

SONOMA and PETALUMA ADOBE STATE HISTORIC PARKS



Docent and SPParks GAZETTE Fall 2025



SPParks UPDATE

Hello fellow SPParkers. As our not so laidback summer (Toscano Tea, July 4th parade and an unexpected lecture, "The Story of Us", by Alex Coburn) is winding down, we are heading into a full fall. Starting with September's Fandango at the Petaluma Adobe and October's Day of the Dead with an outdoor movie, special bread, and hot chocolate. Don't forget to bring your lawn chairs! Jerome has a great selection of musicians lined up for Autumn fun, as well as several interesting lectures. Look for the list on Page 6.

November launches holiday events, including the Victorian Christmas Crafts Workshop on November 9th. Yvonne Bowers chairs this always fun and rewarding event heading into the holidays. It's followed in December by the luminaria-lit Holidays on the Northern Frontier and Christmas at the Mission. The Parks sites by the Plaza will be open December 13th with lots of activities – definitely a good time to get out and embrace the holidays!

And don't forget our Annual General Meeting. That's a good time for members to find out where SPParks is financially (we are well-balanced, no worries), see a video look-back of accomplishments and meet the slate of 2025-26 Board officers. With a tasty light supper too!

The Barracks Gift Store is our major funding source for Parks events. As you will hear, it is steady, while still recovering from COVID and the erratic supply chains. A recent addition, "Round Up for the Parks" is working out quite nicely. Volunteers at the Store are needed: talk to Elizabeth, our Store Manager, who is looking forward to meeting you.

All SPParks events and activities at the Parks are enhanced by volunteers.....we can't do it without your time and efforts.

Volunteers make things happen!
See you in the Park!

Anne Cox, SPParks Board President

DOCENT ORGANIZATION UPDATE

Docent Picnic:

The annual docent picnic held on August 24 was a great success, as usual. Thanks to all who contributed food and drink, including SPParks. And special thanks to Jim Danaher for our history quiz. Yellowjackets enjoyed the feast as well, but were kept at bay for the most part. It has been suggested to start next year's picnic a little later, 4 pm, so that more park employees might attend.

Quarterly Meeting, September 13, 2025:

Jim Danaher from SPParks noted that store volunteers are needed, as are SPParks Board members. He also reported that the "Round Up" program has been very successful – when visitors buy merchandise at the Barracks Store or the Mission, they are asked if they want to round up their purchase amount to the next whole dollar. It may not sound like much, but it has been adding up to a very nice donation stream.

(continued on page 2)

SAVE THE DATE

SPParks ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



**SONOMA
PETALUMA
PARKS**

The Annual General Meeting for SPParks Members will be Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at 6 pm in the Sonoma Barracks A/V Room. Details will be coming to members soon.

"A Year in Review" - highlights of 2025
Nominations for Board Seats
Presentation of Slate of Officers for 2026
Light Supper * Refreshments * Desserts

Professor Jim's History Mystery Quiz

1. What is the oldest public art museum in the western United States?
2. How long must a candidate for California governor be a state resident?
3. What brothers founded the San Francisco Chronicle (known for its reporting of gossip and scandals)?
4. Name the NYC born man who helped Liberty Hose Co. #2 (fire brigade) in San Francisco in the 1850's - the inspiration for Mark Twain's best work?

Answers on page 6

Support Our Local State Parks Join SPParks!

As of October 1st, all new SPParks memberships are good until the end of 2026. Join us with your contribution of \$40 or more. For more information visit our membership page on our website:

<https://www.sonomaparks.org/about/membership/>.

There is a table showing membership levels and benefits. You can join by making a donation through PayPal or by credit card. There is also a link to the application form which can be printed and mailed with a check. If you have any questions or would like me to send you an application, please email me at spparks.membership@gmail.com.

Please join us in supporting the Sonoma and Petaluma Historic State Parks.

Mike Owens, Membership Chair

(Docent Organization - continued from page 1)

Jennifer Hanson noted that some Boy Scouts have been working at the Petaluma Adobe spreading chipped material. She also reminded us that there is a costume closet at the Adobe. The good news is that a dance floor was purchased by the State Parks for Fandango, which was September 20th. (see page 7) She informed us that there will be an annual "Bear in Mind" training coming up, so all active docents need to sign up for the training. A potential new docent is pending. November 1st is Finding History Day at the Veterans Hall in Santa Rosa, sponsored by the Sonoma County Historical Society.

Lisa presented docent library selections for check out. (see page 6) And Rob updated us on all the happenings in the Parks. (see page 3)

Finally, Karen noted some confusion and concern has been expressed regarding the application and training process to become a docent – there is not a clear path. Attrition in the ranks obviates the need for future new docents. Jennifer stated a "volunteer coordinator" position may be pending at the State level. This ongoing conversation will be continued....

Karen Pregler, Docent Co-Chair

SPPARKS NEEDS YOU!



Sonoma Petaluma Parks, Inc. (SPParks) needs **Board Members!** Join the Board and support our three pillars: Interpretation, Preservation and Awareness. We meet on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 10:00 am, alternating between Sonoma and Petaluma. You are needed!

If interested, please contact Yvonne Bowers yvonne@sonomaparks.org or Sue Vargas flyingrsv@sonic.net.

STATE PARKS NEWS

IT'S ALMOST HERE!

The Sonoma Valley Visitor's Bureau (SVVB) has moved over to the Toscano Hotel at Sonoma State Historic Park, as part of a "Joint Powers Agreement" (JPA) between the City of Sonoma and Dept. of Parks & Recreation, Bay Area District. As I write this, the staff and volunteers of the SVVB have all of their furniture and other items in the Toscano Hotel. All they have to do now is get everything organized and built. The first floor was professionally cleaned and the cages have been removed. ADA accessible thresholds were installed at the entrances facing Spain St. They are still waiting for AT&T to wire the building with phone and internet service.



(photo by Rob Pickett, 9/2/25)

So where did all of the furniture that was in there go, you ask? Well, some went upstairs in the hotel, some to the upstairs of the Toscano Kitchen, a few items went upstairs in the barracks, and the rest went over to the Blue Wing Inn, to help furnish that building. If you haven't looked in the window of the Blue Wing Inn in a while, you should check it out...there's a woman mannequin behind the bar and several soldiers playing cards near the window. The only things that were left in the Toscano (first floor) before SVVB moved in, were the bar, three wood burning stoves, and the photos and images on the walls (which were also cleaned).



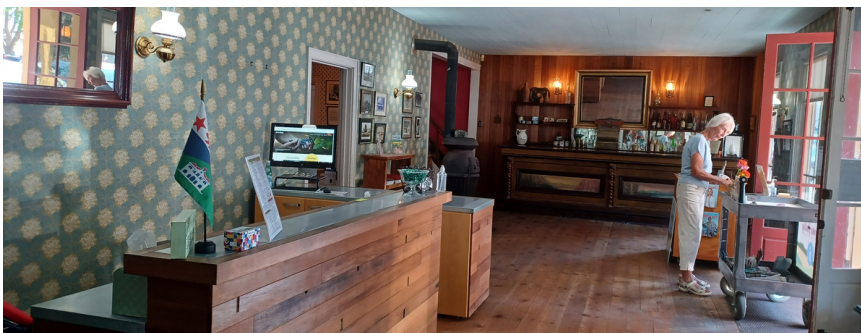
(photo by Dee Katson, 9/13/25)

While passersby's may see our own Sharon Douglas greeting folks at the door, or the doors opened, so they can grab a brochure or two, the SVVB is scheduled to officially open late September or early October. The hours will be 10am-4pm, 7 days a week! There is some discussion about SVVB volunteers, and potentially State Park volunteers, having the opportunity to interpret the upstairs, so stay tuned for that potential news.

While it is bittersweet to be hosting the SVVB in the Toscano Hotel, the overwhelming response seems to be positive and people seem very excited to welcome them into a precious piece of Sonoma State Historic Park. It will bring more visitors into the park, inform more visitors of our history here, and get more people into the Toscano Hotel.

If you have any questions about this move, please feel free to email me at: Robert.Pickett@parks.ca.gov

Rob Pickett, Supervising Ranger



(photo by Dee Katson, 9/13/25)

Travel Bug – aka Enrichment Opportunities

Grace Hudson Museum

story and photos by John Braschi, Docent Organization Co-Chair

On June 9, 2025, 8 docents visited the Grace Hudson Museum in Ukiah. It was a super day of exploration and fellowship. Our thanks to Jennifer Hanson for organizing the field trip, and to Alyssa Borge, Curator of Education and Exhibits at the Museum for giving us a fabulous tour.

The museum was founded in 1986. It has many special events and is an important community center. In addition to the temporary exhibits (which focus on local artists) the museum also has some permanent collections and a wonderful gift shop.

The museum's main focus is the life works of oil and watercolor artist Grace Carpenter Hudson (1865 -1937) and her ethnologist husband, Dr. John F. Hudson (1857-1936). There are several galleries, including multiple galleries of photographs and Ms. Hudson's paintings of Pomo Indians and Hawaiians.

Another wonderful and extensive collection represents and describes the evolution of Pomo Indian basketry. The other gallery contains artifacts from the Hudson and Carpenter families and Dr. Hudson's collections.

There is also a lovely garden of native plants, both with medicinal qualities and those used for making baskets. In addition, the Sun House is next door. It is an airy Craftsman Style house that was the Hudsons' home and contains a collection of the Hudsons' antiques, furniture and their studios and offices.

We completed the day with good conversations over a hearty lunch.



Historical Notes:

The Curator emphasized how difficult and unusual it was that Grace Hudson, as a woman, was able to support her family as an artist.

We learned from the Curator that in the early 20th Century, in order for local Pomo to live off the reservation, and work as domestic servants, laborers, etc., they needed to be "indentured". We understand that it was not true indenture, but a way to procure help.

The Curator also reminded us to speak about indigenous culture in the present, because descendants of these folks are our neighbors and their cultures and languages live on through their descendants.



William L. Todd: Nephew or Cousin of Mary Todd Lincoln?

by Travis Wagner, Docent

Kudos to Ed Purkey for his excellent presentation at the June quarterly docent meeting, and his article in the Summer 2025 issue of the Gazette on the Bear Flag Revolt. A major participant in the event, who also was involved in the design and creation of the Bear Flag itself, was William Todd. Some local Sonoma history books state that William Todd was the nephew of Mary Todd Lincoln, others note they were first cousins. What was their relationship? Hint, Ed Purkey was correct.

Father: General Levi Todd (1756–1807) Mother: Jane (Briggs) Todd (1761–1800)		
Son Dr. John Todd (1787-1865) Dr. John Todd, an older brother of Robert S. Todd, was born on April 27, 1787, in Kentucky (before it was a state).	<BROTHERS>	Son Robert Smith Todd (1791-1849) Robert S. Todd, younger brother of Dr. John Todd, was born on February 25, 1791, in KY. He was the 3rd of 6 sons.
Son William L. Todd (born April 14, 1818) in Edwardsville, IL.		Daughter Mary Ann Todd (born December 13, 1818) in Lexington, KY.

Dr. John Todd studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and returned to Kentucky to start his medical practice. In 1817, he moved to Edwardsville, IL, and in 1827, moved to Springfield, IL. His brother, Robert S. Todd, married Elizabeth Parker and had six children who survived to adulthood, including Mary Ann Todd. Following the death of his first wife, Robert remarried and had eight additional children survive to adulthood.

Dr. John Todd's son, William Todd, was born in Edwardsville, IL, on April 14, 1818, but grew up in Springfield. He was unmarried when he joined the same wagon train as William B. Ide's family. Robert S. Todd's daughter, Mary Ann Todd, moved to Springfield, IL, to live with her sister where she met a 32-year old struggling lawyer, Abraham Lincoln. They married on November 4, 1842.

The answer: William Todd and Mary Ann (Todd) Lincoln were first cousins.



Docent Picnic History Mystery Quiz Winners – 2025
(photo by Dee Katson)

**NEXT DOCENT QUARTERLY
MEETING & HOLIDAY
CELEBRATION**

**Saturday, December 6, 2025
10:00 AM
BARRACKS A/V ROOM**

UPCOMING EVENTS

LECTURES: Third Thursday of the month, 7 pm Mission Chapel. \$10 general public, \$5 SPParks members, Docents and Park staff free.

- October 16: **Laura Simpson** - Harp Through the Ages (Lecture & Performance)
- November 20: **Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz** - The Vallejos' Californio Correspondence, 1846-1888
- January 15, 2026: **CW Bayer** - Jazz Water: Sonoma, CA and the invention of jazz

MUSIC IN THE MISSION: First Thursday of the month, 7 pm Mission Chapel. \$10 general public, \$5 SPParks members.

- October 2: **Teodoro Sacristán** - Latin ballads
- November 6: **Michael Belair** - Brazilian Bossa Nova, Samba & Rhythm & Blues

Dia de los Muertos Movie Night: Friday, October 24, 2025, 5:30-9:30 pm, Sonoma Barracks. Music, food, fun activities, and more! Hosted by the La Luz Center, SPParks, and California State Parks. FREE.

Victorian Christmas Crafts Workshop: Sunday, November 9, 2025, 11 am - 3 pm, Vallejo Home. Rain or Shine. Admission \$3 adults, children free.

SPParks Annual General Meeting: Wednesday, November 12, 2025, 6 pm, Barracks Audio/Visual Room

Docent Organization Quarterly Meeting: Saturday, December 6, 2025, Barracks Audio/Visual Room, (Holiday Lunch Celebration)

Holidays on the Northern Frontier: Saturday, December 13, 2025, 5 pm - 8 pm, all Sonoma State Historic Park venues. Free.

DOCENT LIBRARY NEWS

by Lisa Tremblay, Docent Librarian

Fall is a great time to enjoy local pleasures and to celebrate where we live; "Show and Tell" at the September quarterly docent meeting featured several picture books from the library collection that include paintings and drawings of early Sonoma County scenes and familiar historical landmarks which strongly evoke how our county looked and felt in times gone by.

We received many book donations over the summer from docents and friends of our parks (apologies if any donations were inadvertently left off this list!)

from **Ed Purkey**: *The Sonoma Mission*, by Robert Smilie and *The Bidwell-Bartleson Party: 1841 California Emigrant Adventure*, edited by Doyce B. Nunis, Jr.

from **Ellen McBride**: *San Rafael, Marin's Mission City*, by Frank L. Keegan and *Captain Jack, Modoc Renegade*, by Doris Palmer Payne

from **April Farnham**: *Bear Flag Revolt*, by Robert Lee Murphy

from **Kim Muratore**: *The Vallejos of California*, by Madie Brown Empanan

Note that any books featured at the quarterly docent meeting which were not checked out then will be on display and available at the Docent Library for the next few months.

History Mystery Quiz Answers

1. Crocker Art Museum-Sacramento
2. 5 years
3. Michel and Charles de Young
4. Tom Sawyer

NATURE & COMMUNITY FAIR - August 23, 2025

California State Parks once again offered a wide array of fascinating exhibits in the annual Nature & Community Event on a steamy Saturday, August 23rd, 2025. Local environmental and civic organizations, as well as State Parks and SPParks invited participation in environmental conservation, restoration, preservation and education. Thanks to Dave Duplantier and Sonoma SHP staff for hosting another successful community event.

(photos by Jazelle Lieske)



FANDANGO, Saturday, September 20, 2025

The spirit of a rancho celebration was once again alive at the Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park on a warm September Saturday. This year's festive FANDANGO, featuring Baile de California dancers teaching the moves of the 1840's, was a big success. We are grateful to the volunteers and staff who enabled this joyous celebration of dance.

(photos by Dee Katson)



**SPParks Joins with CA State Parks and Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau
in Sonoma's World Famous July 4th Parade
Friday, July 4, 2025**



SPParks extends a heartfelt thank you to the volunteers who participated in Sonoma's "Road Trip" 4th of July parade. Along with the State Parks' truck and mascot, *Sonomie*, we had 11 "tourists" and each one was different and delightful. It was especially meaningful to have a joint entry with the Sonoma Valley Visitors Bureau. We are all here working together to welcome visitors to Sonoma Valley and it was great to collaborate.

[See also, SVVB in the Toscano Hotel, page 3]

(Photos by Mike Cox and Dee Katson)



LINKS

GAZETTE Editor: Dee Katson:
administrator@sonomaparks.org

Sonoma Petaluma Parks Association (SPParks):
sonomaparks.org

Sonoma State Historic Park
https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=479

Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park
https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=474

MEETINGS

SPParks Board meets 2nd Tuesday of the month,
10 AM

Docent Quarterly Meetings at 10 AM in the Sonoma
Barracks A/V room on the 2nd Saturday in March,
June and September and on the 1st Saturday in
December

Sonoma Petaluma Parks
P.O. Box 1702
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