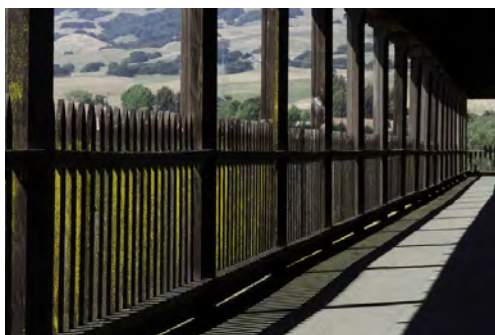


SONOMA and PETALUMA ADOBE STATE HISTORIC PARKS



Docent and SPParks GAZETTE Summer 2026



SPParks UPDATE

SPParks Board members have been keeping busy these last few months. Besides hosting the very popular 1st Thursday Concerts, orchestrated by Board member Jerome Knill, and moving the 3rd Thursday Lectures back to the Barracks Theater, we have just held our 3rd Annual Toscano Tea in the historic Toscano Kitchen on a sunny Sunday afternoon. It was a sold out event and everyone left happy, and well fed, with a goody bag of cookies including a discount card for our Barracks Store! It was a lovely time - lots of work and lots of fun. A word to the wise: plan now for the May 2027 Tea.

Board members also have been hosting a table, selling postcards and art books during the Mission's 1st Thursday Jorgensen gallery opening.

[Editor's Note: read more about the gallery on page 4.]

Our devoted Board members also volunteer in the Barracks Store, as well as at every State Parks event in Sonoma and in Petaluma. In November, SPParks will be putting on the Victorian Christmas Crafts Workshop, as well as the Annual General Meeting, complete with a tasty dinner. And, of course, in December we will be present at the Holidays on the Northern Frontier, better known locally as Christmas at the Mission.

(continued on page 2)

DOCENT UPDATE

Well it looks like I am here again. Since no one has stepped up to be a new co-chair of the Docent Committee, I have volunteered to serve again. We have 2 more meetings this year. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE, will someone volunteer to help me when John Braschi's term is done in December?

After the June meeting was called to order by John, our favorite reenactor Jerry Pozo invited us to join the Bear Flag celebration in the Plaza with a BBQ afterward. We also heard interesting updates on books in the library, lectures in the Barracks, music in the Mission, SPParks fundraising activities, and much more. Tyler and Jennifer updated us about recent events and potential field trips, and welcomed several new docents.

We are also planning to have a POTLUCK PICNIC in August, but the exact date has not yet been confirmed. More information will be e-blasted as soon as we have more updates.



*Time travelers dressed for Tea at the Toscano
(photo by Dee Katson)*

I also want to add my comments on the 3rd annual Toscano Tea, which raised a big chunk of funds for the Parks. The tea was very well attended and a good time was had by all. What I really enjoy is the fact that we are still able to attend such an event at such a historic place.

I'll see all you docents at the picnic, and at our next meeting on September 12, 2026, at 10am in the Barracks.

*Kathryn (Kit) Foster,
Docent Co-Chair (again)*

(SPParks Update - continued from page 1)

We welcome any ideas or suggestions and, importantly, we can always use new board members. Already, the Nomination Committee is searching for potential new Board members. Do you have the wherewithal to consider it? If you love our treasured historic parks, please join us as a volunteer Board member.

Remember: volunteers make things happen!
Be part of it.
Enjoy family and summer!

Anne Cox, SPParks Board President

DOCENT LIBRARY NEWS

INDIGENOUS READING CHALLENGE - REMINDER
As discussed at the March quarterly, let's get ready for "Indigenous Peoples Month" by choosing and reading a book or article about Native Americans in California or elsewhere. Several books from our collection are on display on the top shelf in the Docent Library, but consider searching at the public library, the Barracks Gift Store, or -- if you must -- online booksellers.

Bring the book to share at the September Quarterly, or just submit the title and author to Dee or Lisa by Sept. 1st so we can compile a recommended reading list to our docents. Book reviews for the Gazette are also welcome. Happy reading!

Lisa Tremblay, Docent Librarian

Professor Jim's History Mystery Quiz

1. In what California location was the first vineyard north of San Francisco Bay?
2. What California town was originally to be named in William Ralston's honor until he modestly declined the offer?
3. What determined the height of the Pioneer Monument in Donner Memorial State Park? The monument faces west toward Donner Pass.
4. Who wrote a 39-volume history of western North America and Central America that was published in the late 19th century?

Answers on page 7

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

- September 17: **Debbie Lee** - "Asians & Pacific Islanders in Early Sonoma"
- October 15: **Reese Brooks** - "Dueling in Early California"
- November 19: **Peter Myerhof** - "Mapping The Last Leg of El Camino Real."

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

- September 3: **Jose Manzo**, Master of Mariachi
- October 1: **Kit Kraft & Michael Noel**
- November 5: **Armitano Domingo** - Fandango Salterio <https://www.armitanodomingo.com/music>

Jorgensen Art Gallery: open during Art Walk, First Thursday of the month, April – October, 5pm – 7pm, Free

Nature & Community Fair: Saturday, August 8, 2026, 4 pm – 7:30 pm, Casa Grande area

Guinga, In Concert in the Mission – Sunday, August 23, 2026, 7pm. Presented by The Sonoma Valley Jazz Society, \$40 for SVJS members, \$60 non-members. Tickets available on the SFJS website, <https://www.sonomavalleyjazzsociety.org/>

Docent Quarterly Meeting - Saturday, September 12, 2026. 10 am, Barracks Theater

Fandango - Saturday, September 19, 2026. Petaluma Adobe, with Baile de California Dancers and a special musical guest.

Sonoma County Finding History Day - Saturday, November 7, 2026, 10am - 2pm, Santa Rosa Veterans Memorial Building, 1351 Maple Avenue, Santa Rosa. Presented by the Sonoma County Historical Society - Cosponsored by Sonoma County Library. Free admission - Free parking <https://sonomacountyhistory.org/>

Owl Rescued at Sonoma State Historic Park

Story and photos from:

Juan-Pablo Perez, Bay Area District

During our staff meeting on April 16, 2026, my coworker Management Services Technician Dana Bravo got a text from Park Maintenance Worker I Paublin Aguilar about a Great Horned Owl stuck in a fence at the Vallejo Home. Dana and I left the meeting early to assess the situation.

I was able to determine there were no signs of serious injury or any open wounds on the owl. Because the owl was not moving and upside down, I knew it had been in that position for a couple hours minimum. With all the blood going to its head, it was clearly exhausted and fatigued.

I quickly grabbed welding gloves and scissors. I held on to the owl's talons while Paublin made cuts into the fence. Once we freed the owl from the fence, I laid it down on the ground and continued removing the remaining fence pieces. Once we were certain that the owl's talons were completely free, I carefully scooped it up and slowly brought it to a vertical position. We could all see by the reaction on the owl's face that it was slowly regaining its bearings and making sense of its surroundings.



Left: An exhausted owl suspended upside down caught in fencing. Right: A free owl ready to fly.

Within about 10-15 minutes, the owl was back to normal. Although still a bit fatigued, it remained calm and never once tried to retaliate. We made the decision to release it just a couple hundred feet from the fence line, as this owl is native to the area. I placed it on a pile of wood pieces and it flew off. Big thanks to Dana Bravo, Paublin Aguilar and Senior Park Aide April Farnham for assisting with the rescue.

Travel Bug – aka Enrichment Opportunities

Field trip to Marin History Museum

Story and photos by Jerry Pozo

On April 8th, 2026, Jennifer, Jazelle, Kit, Suzanne, Karen, Ken and Jerry traveled to The Boyd Gate House in San Rafael for a tour of the special exhibit **Rancho Roots**. The Boyd Gate House was built by Ira Book in 1879 as a guest house for his residence next door, Maple Lawn. His granddaughter and her husband owned the property until it was donated to the City in 1905 and is now the home to the Marin History Museum.



After our tour, we then traveled to Novato for an outdoor lunch at Mi Pueblo. Then over to Miwok Park for a tour and presentation on Miwok history at the Museum of the American Indian. The park is surrounded by trees, a stream and lots of walking trails. Another good day as a state park docent and history enthusiast.



Editor's Note: Jennifer Hanson reports that the **Rancho Roots** exhibit has been extended through December 18th, and is well worth checking out.

THE ART OF HISTORY

Jorgensen Gallery now open during Art Walk

by Jazelle Lieske, Senior Park Aide

The Chris Jorgensen Gallery in Sonoma's Mission is now open for evening viewing during Sonoma Art Walk, the first Thursday of every month, from 5pm to 7pm, April through October. This event provides a wonderful opportunity to view the historic paintings of California missions using LED-light magnifying glasses, taking a deeper dive into the exquisite details. The gallery is a permanent exhibition of 57 of Jorgensen's original watercolors of the California missions, which normally need to be kept in dim lighting to preserve the fragile 124+ year old works. During these special evenings, materials are provided to assist visitors who are interested in art creation and/or mission history.

Each of the paintings is matched to their reproduction in the book titled **"California Missions - The Paintings of Chris Jorgensen"** (available for purchase on gallery nights at a 10% discount with funds benefiting our park through SPParks). The gallery evenings also have a secondary theme, either showing a local artist's work or inviting visitors to bring a sketchbook and draw from inspiration in the gallery. For example, on June 6th, Barbara White Perry was on hand to display her drawings and sign her books. [see page 5] After touring the gallery, visitors can go next door to the chapel for wonderful live *Music in the Mission*. [Except in July and August.]

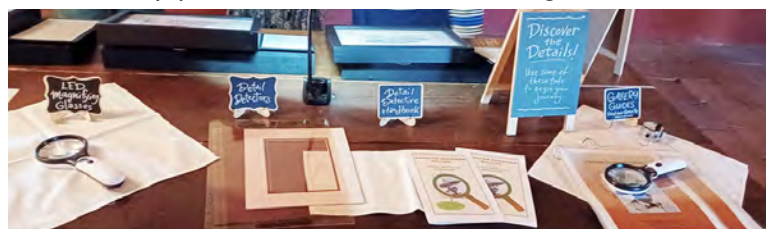
Our goals for the Art Walk Gallery Evenings are many: to offer the public a time to visit the gallery for free when the rest of the mission is closed; to view the details of the paintings while learning about Jorgensen the artist and California mission history; to partner with Sonoma Art Walk in sharing art and history with our local community; to introduce SPParks and their "California Missions" book (see below); to share local Sonoma artist's works; and also to invite visitors to start a sketchbook inspired by the gallery environment.



(photo by Jazelle Lieske)



Especially important is introducing both travelers and our local community to the treasures Sonoma State Historic Park has within these gallery walls. Our hope is that visitors will connect with these paintings in a deeper way that will encourage them to value and help preserve the works for future generations.



(photo by Dee Katson)

A Brief History of the Jorgensen Gallery at Mission San Francisco Solano

by Jim Danaher, SPParks Board

For 75 years, since 1951, the California mission paintings by Christian "Chris" A. Jorgensen (1860 - 1935) have been on display at Mission San Francisco Solano. The paintings were created during the winter months of 1903 - 1904 and 1904 - 1905, while Chris Jorgensen visited the locations (from San Diego to Sonoma) on horse-drawn buggy. After completion, the mission sketches were given to his son Virgil.

Chris and his wife Angela (nee Ghirardelli) had two children, Virgil and Aimee. Virgil Jorgensen (1888 - 1950) was an architect and earned degrees from the University of California at Berkeley and the Boston Institute of Technology (today the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)). During his architectural career, he designed two California movie theaters, one in Redding and one in Merced, both in the art deco style. He was also a director of the D. Ghirardelli Company.

THE ART OF HISTORY

Barbara White Perry Featured Artist in Jorgensen Gallery June 6, 2026

Barbara White Perry began painting, drawing and building things at an early age in rural Illinois, and has always been interested in old buildings. Her creative family encouraged her to experience the arts, painting, music and theater. Four years of mechanical and architectural drawing classes would become an important tool in her future. She moved to California in 1975.

In 1999, Dr. Wylie Hartman asked her if she would draw a friend's barn. Barbara saw the old barn laden with wisteria, backlit by the morning sun and sadly neglected. She drew it and continued to do more.



(photo from Barbara White Perry)



In March 2015 her first solo exhibit of ink and vine-charcoal illustrations was in the beautiful Gallery 212 at the Sonoma Community Center. The 42 images and stories were well received, and many people encouraged her to create a book. Drawing Sonoma was born in August 2015. As the inventory of the first book dwindled, she decided to add new images and created a second edition. Drawing Sonoma, Second Edition sold out in December 2021. The third edition is the last of the series. The exhibit of her entire work, sixty-five illustrations and stories, was in the Sonoma Community Center's Gallery 212 in March 2025.

Barbara is a Sonoma Treasure Artist, named by the city of Sonoma's Cultural and Fine Arts Commission who not only noted her accomplishments as a painter, illustrator and author, but her numerous contributions to the community.

Barbara and her husband Fred have lived in Sonoma Valley for over 38 years. Their zinfandel vineyard, adjacent to Buena Vista Winery, was originally owned by Count Agoston Haraszthy who founded Buena Vista in 1857.

barbarawhiteperry.com

[Editor's Note: Her book titled "Drawing Sonoma" is available for purchase at the Barracks Gift Store, along with cards featuring her drawings.]



Barbara White Perry, right, in Jorgensen Gallery
(photo by Dee Katson)

(Jorgensen Gallery History continued)

Virgil Jorgensen retired to the El Verano area of Sonoma Valley to raise livestock. In 1949, he served as director of the Valley of the Moon Vintage Festival Association. The Vintage Festival displayed the mission paintings at Vella's Ice Cream parlor across the street from Mission San Francisco Solano.

Following Virgil's passing in May 1950, his widow Florence Jorgensen deeded the paintings to the California State Parks (in 1951) and they have been displayed at the mission ever since.

The Jorgensen Gallery is included on the Sonoma Art Walk and offers a free viewing on the first Thursday evening of each month, April through October.

PETALUMA STATE HISTORIC PARK EVENTS

Sheep Shearing, Saturday, April 11, 2026

(Photos by Carmin Vanni)

In spite of unexpected spring showers, heritage breed sheep from local farm animal rescue Flat Broke Farm lost their winter coats under the expert guidance of shearer John Sanchez. The annual event normally attracts many area families, but this year the rain discouraged all but a few determined sheep enthusiasts. One high school student was so enthralled that he purchased one of the sheared pelts so that he could complete the entire process from washing to spinning to weaving, all on his own. The Petaluma Adobe staff and volunteers are very grateful for our loyal community.



Living History Day – Saturday, May 9, 2026

(Photos by Jerry Pozo)

On Saturday May 9th, Petaluma Adobe State Historic Park ushered visitors back in time to the 1840's for Living History Day. Park staff and volunteers wore period attire to represent vaqueros, traders, and rancho workers. Visitors enjoyed participating in the crafts and activities that occurred at General Vallejo's Petaluma Adobe during the rancho period including rope making, wool spinning, basket weaving, blacksmithing, and woodworking.



SONOMA STATE HISTORIC PARK EVENTS

Jennifer Kloetzel brings Bach to the Mission, May 7, 2026

"Mission: Bach - The Road to Inspiration" is the vision of cello soloist Jennifer Kloetzel, connecting the past and present through the power of music. She has performed Bach's Cello Suites and new solo cello works, inspired by Bach, at (or near) each of the historic 21 California Missions, exploring music, art, culture and history. Celebrating music's ability to inspire and bring people together, Ms. Kloetzel's "Pilgrimage of Sound" brought inspiration and joy to our Mission in Sonoma this year. Her powerful performance here was warmly appreciated by all who attended.

<https://missionbach.com/>

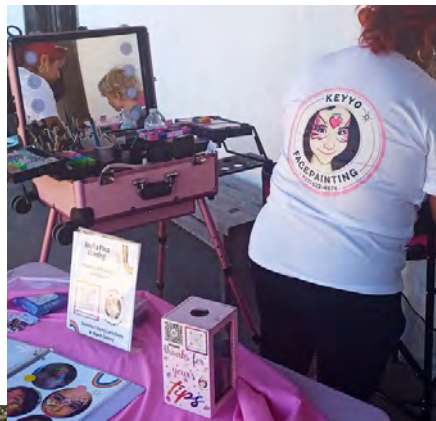
**Children's Day Festival & Movie Night, Saturday, June 6, 2026**

Children's Day, 2026 was a wonderfully fun event. Every guest and community partner I spoke with was having a great time, and thankfully, it was a perfect night to be outside! The crafts were a hit, the nachos were a hit, and "Nacho Libre" was a hit. Selfies with the cutout next to the cannon and banner were happening, while children and seniors alike had their faces painted. The highlight of the night was a grandpa getting a dragon painted on his face, only to say, "I couldn't resist..."

My deepest appreciation goes out to State Parks staff, La Luz, our park volunteers, and SPParks for making this event happen.

S. Tyler Markley, State Park Interpreter I

(Photos by Dee Katson)



History Mystery Quiz Answers

1. Fort Ross
2. Modesto
3. Snow level at the time of this tragic event.
4. Hubert Howe Bancroft

Tea in the Historic Toscano Dining Room – Oh, so Tasty! Sunday, May 31, 2026

(Photos by Dee Katson)

Many thanks to our devoted time travelers who joined us for Tea in the Toscano Kitchen. Everyone was beautifully dressed on a beautiful sunny day, and, of course, the tea and treats were devine. Our annual fundraising event was sold out in advance, a testament to the value of Sonoma's treasured historic sites. And the event would not happen without the catering expertise of Lisa Lavagetto and Julie Steinfeld of sonomafoodgurus.com along with the hard working volunteers from the SPParks Board of Directors.



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
Sonoma, CA 95476