

# 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

Dear Members of Friends of Villa Grande,

Happy Fall! The air is getting crisper and days shorter. There were fewer people using Patterson Point Preserve this year, due to the skillful educational monitoring of John Schneider and other volunteers, the opening of recreational areas elsewhere, and possibly, to the toxic algae keeping people and dogs away.

Since our last newsletter, we have seen the passing of several community members:

**Victoria Wikle**, who led the restoration of the Town Square, was instrumental in securing the grant that allowed us to purchase Patterson Point Preserve.

**Joyce Bradley**, a woman of Southern charm and universal kindness, was cared for by her loving daughter Lori for the past eight years.

**Pat Clarkson**, who served as the Villa Grande Postmistress, was a wonderful and generous neighbor, frequently greeting members at FoVG events and caring for neighbors' pets. Survived by her daughter, Susan Carrier.

**Maria Esteves**, the oldest Villa Grande resident, missed reaching her 104th birthday by just two months. She moved from New Jersey 6-½ years ago to live with her son Roberto and delight the community with stories of the old country.

In the past few years, we have lost other residents and community members. To honor all our ancestors, we are setting up an "ofrenda" at the Villa Grande firehouse plaza. Starting Saturday, October 30, I invite you to place remembrances, flowers and photos (no candles!) of your own relatives and friends at the altar set up for this special occasion. On Sunday, October 31 from 2-4, we will gather to remember our loved ones and celebrate Día de los Muertos, which begins the next day. Please wear Covid-safe masks, not just Halloween ones. We will keep the ofrenda through Monday, November 1.

Thank you for your continued support of FoVG. You make a difference!

With Gratitude and Respect,  
Kyla Brooke  
President, Friends of Villa Grande

## TOWN SQUARE MEMORIAL BENCH

To commemorate the lasting contributions Victoria Wikle made toward restoration awareness in Villa Grande, a bench with an inscription has been placed in the Town Square. It is the site of her first restoration effort and the work continues to this day.

The inscription reads "This Town Square Park is maintained by Friends of Villa Grande and honors Victoria Wikle, who reestablished its native habitat and served as the first Restoration Manager of Patterson Point Preserve."



## VOLUNTEER FOR PATTERSON POINT RESTORATION

September was the beginning of the restoration season for Patterson Point Preserve. We are seeking volunteers to help with this year's restoration activities, including removal of non-native blackberries and ivy. There is a

brief training for those who haven't worked in the preserve before, and you may sign up for a specific day or activity by contacting Rich Holmer at (707) 865-2998.

## BACK TO THE FUTURE OF THE RIO THEATER

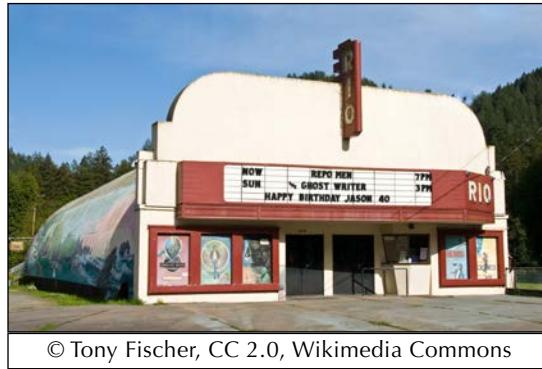
In 1949, Sid Bartlett bought a surplus Quonset hut from the U.S. Navy and installed it on the site of the old Redwood Skating Rink, home of the original Bohemian talent shows. The following year, he opened the Quonset hut as the Rio Theater, and it quickly became a treasured community resource.

Bartlett later sold the Rio to Thomas Dean, who was a personal friend of Christo Vladimirov Javacheff and Jeanne-Claude Denat de Guillebon. Already famous for their unique style - using fabric for massive art installations - Christo and Jeanne-Claude erected their 24½ mile long, 18' high Running Fence across Sonoma and Marin counties in September 1976. When it was dismantled two weeks later, Dean obtained and hung some of the fabric from the ceiling of the Rio, where it remains today.

During its heyday, the Rio sported a full calendar of movie showings, including double features, special half-price family nights and benefit showings for local organizations. With inexpensive tickets and a well-stocked snack bar, you could catch new-ish films in a neighborhood setting.

In 1984 the theater fell into foreclosure, and in 1993 it was purchased by Villa Grande residents Don and Suzi Schaffert, who kept it running as a well-loved - if funky - community movie theater. For those chilly winter evenings, the Schafferts even provided blankets!

In March, 2013 the Schafferts launched a Kickstarter campaign to purchase the digital projector necessary for them to continue showing new films. Less than a year later, they arranged the sale of the theater to an LLC belonging to twenty-six enthusiastic young investors. Unfortunately, floods, the internet and the Covid pandemic conspired to end their dream and the theater



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went dark just after the Wonderland Radio Show about Guerneville, held on October 27, 2018.

Now renamed "Monte Rio Theater & Extravaganza," four new partners are in charge: Paul DuBray of the Rio Café across highway 116, David and Kim Lockhart, owners of River's Edge Kayak & Canoe, Bryan Gallinger, a Los Angeles-based marketing and events professional and Dan Jahns, a finance professional.

The way Paul DuBray sees it, "The Monte Rio community has been waiting for someone to revitalize this amazing theatre. It has so much potential to play a positive role in shaping our entire community and in helping to build an even stronger Sonoma."

Bryan Gallinger said that they included the word "extravaganza" in the name because they want to do

something that is "different, unique and above average" with the space. "So when tourists are coming in they have something that adds value, and locals have a place where they can think outside the box and find unique activities and programs."

A goal of the new ownership group, Gallinger said, is finding ways to keep the theater open year-round, instead of closing it during the off-season. While the theater will continue to be used for movies, he said that they've also been thinking about how to host festivals, present themed events and come up with other innovative uses.

An upcoming scheduled event is the Rocky Horror Picture Show on October 30. Check the marquee (or RioTheater.com) for show-times and other events.

## SUBURBAN PROPANE READY FOR SIGNUPS

We're pleased to announce the start of a new four year FoVG contract with Suburban Propane, effective September 1<sup>st</sup>. Our old contract with Amerigas expires December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The new service area is larger: both sides of Moscow Road from Casini Ranch to the gates of the Bohemian Grove and from the Monte Rio Post Office west to Monte Cristo along 116.

The discounts for service are significant, with prices lower than

retail at all the other companies. For example, the annual tank rental fee for tanks up to 250 gallons is normally \$250/year, but FoVG members' price is \$45/year. Per gallon pricing will fluctuate, but is at least 40% less than retail.

For details and information about setting up your new account (or receiving the FoVG discount if you're currently using Suburban), contact: friends@villagrande.org.

## STILL A BUMPY ROAD

You may be wondering what has happened since last fall's newsletter when we announced that Friends of Villa Grande had applied for a "Flood Mitigation Grant" to fund a survey of drainage problems in Villa Grande streets. The survey is a prerequisite to the County doing any work on the roads.

Since then, FoVG received a \$21,200 grant, and the Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works se-

cured an additional \$60,000 from the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, fully funding the survey. A Request For Proposal (RFP) detailing the scope of work was distributed and the evaluation of the responses started on September 8. Unfortunately, FEMA requested that the list of certified contractors be expanded and that the RFP be reissued. We remain optimistic - and patient.

## NEW PLATFORM IN FIREHOUSE PLAZA

A permanent platform has been constructed at the historic Villa Grande firehouse which was inaugurated on July 4th. After the traditional parade, a local band, the Fargo Brothers got the party going with classic rock tunes for everyone's dancing pleasure.

With materials provided by FoVG, volunteers built the platform in just two days. Thanks to Ruben Garcia, Rich Holmer, Lance Russell, and team leader Jon Box.

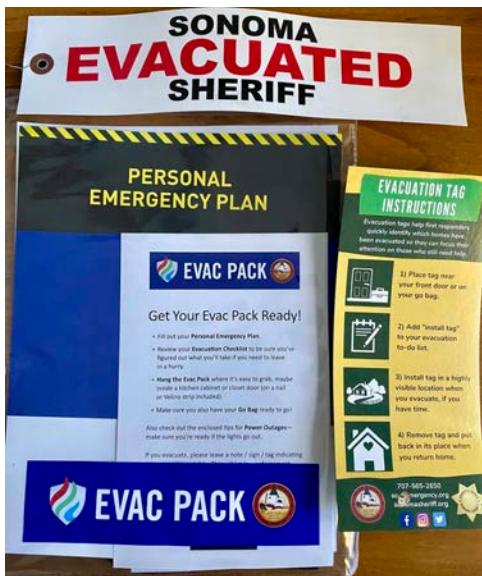
A policy is now in place to make the firehouse plaza available to neighbors and friends. If you have an idea for an event that would be compatible with the plaza and the new platform, please email: [friends@villagrande.org](mailto:friends@villagrande.org).



Villa Grande volunteers Rich Holmer, Ruben Garcia and Jon Box working on the platform decking.

## FIRE SEASON PREP

Preparing to evacuate for a fire emergency has become a way of life among the redwoods. To



help everyone get ready, Ruben Garcia and Kyra Wink have obtained materials everyone needs: an Evacuation Pack including a way to set up a personalized plan and an Evacuation Tag with information about its use. These items are available on the front porch of the "Old Hotel" at 21849 East Street, Villa Grande.

Stop by to pick them up and work on the plan for your family and pets. Also, talk to friends and neighbors about their planning as well and don't forget your Grab and Go bag:

[tinyurl.com/VGgrabgo](http://tinyurl.com/VGgrabgo)

Minutes can count, especially with the continuing Moscow Road closure.

Two useful apps to put on your phone for emergency alerts are **PulsePoint Respond** and **Watch Duty**. Additional information is available on the FoVG website at:

[villagrande.org/emergency.html](http://villagrande.org/emergency.html)

## FoVG 2020-2021 FINANCIAL REPORT

The fiscal year that ended June 30, 2021 was a difficult one for many non-profits, but thanks to the 161 members of Friends of Villa Grande, it ended in better financial shape than it began last July 1st. In large measure, due to a \$21,200 grant for a roads survey (see article on previous page), we ended the year with a net revenue of \$25,550.

After years of careful stewardship, FoVG has \$310,240 in assets, including the Patterson Point Preserve land valued at \$170,800.

Instead of a fundraiser for FoVG, in 2020 we sponsored a "Disco Nites" internet dance party for the Redwood Food Bank that raised almost \$3,000 during the early Covid epidemic.

## VILLA GRANDE WEAR FOR FAMILY & FRIENDS

Just in time for the holidays, FoVG has for sale:

Black unisex zippered & hooded sweatshirts, 50/50 cotton/poly \$35

Men's black or royal blue cotton crew neck T-Shirts, sizes S-2XL \$15

Women's black or teal V-Neck cotton T-Shirts, sizes S-2XL @ \$15

Super popular and wonderful gifts. Contact [friends@villagrande.org](mailto:friends@villagrande.org)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### FoVG Board Meetings Over Zoom

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the Month  
10:00 a.m. - Noon  
For Zoom link, email [friends@villagrande.org](mailto:friends@villagrande.org)

### Day of Remembrance and celebration of Día de los Muertos

Firehouse Plaza  
October 31  
2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

### Boat Anchorage Ends Remove watercraft by October 15

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

**FRIENDS of  
VILLA GRANDE**

POB 28, Villa Grande, CA 95486

ON THE WEB AT

VILLAGRANDE.ORG

### GRAVEL ON 3RD STREET

With the permission of the Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works, FoVG hired Sonoma Landworks to place gravel on the end of 3rd Street making it more accessible during the winter for Pacific Sanitation and propane company trucks.



### CALIFORNIA/PACIFIC BANANA SLUGS

Local banana slug varieties include California (*Ariolimax californicus*), seen here, and Pacific (*Ariolimax columbianus*), which have dark spots. They can grow up to 8" long. The mucus they exude can capture up to 100 times its volume in water and contains chemicals that numb the tongues of predators, which helps them survive for up to 7 years. Slugs are decomposers, turning dead plant material into soil humus and nitrogen fertilizer. They're also hermaphroditic, so they're allowed to use either restroom.



### MEMBERSHIP FORM

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022

RENEWAL  NEW

BENEFACITOR	\$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 ADDITIONAL DONATION.	\$25	Low Income
TOTAL PAID: Cash/Ck/PayPal	\$ _____	\$ _____

Last/First name of member/household members:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Local Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Please send check and form to FoVG  
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or online through Paypal at  
[villagrande.org/Membership](http://villagrande.org/Membership)