it remains a true architectural gem of Villa Grande.

If you would like to share stories of your house, please contact Roberto Esteves: esteves@comcast.net.

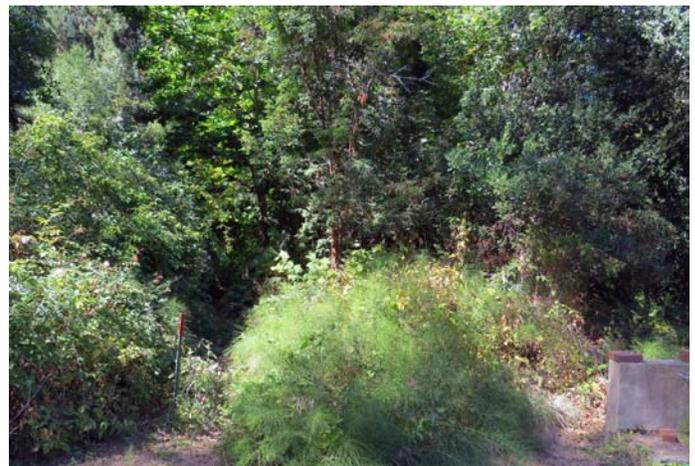
PATTERSON POINT PRESERVE UPDATE

In 2014, our restoration team planted a hedgerow of native plants along the southeastern border of Patterson Point Preserve to provide a natural buffer zone to the adjacent private property. The phrase commonly used to describe a native plant's first few years of growth is "sleep, creep then leap," which is certainly true in our case. The two photos below show 2015 and 2018 views of the same border section, with horsetail ferns (*Equisetum arvense*), ninebark (*Physocarpus opulifolius*) and other natives thriving under the toyon tree (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*).



Looking forward, a major restoration challenge is the patch of ivy at the top of the sandy beach. We have been hesitant to rip it out because of the potential for beach erosion during the next flood season. To help with this project, we have engaged with the Students and Teachers Restoring A Watershed (STRAW) to not only remove the ivy, but to replace it with native plants and materials that will keep the sand intact.

STRAW is a program of Point Blue Conservation Science in Petaluma, and since 1992 STRAW has performed over 550 restoration projects. STRAW received a grant from the Sonoma County Water Agency for \$75,000 to support FoVG over 5 years for the beach ivy removal, along with two other projects on PPP, beginning this season. Initial work will be performed by K-12 students from nearby schools, as they learn about restoration. Later monitoring and maintenance will be handled by interns. A short video on STRAW's work is here: tinyurl.com/VGstraw.



We are hopeful that our association with STRAW might lead to additional projects in the Preserve. Kudos to Linda Fisher and Leah Norwood for engaging the STRAW program, and thanks also to John Parodi, STRAW Restoration Manager, for his support.

ITTY BITTY PARTY IN THE TERRACES - JANUARY 12

Start the new year partying with your neighbors and wipe away the winter blues! Friends of Villa Grande invites you to an "itty bitty" party that will feature small plates, soup shots, and miniature desserts at three Terraces homes.

The party is on Mesa Grande Terrace, from 1:00-4:00, starting at 21811, home of Peter Nguyen and Grant Kalinowski, continuing at 21804, at

Andrea Buffa and Ruben Garcia's home, and concluding at 21800, the home of Shelley and Lance Russell.

If you would like a ride up the hill, we're arranging a shuttle service. The party is open to FoVG members and their guests, and please RSVP to: andreabuffa2006@gmail.com

FOVG BOARD SETS PRIVACY POLICY

At the request of one of our members, the Friends of Villa Grande Board adopted a policy on the privacy of member's personal data:

"Friends of Villa Grande only uses member information for FoVG business, including mailings, emails, and one-on-one communi-

cations. Only Board members and Membership Committee members have access to the Membership Database, and FoVG never shares membership information with other people, groups or programs without a member's authorization."

PROPANE OUT-OF-GAS OPTIONS

In case you've signed up for the AmeriGas propane benefit and are not clear on the refill options available, the two choices are:

Automatic Delivery The Company is responsible to keep your tank from running empty. If for any reason, it becomes empty, they treat it as an emergency and will send out a service crew immediately. This choice will require more

AmeriGas truck visits, which may be tracked by checking on their website.

Will Call It is the customer's responsibility to call when the tank is low, and AmeriGas suggests using 30% as the threshold. If you fail to call before the tank runs out, there could be as much as a 48 hour delay before they can return to refill it. There may also be additional fees.

TOWN HALL RECAP: JULY 8, 2018

Emergency Preparedness Erin McKinney reported on the discussions of the Emergency Preparedness group, which formed after last year's disastrous wildfires. Topics included installing an emergency alert siren, logistics during an emergency and creating a list of people who may need special assistance. There was wide support for this effort, and Jim Beck has volunteered to lead the next meeting. All community members are invited to attend the meeting on November 10, at 10 a.m. at Jim's home, 21871 Russian River Avenue.

Community Identification Kyra Wink described her frustration with the confusing of Monte Rio and Villa Grande addresses by delivery and service companies. She cited an exam-

ple of an emergency responder's misdirection causing delays and unnecessary worry.

The solution starts with changes to the Sonoma County Community Identifier system, used by Google Maps, MapQuest and others to plot routes for drivers. Kyra and Rich Holmer have spoken with the county about how Villa Grande could update its own community identifier, and the County asked us to first define the boundaries and seek public input for any change.

Septic Update There were presentations regarding the new septic policy that generated plenty of questions. Discussions scheduled for November by the county will be covered in the next newsletter, hopefully with some answers.

TOWN SQUARE CLEANUP

Armed with shovels, clippers, chain saws and pitchforks, a merry band of neighbors (Sukey, Linda, Leah, Darcy, Kyra, Marcy, Jim, Rich and Roberto) launched an assault on the ivy and blackberries that had overgrown the Town Square and the former "Boat Plaza". In a serendipitous turn of events, Jim McFarland had cleared out most of the weeds with a Bobcat, allowing two abandoned boats to be towed away by a Monte Cristo neighbor.

This cleanup allowed us to sheet-mulch with cardboard and newspaper under the redwood trees to discourage future weed growth. We also cut down and hauled away weeds encroaching on the public rights-of-way, opening up at least eight more parking spaces within a block of the Preserve. This effort was so successful, we're planning another one the weekend before the next 4th of July celebration.

CALENDAR

FoVG Board Meetings
All Invited - Old Hotel
21849 East Street
First Saturday Each Month
10:00 a.m.

Emergency Preparedness
Community Meeting
Saturday, November 10
21871 Russian River Avenue
10:00 a.m.

Itty Bitty
Progressive Party
Saturday, January 12
1:00-4:00 p.m.

Annual Party/Fundraiser
Date: April 27 2019
Theme: TBD!

Online at:
villagrande.org/calendar

ON THE WEB AT
VILLAGRANDE.ORG

DUTCHMAN'S PIPEVINE CATERPILLAR

This caterpillar, wearing its black and orange Halloween outfit, will metamorphose into a Pipevine Swallowtail butterfly. The native Dutchman's Pipevine (*Aristolochia californica*) on Patterson Point Preserve is the preferred host for this species, which has adapted to the distasteful chemicals the plant produces. This not only discourages predators of the caterpillar, but of the adult butterfly as well.

Photo by steward Vickie Sneed, September 24, 2018.



PARKING SOLUTIONS SOUGHT

Several residents have raised concerns about the number of cars parking in Villa Grande on warm weekend days. Over the summer, Andrea Buffa and Greg Sampson researched options with county agencies and other Russian River communities facing the same issue. Community members also collected data about the number of people visiting Patterson Point and parking in Villa Grande on summer weekends. The results of the research and data gathering effort will be presented at a community meeting early in 2019.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

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
ADDITIONAL DONATION		\$ _____

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

Last/First Name of member/household 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