

Petaluma River Heritage Center - Highlights 2/09 – 2/2010



Petaluma Library River Heritage exhibit

2/1 - Friends installed a colorful exhibit in the Petaluma Public Library; that included River history photos provided by the Petaluma Museum, River Heritage Center plans and a large model of the Alma, loaned by the SF. Nat. Maritime Museum.



Volunteers help clean out the Livery Stable

3/14 – On the first of several work days at the River Heritage Center volunteers took on the dirty task of removing rubbish from the 100 yr. old structure. Thanks to the efforts of dozens of community members like these the barn’s interior was cleaned out in preparation for future renovations.



Kids love rowboats too



Traditional Small Craft visit the RHC

4/5 – Friends held an open house at The River Heritage Center and hosted the Traditional Small Craft Assn.’s annual Petaluma River Row. Hundreds of people visited the Livery Stable to see the beautiful boats and interesting displays. The fine Spring weather attracted many families.



Bonna Benedetti-Flynn in the Butter & Eggs parade

4/25 - The annual Butter and Eggs parade was one of several community events that we participated in. This colorful pageant let us spread the word about the River Heritage Center to over 10,000 viewers.



Parks Director Scott Brodhun opens the RHC workshop

5/26 – A River Heritage Center “Brainstorming” workshop was attended by a wonderful cross section of community members. Professional designers and planners; Petaluma City Council members and staff, and citizens of all ages joined in a public workshop, led by Architect Mary Dooley, to suggest improvements, features and programs for the new facilities.

6/13 - The men's group "Team Torch" provided a work day at the Livery Stable. The group of talented men do regular community service as part their practice. On this day they replaced 2 badly decomposed barn doors with newly constructed ones from material paid for by Friends. We also provided plans and directions for this valuable effort. Thank you Team Torch!



Team Torch builds new doors for the Livery Stable



The "Alma" arrives for he River Heritage Fair

9/12 – The first Petaluma River Heritage Fair, held by Friends, saw the RHC come alive with river related displays and entertainment. Coinciding with the annual visit of the historic scow schooner "Alma" and the replica Chinese shrimp junk "Grace Quan" the attendees were treated to a wonderful day of cultural heritage. A new floor contributed to the Livery Stable's wonderful acoustics as musicians and storytellers entertained the festival attendees.

7/2 – A Summer Youth Ecology Corp. team of Petaluma youths, ages 18 –24, began 8 weeks of work at the River Heritage Center (RHC). Funded by a Federal Stimulus Grant they were one of several teams employed by Petaluma People Services to learn work skills while providing environmental services for the City. Friends worked with the City Parks to obtain the grant and volunteer Eve O'Rourke drew plans for a number of projects at the RHC. She then worked with the crew daily teaching landscaping and masonry. By summer's end they had learned many trade skills, created valuable amenities at the Center and transformed the interior of the Livery Stable with a new floor.



The Heritage Fair crowd at Tule Boat launching

One of the day's highlights was the launching of a traditional "Tule Boat" that was built by volunteers.



Summer Youth Ecology Corps. (Eve O'Rourke lower rt.)



Tule Boat's maiden voyage

10/25 – Heritage Homes of Petaluma, (who have supported Friends restoration efforts in 2009 with 2 \$1000 grants) held a special program at the River Heritage Center. Pumpkin carving and scary stories were the theme for this Halloween event. A bonfire in the special stone pit constructed over the summer offered a perfect setting for a nighttime gathering.



Halloween revelers gathered at the River Heritage Center

11/18 – River Heritage Center planners Mary Dooley, Bill Wolpert and David Yearsley traveled to the S.F. National Maritime Museum to discuss program ideas and possible collaborations. We learned from the Skippers of the “Alma” what makes their educational programs successful and were offered tentative plans for more Museum related activities in Petaluma in 2010; such as school trips on the Alma and building small boats.



SF Maritime Museum staff meeting with RHC planners



SF Maritime Museum’s “Tule Splitter” style duck boat

12/1 – Board Members Elizabeth Howland and Elizabeth Mori were flown to Fresno by Friends supporter Sid Hendricks to learn about the San Joaquin River Parkways successful conservation and nature education programs. Executive Director Dave Koehler and Bd. members George Folsom and Coke Hallowell met them and were most generous in giving a tour of their facilities, expounding on their 20 year history and providing a gourmet picnic lunch by the River. It was a very inspirational day!



Two Elizabeths depart for Fresno with pilot Sid Hendricks



Nature displays at the San Joaquin River Parkway Center

12/6 – Eve O’Rourke was recognized as Friend’s **Volunteer of the Year**. Among her many contributions in 2009 Eve designed several projects for the River Heritage Center and worked all summer with the Youth Ecology Corps teaching stonework and landscaping skills. We cannot thank Eve enough. The benefits of her contributions will be enjoyed for years to come.



Eve O’Rourke – “Volunteer of the Year”



Thanks to the efforts of Friends office administrator Lucy Kenyon the Petaluma River Heritage Center now has its own web site www.PetalumaRHC.org. Visit it to learn about the Petaluma River and the efforts being made to restore the livery stable in Steamer Landing Park; a place for people of all ages to engage in River activities, lore, and culture. An exciting feature on the website is a new audio CD [“Stories from the River Heritage Center”](#). This recording, created by Thom Butler and featuring an introduction by Mayor Pamela Torliatt, highlights many facets of the River’s resources. Friends Director David Yearsley tells those stories and local architect Mary Dooley paints a vision of the River Heritage Center’s future role in bringing them to life. Hard copies of the CD are also available from Friends for \$5.

Dec 09 - 3 Tribe Torch” work days:



Our thanks go to Tribe Torch



Placing plastic on the façade



Priming and painting the new floor

Members of the men’s group Tribe Torch” donated 3 full Saturdays this past December, making major improvements that will help to protect the historic Livery Stable at Steamer Landing Park. They used their construction skills to place plastic sheathing over the porous southern façade. This in turn helps protect the stable’s new floor, which they cleaned, sanded, primed, and painted. Friends orchestrated the projects and the City of Petaluma provided the materials to assist the men of Tribe Torch. Our thanks go out to all of the men who generously donated their time and skill to complete these projects.

Dec. 6 - Friends of the Petaluma River Celebrates successful year



Vasanti Jayaswal gives a River blessing



The June Bugs performed



Bill & Lucy Kortum were honored guests

Friends had a very productive year *Celebrating and Conserving* the River. You can read more about our many accomplishments in our 2009 Annual Report: <http://www.friendsofthepetalumariver.org/annual-reports/>