

OBSERVER



January 2020

Presented by

Petaluma Estates Homeowner's Association



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Petaluma Estates

Mobile Home Park

901 North McDowell Blvd.

Petaluma, California 94954

John Waterman, Manager

Toni Latorre, Co-Manager

Office 707-763-8501

Office email — petalumaestates@att.net

For urgent park issues, call the office.

For questions re: bills, clubhouse use, etc.
call the office.

For police or fire emergency

call 911

For all non-emergency reporting

issues use the following:

Police Department Dispatch—

Call 707-762-2727 Or

Call 707-778-4372

Fire Department Dispatch—

707-778-4390

707-778-4372 This is also the number to
use when calling **for any reason** from a
cell phone—add it to your contacts!

Officer Dario Giomi

Voice Mail: 707-781-1237

**Have you fallen and need
assistance to get up?**

Call 707-576-1371

**A service provided by the
Petaluma Fire Department**

LIFT TEAM

Petaluma Estates Homeowner's Association Officers, Chairpersons, and Volunteers

Incoming President::	Nickola Frye	758-6158	merryfrogs@hotmail.com
Past President:	Joleen Bishop	713-816-4167	JoleenBishop@gmail.com
Incoming Vice-President:	Patti Della Bruna	765-2363	
Secretary:	Arlyn Serber	415-846-9572	Arlyn@AmericanErgonomics.com
Incoming Treasurer:	Diane Pimentel	772-7514	dpimentel@earthlink.net
Interim Observer Editor:	Kathy Kneeland	981-7650	KathleenKneeland@comcast.net
Articles/information must be submitted to Kathy by 5:00pm on the 7th of the month prior...			
Observer Delivery:	Judy Bufano	766-8709	
Neighborhood Watch:	Carole O'Brien	981-3589	tooahsum@comcast.net
Sunshine:	Ellen Reinhold	769-4445	EllenReinhold@icloud.com
GSMOL:	Diane Pimentel	772-7514	dpimentel@earthlink.net
Hospitality:	Nancy Jamarck	774-6168	ncjam@sbcglobal.net
Event/Social Planner:	Dennis Vollmer	799-2961	
Library:	Muriel Truett / Dennis Vollmer		
Poker:	Lilyan Frank	658-0181	
Pinochle:	Patti Della Bruna	765-2363	
Garden Club:	Joleen Bishop	713-816-4167	



Clean your closets!
Check the shed!
Don't save that!
Put that junk aside!
Yard Sale May 16th!



NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH with Caring Neighbors

Continue to be vigilant and caring of your neighbors.

For more information or suggestions,

Contact: Carole O'Brien, ChairPerson for NW/cn

Telephone: 981-3589 Email: tooahsum@comcast.net

General Meeting – December 6, 2019

Call to Order

Pledge of Allegiance

In Attendance: Joleen Bishop, Marty Sloan, Nancy Jamarck, Arlyn Serber, Pat Vollmer, Dennis Vollmer, Ellen Reinhold, Kathy Kneeland, Nickola Frye, Judy Bufano, Lilyan Frank, Carole O'Brien, Patti Della Bruna, Joe Della Bruna, Bob Mawyer, Cecilia Myers, Pat West, Michael West, Pat Steele, Pete Steele, Nancy Mosk, Ted Cain, Bruce Pearson, Ellen Reinhold, Sarah Young, Kristeen Adams, June Hudnall, Vera Steinfels, Arlyn Serber, Thomas Gorman,

Fund Raiser – Sarah Young has \$1.00 raffle tickets to raise PEHA funds. She will have them also at the Holiday Dinner.

The Bingo Machine came under discussion. We will get it back.

Election for 2020 officers was held. President and Vice President nominees (Nickola Frye, and Patti Della Bruna) were added at meeting before vote.

Election results.

President:	Nickola Frye
Vice President:	Patti Della Bruna
Secretary:	Arlyn Serber
Treasurer:	Diane Pimentel

Meeting Adjourned and Club House Tree was decorated.

Thanks to Nancy Jamarck for the wonderful snacks including hot chocolate and white hot chocolate drinks.

Respectfully submitted,

Arlyn Serber, PEHA Secretary

At the meeting, we did not get the chance to thank Nancy Jamarck for all her effort to provide a sumptuous Chocolate Bar. Hot chocolate, white hot chocolate, candy canes, PEEPs, multi color marshmallows, and sprinkles along with different flavor syrups, WOW! Nancy said, "This is my holiday gift to all the residents". So a big THANK YOU to Nancy, it was a delightful gift to brighten our December days.

Kathy Kneeland

Incoming President Message

Hello-

I thought I would share with you some thoughts upon becoming the Incoming President of the Petaluma Estates Homeowner's Association.

First, I would like to sincerely thank Joleen and Pat for taking on the task of President and Vice-President for this part year. Their leadership has resulted in several successful projects and activities. I personally have been inspired by the revamped and updated library. As a lifetime reader and lover of books, we all owe them a huge Thank You.

The effort and skill that they applied to put together the well-received safety information are greatly appreciated. Each of us, as residents of this community, welcome their input and knowledge in the critical area.

Additionally, I am sure there are many other projects and activities, such as the garden, each of us should take the time to thank them for accomplishing.

Second, I would like to let you know a little about me. I have resided in the park for about twelve years. I am a retired technologist who worked for the Sonoma County Department of Education, and I am a trained chef who owned and ran my restaurant for several years. But, my proudest and happiest achievement is being a grandmother to thirteen grandchildren, and one very new great-grandson. Some of you may know me as the "soup lady." Yes, I am the person who, with some super helpers, Pat and Nancy, make the soups and other items found in the Clubhouse on Fridays.

As your Incoming President, I want to express that I am a firm believer in the success that we can accomplish with an open dialogue. I invite each of you to share with me your thoughts and ideas on projects and activities for the upcoming year. I look forward to hearing from you.

Nickola (Nick) Frye

merryfrogs@hotmail.com

707-758-6158

HUMOR, FOR SOME...

If my body was a car, I'd trade it in for a newer model. Because, every time I cough or sneeze, my radiator leaks and my exhaust backfires.

My kids laugh because they think I'm crazy. I laugh because they don't know it's hereditary.

I was visiting my daughter last night when I asked if I could borrow a newspaper. "This is the 21st century Mom" she said, "we don't waste money on newspapers. Here, use my iPad." I can tell you this...that fly never knew what hit him...



Reminder-Residents-Garbage Cans

Be sure to place your cans at least 3 feet apart in front of your home. The large garbage trucks have large grasping arms that come out to pick

up and hoist your can to empty it. If your cans are too close together you run the risk of them being knocked over, with garbage spilling out on the street, or the arms having difficulty maneuvering to get a good grasp on your cans. Be kind to our garbage pick up men as we would surely miss them if they couldn't pick up our garbage.



Cleaning out your closet? Finding coats you no longer wear?

Winter coats are needed at COTS.

Call Judy Bufano at 766-8709. Make arrangements to drop off your donations with her or arrange for pick up by her. She will take them down to COTS for you.



Cherish all your happy moments, they make a fine cushion for old age.

Booth Tarkington

Faith is taking the first step even when you can't see the whole staircase.

Martin Luther King Jr.

January 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 	2 General Meeting 6:30pm	3 Poker 1 to 400pm	4
	5	6 Pinochle 12:30pm	7	8	9	10 Poker 1 to 400pm
11	12	13 Pinochle 12:30pm	14	15	16	17 Poker 1 to 400pm
18	19	20 Pinochle 1230pm 	21	22	23	24 Poker 1 to 400pm
25	26	27 Pinochle 1230pm	28	29	30	31 Poker 1 to 400pm



January 1st	Sue Reese
January 3rd	Joleen Bishop
January 7th	Mary McCann
January 10th	Gloria Pearson
January 10th	Betty Soldate
January 10th	Muriel Truett
January 11th	Habib Farasati
January 14th	Myrna Haire
January 19th	Kathy Kneeland

January 20th	Wendell Day
January 20th	Gregory Schelkun
January 20th	Hector Serber
January 21st	Fred Hilchey
January 27th	Patti Della Bruna
January 28th	David Zacks
January 29th	Marilyn Stedman
January 30th	Reginald Hansen



Sunshine Report from Ellen Reinhold

11/13/19 Get Well card to Ana Maria Wilkinson
11/25/19 Get Well card to Karen Van Dyke



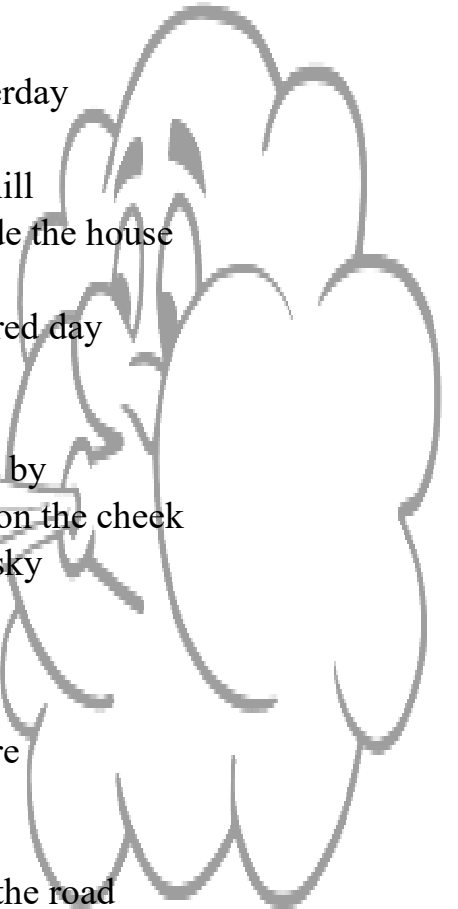
WINDY DAY

The wind yesterday
bit me
with its cold chill
I ran back inside the house
to escape
the cloud covered day

Today
the wind swept by
and kissed me on the cheek
The sun filled sky
invited me
to walk

And here we are
this breeze
and I
dancing down the road
What a difference
your smile makes

Poem by Arlyn Serber





SMART Announcements

○ Larkspur and Downtown Novato Stations Opening in Mid-December!

With SMART's Larkspur station and Downtown Novato slated to open in December of this year, our local train service is expanding quickly. These stations will help connect Marin and Sonoma counties to the Bay Area's ferry system and transportation to the entire Bay Area.

For more information about SMART's newest stations, please visit www.SonomaMarinTrain.org.

○ New SMART Schedule Released

As the SMART system expands to serve more locations in the North Bay, our service schedule is being revised to fit the needs of more residents. SMART released a new schedule on November 20, 2019 that increases train frequency through the rail system. Please visit the links below for more information:



Why read? Two good reasons...

Reason #1: Reading Helps You Sleep Better

"I find television very educating. Every time somebody turns on the set, I go into the other room and read a book." —*Groucho Marx*

Fact: Sleep studies have shown that reading each night can make it easier to fall asleep and allow you a deeper sleep. And TV has the opposite effect.

Activity in parts of the brain that control emotions, decision-making processes, and social interactions are drastically reduced during deep sleep. This means deep sleep may help people maintain optimal emotional and social functioning while they are awake.

Also, deep sleep is necessary for our nervous systems to work correctly. Too little sleep leaves us tired and unable to concentrate the next day. So train yourself to associate reading with sleep and make it part of your bedtime ritual.

Reason #2: Reading Keeps Your Mind Sharp

"Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body." —*Joseph Addison, English essayist, poet*

Fact: Reading daily could help keep your brain in shape as you reach old age. Research suggests that reading books, writing, and participating in brain-stimulating activities at any age may preserve memory.

One study found those who engaged in mentally stimulating activities (such as reading) experienced slower memory decline compared to those who didn't. In particular, people who exercised their minds later in life had a 32% lower rate of mental decline compared to their peers with average mental activity.

The study's author, Robert S. Wilson, Ph.D. of the Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, said: "Our study suggests that exercising your brain by taking part in activities such as these across a person's lifetime, from childhood through old age, is important for brain health in old age. Based on this, we shouldn't underestimate the effects of everyday activities, such as reading and writing, on our children, ourselves and our parents or grandparents."

—Taken from the monthly titled "friends of the Petaluma Library"

ASK THE FRAUD TEAM



I got a call from someone saying they were from Medicare and needed to confirm my number to send out my new plastic card. I thought cards were only paper.

You are spot-on. Medicare has only paper cards and is not sending out new plastic cards. This is a scammer trying to steal your Medicare number to bill for fraudulent charges. Remember: Medicare will never call you out of the blue asking to verify your information.



I keep getting calls saying that I owe \$399 and if I don't call back in 48 hours to dispute, they will automatically charge me. What is going on? I don't owe any money.

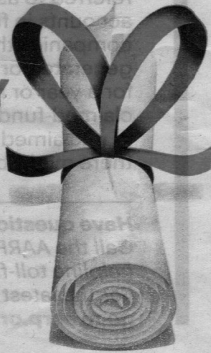
Thousands of other people are getting these calls, too! It's a common complaint on the AARP Fraud Watch Network helpline. Our best advice: Do not call them back. If you owe money to someone, usually you will know it—and they will conduct business through the mail. The threats are just scare tactics to get you to call back.



I want to freeze my credit, but I hear it affects my credit score. Does it?

No, that's a common misconception. A credit freeze does not affect your credit score. It is a great tool that protects you from ID theft by making it more difficult for criminals to open up credit in your name.

FOUR ESTATE PLANNING DOCUMENTS YOU REALLY DO NEED



► **WILL** Dictates the fate of your assets after your death (unless they're covered by other documents, such as an IRA beneficiary form or a living trust).

► **LIVING WILL** Informs loved ones and professionals about the medical treatment you want if you can't speak for yourself.

► **DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY FOR HEALTH CARE** Designates who can make medical decisions for you. It's often paired with a living will.

► **DURABLE FINANCIAL POWER OF ATTORNEY** Allows someone you choose to make financial decisions for you. (Many brokerages and other financial institutions require customized versions.) —The editors

OUTRAGE!

PUPPY PERIL



We've been getting calls at the Fraud Watch Network helpline about a really beastly scam: cheating people with the promise of a puppy.

A 58-year-old man from Georgia paid \$1,500 for safe delivery of a puppy he saw advertised on Facebook.

The seller had him buy gift cards and read the numbers over the phone. No dog ever arrived.

A 74-year-old man in Florida sent a \$200 gift

card for a puppy he saw on Craigslist. He was also cheated.

If you are looking for a furry friend, look locally, where you can meet with the seller and see the facilities. When buying from a classified or online ad, never wire money or use gift cards to send money. Or visit a local rescue shelter and find a sweet friend who needs company as much as you do.

OUTRAGE!

CELEBRITY PHONE SCAMS

Would you give money to a cause if a favorite celebrity asked? Well, be careful. Celeb impostors are using the allure of fame to scam the unwary.

A Canadian man was bilked out of \$500 he thought he was donating to the causes of singers Garth Brooks, Jimmy Buffett and Shania Twain, all of whom he believed had contacted him, according to CBC News. Other celebrities, from billionaire Richard Branson to country star Travis Tritt, have warned fans that they have been impersonated. The Federal Trade Com-

mission says if you unexpectedly hear from a big name:

► **Slow down.** Before you send money, talk with someone you trust.

► **Do some research.** Search online for the celebrity's name plus "scam." Never send money, gift cards or prepaid debit cards to anyone you haven't met—including famous people.

► **Report your experience to the FTC.**

And finally, ask yourself: Why is this star I've never met calling me?

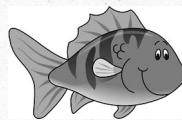
SOCIAL SECURITY SCAM UPDATE!

AARP is still getting *lots* of complaints about the Social Security impostor scam, which I wrote about recently. Word is, con artists are getting even more aggressive. They tell you your card is linked to crimes; through fear tactics, they get access to your money. Just hang up. Law enforcers don't operate this way.



Inside the Social Security Phone Scam

30 AARP THE MAGAZINE / Real Possibilities



Tid Bits from AARP



Buffalo Plaid - its Origins

Malboro Man wore it . . . Roy Rogers wore it . . . Tom Mix wore it . . . as did the mythical Paul Bunyan, legendary lumberjack of a thousand comic strips. And no self-respecting gunslinging cowboy would be seen without it . . . Buffalo Plaid . . . as American as apple pie! Or is it?



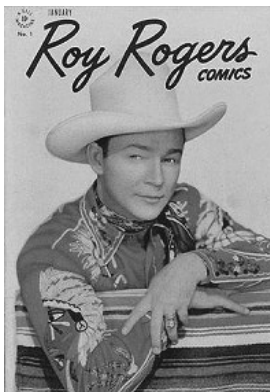
Officially, Buffalo Plaid or check, is "plaid with large blocks formed by the intersection of two different color yarns, typically red and black." Hang on a minute . . . isn't that the Rob Roy tartan? It most certainly is and it's said that it was introduced to North America by a descendant of Rob Roy - one 'Jock McCluskey' sometime lawman, bounty hunter, fur trapper, gold miner and eventually Indian trader.

In the Indians' eyes, McCluskey was no ordinary white man. Awed by his strength and size, he was hailed an invincible warrior. Both feared and revered, he was equally admired for his compassion. In the anti-Indian holocaust that followed *Custer's Last Stand*, he was a rare white man indeed who dared to champion their cause. His reasons were as simple as they were personal: Their persecution and plight mirrored his own family clan's descent from nobility to hunted criminals.

Befriended by the Indians, McCluskey became one of the era's near vanished middlemen: A white man welcome among the Indians who effortlessly mingled between two warring rivals without fear or retribution. From the Lakota Sioux and Cheyenne, McCluskey bartered for buffalo pelts, offering a myriad of finished goods in exchange, the most coveted among the Indians were the heavy woven Scottish blankets, their dense, hearty weave colourfully emblazoned with his clan tartan's signature red-and-black colours.

According to McCluskey's great nephew, Gregor McCluskey, Sioux and Cheyenne warriors were in awe of its colour. None had ever seen such a deep, rich red. They believed its intensely rich hue of red to be a sorcerer's hex, a dye distilled from the spirit blood and ghostly souls of McCluskey's prey and enemies, a belief McCluskey did little to correct. Worn in battle and draped across their war ponies, it was prized as a good luck talisman and revered as a spirit guardian that would deliver immortality, even in the face of death itself.

Sioux and Cheyenne warriors called it "plaid" (the Gaelic for it was pronounced *pladger*) as did U.S. Army outpost and fort traders who bought McCluskey's bartered skins and plaids. Hence was born, sometime in the late 1880s, the unique and confusing American term *plaid* referring to tartan itself rather than the use to which it was put. It was a very short step from there to the tartan of McCluskey's Rob Roy blankets becoming known as Buffalo plaid.



1914 brought WWI, and a war on eggs, too

In 1914, the major news was about the Mexican Revolution. WWI starting up in Europe and the opening of the Panama Canal, plus women's suffrage and the war on alcohol in the US.

But, in Petaluma, another war was a-broiling.

Stay tuned.

On August 4, 1914, Germany declared war on Russia and France, and Britain declared war on Germany while the US and China stayed neutral. The following day, Germany bombed Belgium from Zeppelins. To our south, the Mexican Revolution had begun, and names such as Zapata and Pancho Villa were headlining the news as American troops became involved. Woodrow Wilson was President and he was resisting women's right to vote, as well as the prohibition of alcohol and war, in general.

The world, it seemed, was askew.

But 1914 wasn't all bad.

Henry Ford that year had created his moving assembly line, announced an eight-hour work day at \$5 per day, and his Model-T became the No. 1 bestselling automobile in the world, and stayed that way for years to come. In Washington, construction began on the Lincoln Memorial and Congress passed the Harrison Act restricting the sale of opiates and coca products (thus sending those users underground). The air conditioner was invented that year, the first Greyhound Bus made its first trip and in California, the little town of Beverly Hills was officially incorporated.

In 1913, Sonoma County—with a population of 48,500—had instituted something called “The

Roadhouse Ordinance” in a move to “go dry” in a limited way. By 1914, just 64 of the local 110 roadhouses, resorts and hotels remained open. It has been opined that political influence had a bit to do with which ones did not get shuttered. And, in Petaluma, our Women's Club proudly celebrated the laying of the cornerstone for their new clubhouse on B Street. It was designed by Brainerd Jones and several hundred folks showed up for the festivities. Another step into our future that year was the opening of the Petaluma Railroad Depot on Lakeville. Constructed by Northwestern Pacific Railroad at a cost of \$7,000, the depot

was dedicated that April, with speeches from Mayor Horwege and J.E. Olmsted, of our Chamber of Commerce.

But the big flap in Sonoma County—and mainly in Petaluma—was the looming importation of cheap eggs from China. Our Sonoma County Poultry Producers had appealed

via an open letter, to the US Secretary of Agriculture, to take action under the Pure Food Laws, to halt said importation because of what they called, “unsanitary, vile, filthy and unspeakable conditions under which the eggs had been produced in China.” Oh my!

They claimed the hens were getting “no care,” and that it affected the incoming eggs flavor. Also, those eggs were selling for 10 cents a dozen in San Francisco vs. Petaluma eggs at 21 cents, and the welfare of the US poultry industry was being threatened.

The California Board of Health then undertook an extensive investigation and concluded that the Chinese egg shells, being more porous (they



said), had “a tendency to be penetrated by dangerous bacteria.” But this charge was left hanging out there, for possible future quarantine from the Feds, which was not soon coming.

A successful ad campaign, was conducted against egg imports and consumers began demanding that they know how old eggs are, at purchase point. A few months following that publicity, Courier editor Homer Wood stated that, “due to the Poultrymen’s Federation, local ranchers have now upped their sales by \$75,000 over the months of March and April. They are adding to the prosperity of the county at large. It has been ruinous and impossible Asian competition.”

Petaluma also entered a “P.R.” truck in San Francisco’s parades, with a large banner saying, “The Pure Food Egg Comes From Sonoma County California, Not China.” “Be loyal to your home producer!”

Sound familiar?

Humorously then, a “freak egg” happened to be found in a nest here, half brown and half white, and our Courier wryly opined that this Petaluma hen had been just sitting there, “indignant over the invasion of the brown Chinese egg.”

Meanwhile, “The Egg King of China,” a fellow named E. Block, blew his cool, saying he was angry due to “aspersions cast on the quality of his output, because it was described as the product of scavenger hens.”

Seeing a decrease in his California business, he then said he would prove to the US Department of Agriculture that grounds could not be found for excluding his eggs. That said, he also allowed, “There is more money to be made by shipping to Europe, where eggs sold by the pound.” He was also, you see, breaking eggs into tin cans, then whipping and hard-freezing them to ship to bakers, and the European market apparently liked that.

But the tough competition continued here on into

the Twenties. Author Thea Lowry, in her fine book, “Empty Shells,” said, “In 1921, bargain priced Chinese eggs, selling for six cents a dozen, flooded the market.” The following year, our Chamber of Commerce hired wily promoter Bert Kerrigan to go on the road to lobby for help. And eventually, writes Lowry, “Congress passed the Fordney-McCumber Bill, which levied and import tariff of 8 cents per dozen on foreign shell eggs.”

And Petaluma was able to continue to boast of itself as “The Egg Basket of The World.”



In other county news, Sturgeon’s Lumber Mill was founded in Coleman Valley that year, with donkeys and oxen doing the big work until they could get their “Steam Donkey Engines.” The Mill operated until 1964 and produced Redwood for many hundreds of Petaluma chicken houses. It’s now a living museum. Take the kids!

And perhaps, as another note on the fears of Chinese eggs, you could buy in 1914, “5 acres, new 4 room cottage, barn, well, tank and poultry buildings. \$2,250.” Or this. “One of the best homes, 1 mile from town, 8 rooms, Gas and Electricity, Lights, 4 acres, Room for 3,500 chickens. \$6,500.”

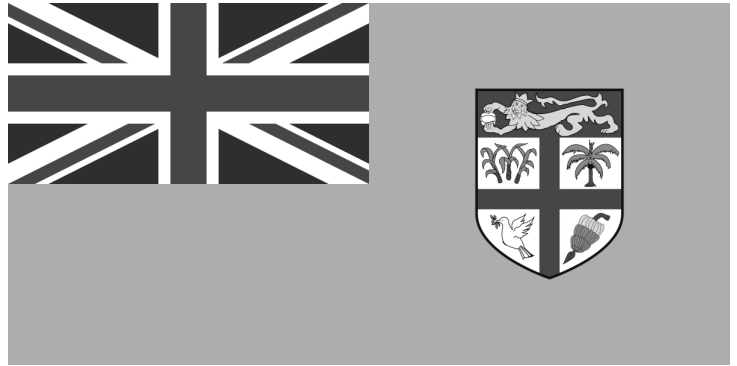
Signs of the times, I guess.

Reprinted with permission from Skip Sommer.

(Skip Sommer is an honorary life member of the Petaluma Historical Museum and Heritage Homes. He can be reached at skipsommer@hotmail.com)

The Fiji Connection: Part II

By Dennis Vollmer



In the November issue of the Observer, I wrote about my connection to the Fiji Islands. To look at me, you

would never guess that my roots are from this remote part of the world. My European ancestors left England on sailing ships in the 1800's, and as fate would have it ended up in the Fiji Islands. They were never to return to England. Fiji, although wild was becoming a British colony at a time when Queen Victoria ruled. In 1874, Fiji became a colony because the paramount chief had requested protection from some marauding Tongan islanders.

A Deed of Cession was signed and European settlers, traders, and businessmen came to see and then to take; the gold, the sugar cane, the fish, the fruit, the sandlewood and the whales. The Fijians were hard to tame. For centuries, theirs was a paganistic and cannibalistic way of life. They were vicious in their tribal war fares. The nearly 300 islands of the Melanesians were not all easily accessed. To change these people's ways and "tame" them would take years. Lives were lost. Some were even eaten. The British with their stern and ridged rules would eventually prevail, but it was the missionaries who tipped the scales and helped these folks change. The Catholics, the Methodists, the Seventh Day Adventists, and the Church of England were the frontrunners in Fiji. These were the missionaries who answered that call, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." It was to be that way throughout the world. The Americas, Africa, India, China, and the list goes on. Indigenous people were being changed by these strange white people who came in the name of the "Lord."

By the time I was born in 1943, Fiji was becoming the Hub of the South Pacific. It was the perfect stop. Ships leaving San Francisco would stop in Hawaii, then Fiji, New Zealand and then Australia. World War II was a scare because the Japanese were relentless in their quest for power. There were battalions of American, New Zealand and Australian forces spread around. The war ended, Fiji was unharmed. The Fijians were now fully immersed in Christianity. They were speaking English. Fijian soldiers had fought in the World Wars. The government was stable. Roads, schools, hospitals, churches and businesses were thriving. An international airport was in full operational order. As a kid, growing up in Fiji in the 1950's was awesome.





All good things would come to an end. Towards the end of the 1950's the British Colonies having been under the thumb of the Queen for so long were beginning to be restless. I was sixteen years old in 1959 when a riot broke out in the capital city, Suva. All hell broke loose. What started out as a grievance with the oil companies, spilled out into the streets. The leaders, upset with the union were, also upset with the government. It was time for a change. These workers incited the crowds and soon the mobs ruled. Windows were smashed, buildings were burned, cars were pushed into the ocean off the wharf and fights broke out. You were safe if you were Fijian. "Fiji for Fijians," became the chant. "White man go home!" We were cautioned to lay low until the heat blew over. Between the police and the military, things did settle down. Schools were back in session, the government remained intact. The thugs were imprisoned after they were given a good beating, but there was still that sour uneasy taste in the air.

My family and I were stuck. We were not native Fijians. Although my maternal great grandmother was a native Fijian, and I was of mixed Anglo/Fijian blood, I was considered an outsider mostly because I was fair skinned. I spoke the Fijian language, ate the foods, observed the customs. My playmates were Fijian, I lived near a Fijian village. In my eyes I was a Fijian. My folks, sensing this change in the colony, had applied for visas to go to a more progressive country. New Zealand, Australia, England, and the U.S.A. Fortunately, my dad was a very skilled big engine repair man. Ships, bulldozers, trucks, and buses. Diesel engines were his thing. His was a needed specialty. America saw it. We were wanted! Our exit green card visas arrived, and we were given a short window to leave Fiji for the United States. In April of 1960, we boarded an ocean liner headed for Honolulu. Our destination was San Francisco. On a dark May evening in 1960 I stepped off a plane at SFO International. A cold, foggy windy bay area greeted us. Ugh! My dad easily found employment at and around the docks of San Francisco and soon he was crawling in and out of engine rooms.



It was a hard adjustment to come from the tropics, but like generations of immigrants before me I knew that the adventure before me, though formidable, was a 'can do.' I am here today grateful that the United States allowed my family and I to come, work hard and succeed. My Fiji connection will forever be part of my life and I now share that with the Fijian caregivers in our Petaluma Estates and with you.

Restored Pt. Reyes lighthouse open

Tourist attraction at coast reopens after \$5.7M project

By AUSTIN MURPHY
THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

It is beloved and historic and iconic, but the truth is, the Point Reyes Lighthouse was starting to look as sorry as the sound of its dirge-like foghorn.

Perched on a jagged promontory in one of the windiest, foggiest spots on the Pacific Coast, the 148-year-old structure had been exposed “to an incredibly harsh environment,” said Jennifer Stock, the National Parks Service’s acting chief of interpretation. “There was a lot of deterioration over time.”

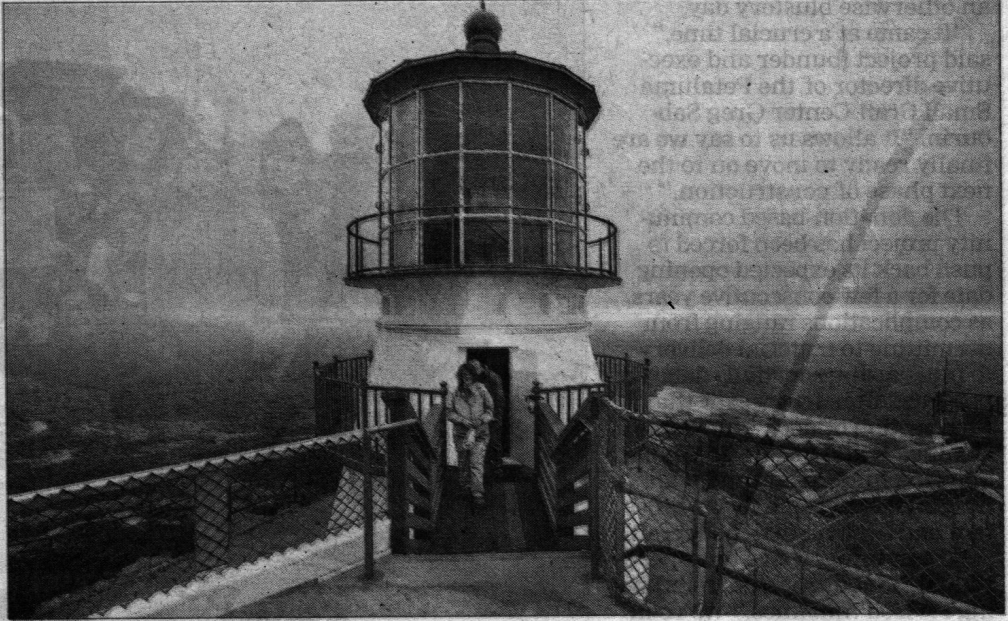
With the building “losing its historical integrity,” as she put it, the Parks Service decided to spend \$5.7 million on renovations. After 13 months of work, it reopened to visitors Nov. 8.

While recapping some of the upgrades for visitors one recent morning, Park Ranger Chris Lish couldn’t help mentioning why they were necessary in the first place.

“Someone decided to make the tower out of cast iron,” he said, highlighting that the material, while sturdy, is prone to rusting when exposed to salt air.

The tower to which he referred is the vast lantern housing the nearly 10-foot tall Fresnel lens, consisting of 24 glass prisms, plus the clockwork that made it rotate at a speed causing it to flash brightly once every five seconds, a warning to mariners “they dare not pass east of there,” said Lish.

That warning has often gone unheeded. The Point Reyes peninsula juts 10 miles into the sea, and has seen 73 major marine wrecks, 37 of them total losses, according to Richard Blair and Kathleen



JOHN BURGESS / THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

The Point Reyes Lighthouse opened last month after a 15-month restoration, the first major project since it was constructed in 1870.

Goodwin, authors of “The Point Reyes Lighthouse.”

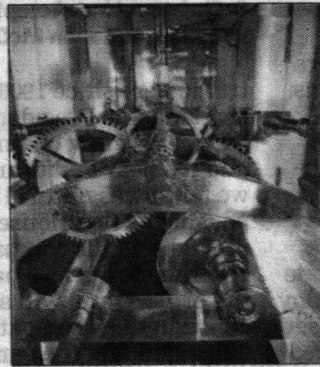
That lens assembly was built in 1867 in Paris — a morsel of news that elicited a fist pump and “Yay!” from Pierre Ponsonet, a Parisian seeing the lighthouse for the first time last month.

While that lens was decommissioned in 1975, replaced by a more modern but less interesting beacon affixed to the cliffs 100 feet below, the original held much historic value. As the only “first-order” Fresnel lens “still connected to its original, operable clockwork” in its original tower and location, Lish explained, it was designated for preservation by the National Parks Service.

Around that time, the glazing sheltering those prisms from the elements was swapped out for Plexiglas, said Stock, which had become so clouded that “you couldn’t even see the lens.”

In addition to rebuilding the tower, workers refurbished the visitors center and equipment building that houses, among other items of interest, the old foghorns.

Back in the day when



The clockwork mechanism that turns the Fresnel lens in the Pt. Reyes Lighthouse was cleaned and polished during the 15-month restoration.

those foghorns were in use and the Fresnel lens reflected light thrown off by burning lard oil, the lighthouse was not run by a single attendant. The principal keeper would have had three assistants, who each worked “60 to 80, maybe 100 hours a week,” said Lish, who added that second and third assistants were “often bachelors who for some reason never wanted to stay more than a year.”

“It’s a little desolate, but it’s still beautiful,” said Kara Godwin, who’d come from Sunnyvale to see

the lighthouse. “If you’re a person who didn’t like being around people, this is a pretty good job.”

Getting here is a job in and of itself. Fourteen miles northeast on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, a sign warns prospective visitors that the attraction is closed Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays — sparing them the final stage of a circuitous journey on a two-lane road pitted with potholes and crossed with cattle grates.

Despite the relative remoteness of the lighthouse — which, come to think of it, is a large part of its appeal — and the 0.4-mile walk from the circular parking lot to the visitors center, and the 330-step descent to the tower (“the equivalent of a 30-story building,” a sign warns), the lighthouse attracts some 400,000 visitors a year, Stock said.

On the days the lighthouse is open, hours are 10 a.m. to 4:30, though an exception was made on Sunday, Dec. 1 — the 149th anniversary of the day it was first illuminated. That day, it remained open past sunset.