

discover Rio Vista



Barbara Bellamy

Member of Women's 9-Holers
August net Niner Award

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Editor's Corner

Although 2023 was a great year with lots going on, 2024 is looking to be even more fun. Discover Rio Vista Magazine is highlighting many activities to celebrate the end of winter and the onset of Spring. The Rio Vista Foundation continues its dedication to making Rio Vista better through its fundraising activities which support improvements at the schools and in the community.

The little-known history of the Foundation and how it has made a difference in the community is highlighted by Tom Surh. The Golf Club at Rio Vista is being reborn as significant improvements are made to both the course itself and the Monarch Grill. Although repairs to the course from last winter's rains continues, the golf course continues to be open to the public. Read about all the improvements in the article "The Renaissance of a Rio Vista Gem" by Tom Surh.

The efforts to bring art to all of Rio Vista continues with the Riverfront Art Fest in April. There will be displays and activities for all ages throughout downtown. This is a first-ever activity which just might be an ongoing tradition for the city. Doris Noriega and Chair Diann Murphy detail how the Arts Fest seeks to encourage art throughout the community. The RioVision Gallery on Main continues to highlight community artists with displays that change out monthly and include an artist's reception. Robie Williams highlights four artists. Laurie Olekseiwicz Highlights two new businesses created by new local residents. Richard's Ice Cream opened on Main Street to serve over 50 flavors of Gunther's Ice Cream, while the gym has been resurrected as Rio Fit on Second Street.

Dennis Elliott introduces us to the new Rio Vista High School principal Clarence Isadore who looks to make a big difference at the school and is filled with ideas.

Doris Noriega takes us on a trip to Rush Ranch and the Access Adventures that happen there with their beautiful and gentle horses. Rush Ranch is located in part of the Solano Land Trust on Grizzley Island near Suisun City. They seek to enrich the lives of people with disabilities through recreation (and horses). Near Suisun City is also the Suisun Wildlife Center. Jan Vick highlights how the center protects and cares for injured wildlife with the goal of releasing most of them back into the wild. Many of the non-releasable animals and birds enter the Center's educational program.

Rio Vista History is presented in Phil Pezzaglia's articles on historical homes and building. This month is a reprint on an article about the Jesse Thomas house on South Second Street.

Rounding out a full magazine is Robie Williams' article about RioVision projects over the past year and those coming in 2024. The Event Calendar highlights activities from January to April, 2024. Come out and enjoy!

Need more events? See the RioVision Roundup and Events Calendar to find just the activity you are looking for.

— *Co-Editor, Jan Vick*

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discover
Rio Vista



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Discover Rio Vista is a tri-annual magazine published by the RioVision Promotions and Communications team that provides information about events, activities and places of interest in and around Rio Vista. This magazine is a volunteer effort. Call RioVision at (707) 360-5244 to help!

See the Discover Rio Vista website at discoverriovista.com. For additional information about RioVision see rioivision.net and facebook.com/riovistavision. RioVision is a non-profit 501(c)(3) group.

COVER: Linda Bellamy, Member of Women's 9-Holers, August Net Niners Award. Photo taken at The Trilogy Golf Course by Jan Vick.

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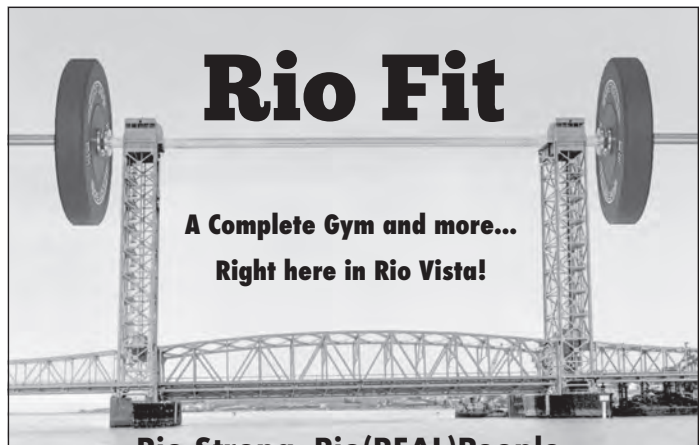
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STORY BY LAURIE OLEKSEWICZ - PHOTOS BY JOHN LOMPA

Rio Vista is booming, thanks to John and Stacy Lompa. These relative newcomers have been opening new businesses in town, making Rio Vista even more inviting to live in or visit. While John and Stacy's roots may be in the bustling bay area, they want to maintain the small town feel they fell in love with during their many weekend drives in The Delta. Two of their recently opened businesses are Rio Fit and Richard's Ice Cream.

It all started in 2020 when John and Stacy fell in love with and purchased The Cook Mansion in Rio Vista, on the corner of 5th and Main. With Stacy's passion for cooking/baking, and John's passion for restoration of old buildings, and their love for antiques, they have been steadily readying the mansion to open soon as a beautiful B&B. In the meantime, John and Stacy learned last year that the local gym on 2nd Street would be closing and decided to purchase it. After some months of renovations, the new gym opened this year on July 10th with a new name, "Rio Fit."

Rio Fit is very clean and has a calm, relaxed atmosphere with a better layout and more options than a lot of name brand gyms. John and Stacy renovated every part of the gym to maximize the good experience for gym members. The gym promotes health, and there is nothing better in life than health. That sentiment was instilled in John by his father, Richard, who had many sayings, one of which was "Health is Wealth." John himself has witnessed that "everyone comes into the gym and when they are done, they feel better and are more positive. It is great to see that effect on people from working out".

Speaking of John's father Richard, "Richard's Ice Cream" is named after him. Rio Vista has been without an ice cream shop for many years, and it has been sorely missed by its residents and visitors who enjoy the small pleasures of eating a delicious ice cream while strolling the quaint streets of Rio Vista, or along its beautiful waterfront. Thankfully Richard's Ice Cream opened on Main Street on August 26th, the same day as the Hog August Bites Festival. Serving Gunther's Ice Cream, they now have 36 ice cream flavors plus 1 seasonal flavor, 4 sherbets, 5 sorbets and 9 real fruit freezes-55 selections.

The ice cream shop makes everyone happy. John mentioned that "even if they come in a little down, by the time they take their first bite, they are smiling, and there are good conversations with customers, it's a very low-pressure fun place to serve people." Ice cream is for all ages, and families appreciate the 14 non-dairy options, because they are happy that if someone in their family has an allergy, there are selections for them as well.

In addition to the B&B, gym and ice cream shop, John and Stacy are busy working on other business projects in Rio Vista. With Stacy's 30 plus years of bakery experience and being a top cake decorator, she looks forward to opening a Bakery and Cafe soon. John and Stacy have also purchased the old Hotel Rio Vista at the corner of 2nd and Main Street. They are in the process of restoring the hotel with commercial units downstairs, and the upper floors a classic hotel, as it originally was over 100 years ago. Perhaps a roof top restaurant may be developed in the future, which would have unbelievable views.

John and Stacy certainly are a dynamic duo, who are working tirelessly to bring life to this sleepy little town and enhance the small-town experience. Their love for the Delta and the community shows. Be sure and stop by for a tasty treat at Richard's Ice Cream, and don't forget to stay in shape at Rio Fit. We look forward to their other new businesses opening as well.





Rush Ranch: Volunteering & Access Adventure

STORY BY DORIS NORIEGA
PHOTOS BY DORIS NORIEGA AND TOM MUEHLEISEN

Volunteering is the heart of Rush Ranch. Individuals freely give their time and labor for the good of the Solano Land Trust, Rush Ranch, and Access Adventure. In return, volunteers improve the community's quality of life, learn new skills, develop a sense of purpose, and make new friends. Part of the Solano Land Trust, the ranch is on Grizzly Island Road in nearby Suisun City. The ranch stretches over 2,070 acres of rolling grasslands and marches. On the ranch property are historic buildings, barns, stables, corrals, blacksmith shop, nature museum, visitor center and nature trails. Imagine using your interests, hobbies, and skills in carpentry, plumbing, gardening, astronomy, hiking, history, bookkeeping, public relations, and more. Volunteer docents lead hikes and school field trips and host the monthly open houses that run from March through October.

Here are a few amazing volunteers:

Michael Muir established Access Adventure at Rush Ranch twenty years ago. This non-profit enriches the lives of people with disabilities by providing outdoor recreation and therapy as they interact with Stonewall Sporthorses, a unique breed developed by Muir. Participants learn to care for the horses and drive carriages.

Muir was born in 1952 and his first pony was waiting for him. At nine years old he was raising sheep as a 4-H project. As early as twelve he bought his first horse from the sale of the sheep. He continued buying and breeding horses through junior high and high school. By the time he attended UC Davis he had over a dozen horses and was extremely active in breeding horses. He eventually became an apprentice to a trainer, and it was then that Muir realized that "his passion was in his relationship with horses."

When Muir sold his first colt, that was the turning point in his business career. He now specializes in the breeding of Stonewall Sporthorses. "I feel like an artist. My horses are my art. They are



Michael Muir with Black Hawk by
Tom Muehleisen

unique and eye-catching. The end product is both useful and stop you in your tracks beautiful!" His high-tech breeding program reaches all over the world, choosing the "best of the best," to produce the highest quality foals. His Stonewall horses have earned National Grand Championships in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Despite his diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis, Muir maintained his passion for training and breeding horses and began competing in combined driving. Also known as horse driving trials, combined driving is an equestrian sport where the driver sits on a vehicle drawn by a single horse, a pair, or a team of four. Over the course of his career, Muir has represented the United States seven times in world and international championships driving competitions, winning medals and champion honors. He won World and International Championships in Germany, Austria, France, Scotland, and Hungary. Muir is the past president of the United States Driving for the Disabled. Amazingly, he led an international team of carriage drivers

with disabilities, driving wheelchair-accessible carriages more than 3,000 miles from California to the White House. This 2001 journey took more than nine months to complete. In May 2024, another journey is planned to Yellowstone National Park. It will take 3 months to cover the 1,000 miles. Volunteers make trips like these happen!

Tom Muehleisen has volunteered for the Solano Land Trust for over



Joe Hoberg, Volunteer Blacksmith and Care
Taker at Rush Ranch by Tom Muehleisen

15 years. He coordinates the schedules and tasks for the volunteers who feed and care for the horses at the ranch. After retiring from law enforcement, Muehleisen enjoyed spending time taking close-up photos of the horses. He eventually began helping Muir transport a team of horses and wagons to the Yountville



Jennifer Leonard with Mimosa

Veterans Hospital. There, they gave the disabled veterans rides that became an important part of their recreational activities.

Muehleisen is also the photographer for the Solano Land Trust, which he loves doing. He often takes photos, not just of Muir and the horses, but also of Lynch Canyon. There, Muehleisen set up trail cameras and used citizen scientists in teams of two to record the biodiversity in the canyon. These unique teams discovered ten species of animals such as deer, raccoons, mountain lions and bobcats. Muehleisen is active in the Bay Area Puma Project and has won several awards for his wildlife photography in Outdoor California Magazine. The ranch has provided Muehleisen with many photographic opportunities and he finds that “just being there is so relaxing.” Try your hand in photographing the beauty found in the Solano Land Trust.

Sherry Patterson, after being in business for many years, is also a volunteer for Access Adventure. Patterson feeds and grooms the horses and completes other chores that are required for their care. Patterson also helps in the coordination of volunteers and bookkeeping. She especially likes working with the new foals because they need to become accustomed to being around people, wearing a halter, and walking with a lead rope, which are skills horses need before they are trained to pull carriages. The foals develop a sense of trust with their trainers along with reducing their instinctive fear of people. Working with the horses is fun and rewarding.

Jennifer Leonard grew up around horses and became an expert horse handler and trainer. As a volunteer for Access Adventure since 2016, the ranch has provided Leonard the opportunity to work with a larger number of horses, which enables her to better listen and respond to their individual personalities. This experience has increased Leonard’s “toolbox” of training skills, enabling her to respond to each horse in a unique way. An especially important skill for Leonard is to “quiet everything in her head and listen with humility” as she gets to know and understand each horse.

Leonard also works with the Irene Larsen Adult Program through the Solano County Office of Education. This organization serves young adults from 18 to 22 years of age with developmental disabilities. Working at the ranch and around the horses, students learn life skills as they transition into adulthood. In addition, students enhance their social interaction and vocational skills. Karen Black had no previous experience with horses, yet twice a week for

the past six years she has fed the horses. Black says the task is “Not too strenuous, but just enough of a workout to get my blood pumping. Fresh air and the peaceful company of horses sure beats exercise class!” On her first trip out to the ranch, Black had to stop for a mother goose escorting her trail of little goslings down Grizzly Island Road. Black states, “I knew instantly that this was the kind of commute traffic I could get used to!” Working with the horses “makes her heart melt, and the antics of the cows make her laugh.” The added plus to her experience is watching river otters, white pelicans, bald eagles, hawks, fluffy owl chicks, and newborn foals. The scenery at the ranch has given her breathtaking sunsets, glorious rainbows, and carpets of wildflowers all while listening to the red winged blackbirds sing.



Jennifer Leonard riding Ripp at Rush Ranch by Doris Noriega

These are just a few of the wonderful stories of Rush Ranch volunteers. Come on out and experience this peaceful and relaxing outdoor environment. Use that special job skill or talent and make our community a more beautiful place and at the same time enrich your life too! For more information see volunteer@solantolandtrust.org or call (707) 232-0150.

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JESSE THOMAS HOUSE

STORY BY PHIL PEZZAGLIA, PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM

Many of the elegant homes that once lined South Second Street during the turn of the last century are gone now. However, a few remarkable examples remain. One of them is the stately former residence of Jesse H. Thomas and his family. One of the finest as well as one of the most recognizable homes in Rio Vista, is the 116 year old Thomas House (a.k.a. Dirr house) located on picturesque South Second Street.

Although well over a century old, the Thomas home is remarkably well preserved. A testament to both the craftsmanship of local builder Weston Campbell and the love for the home that each one of its owners, since Mr. Thomas, has had for it.

To get a real sense of the style and design of the house, one must learn first about the man who contracted to have it built to fit his family's needs. Jesse Harriman Thomas was born in the state of Maine in 1844. In 1860 he headed out west to California with his parents, Melzar Eleazer and Sarah (Eaton) Thomas. The Thomas family arrived in Nevada and took residence in the mining community of Birchville in Nevada County.

The settlement, initially called Johnson's Diggings, then Birchy, was located two miles north-northeast of French Corral. Six years later in 1866, Jesse at age 22 relocated to Sacramento County. It was that year that he was introduced to Lydia Jane Bump, daughter of Nelson and Sarah Tibbons (Runyon) Bump, of Merritt Island. Lydia was born October 19, 1848 in Momence in Kankakee County, Illinois. The Bump family moved to the Delta in the latter half of the nineteenth century and settled on Merritt Island. The island is in Yolo County across the Sacramento River from Hood.

After a short courtship, Jesse took Lydia as his wife in 1867, and the couple set up in San Joaquin County. Jesse was listed as a registered voter in Tulare, San Joaquin County in 1869. It is unclear what year the couple moved back to the Delta.

However, it is known that their first daughter, Jessie Etta, was born August 22, 1869, at Corral Hollow in San Joaquin County. She married Ernest Gammon of Richland (Hood). The Thomas couple would eventually have three more children, Carrie A., Hallie Edna (1879-1938), and Fred, all of whom would be raised in the Delta. Fred constructed a fine two-story home on the corner of Third Street and St. Gertrude Avenue. Jesse Thomas along with Mr. Leftinger, John Hollenbeck, and



Dr. W.M. Ryer were the early property owners of Ryer Island. The Runyon family was one of the early families on the island, when it was still called Schoolcraft Island, before being renamed Ryer Island. The Runyon's eventually moved to other islands, such as Grand and Sutter Island.

In 1882 Jesse began farming on Ryer Island. Five years later he became Supervisor of Reclamation District No. 501 Ryer Island, which had been established in 1872. He held the position until his death in 1907. Jesse Thomas became a prominent well-known rancher and pear grower in the area. He was well liked and respected throughout the Delta. He was known for his tireless efforts, working night and day, to accomplish his vision of making Ryer Island a more profitable agricultural island.

It was through his tireless work and efforts that Ryer Island could withstand the many floods, which occurred at that time in the Delta. However, the flood of March 1907 was one of the worst to hit the island. Due

to the floods and the lack of business on the island, the Thomas couple decided to purchase property and move to Rio Vista. On July 28, 1899, they purchased four parcels of land from Joseph and Gertrude Bruning for \$600 in gold coin. The sale of the property was witnessed by local Notary Public, E.M. Chase.

Jesse hired local contractor, Weston Campbell, to construct their home. Campbell had just two years prior built the Victorian home on the corner of Second Street and Bruning Avenue for Captain Lars P. Larsen. The Thomas home was constructed of the finest



Carrie Thomas



Fred Thomas

Redwood available, which was easy to get since Sullivan and Larsen Lumber Company was on Front Street in Rio Vista. The 3843 sq. ft., three-story, 10-room home included: a large living room with fireplace, kitchen, breakfast nook, formal dining room with three built in hutches, six bedrooms, and one bathroom. Originally the home had an outhouse, carriage house, and several sheds located to the rear of the property.

The home is considered a Victorian with characteristics of the Queen Anne style popular during the era of its construction. Queen Anne style can be categorized by the heavy use of decorative “gingerbread” woodwork along with the original balustrades. Some of the home’s exterior features were a gabled dormer with fixed sash and multi-pane sidelights, fish-scale shingles, bay windows, horizontal siding, a transom light above the first floor window, stained glass sidelights on each side of the front door, eave brackets, lattice work, balustrades, a tower, and ornate decorative woodwork. It was shortly after the Dirr’s residency began, that the square upper tower and bay window were topped with balustrades. Presently, only the railing a top the front porch remains.

More than a few important family events took place in the Thomas home, including the April 1904 wedding between the Thomas couple’s second daughter, Carrie, and Daniel M. Sullivan, which was attended by family and close friend s. And at the time of Jesse’s passing, his funeral services took place in the family home and were given by Rev. W. H. Scudder of the First Congregational Church. The reverend paid a glowing tribute to his memory.



J. Stern Store

On January 30, 1920, the house officially changed hands from the J.H. Thomas Company (a corporation) to Hallie Thomas Dirr for the sum of \$10.00. Henry Dirr was a prominent businessman in Rio Vista. He was a partner in J. Stern & Co. and a Vice-President & Director of the Bank of Rio Vista. After Hallie’s death in 1938, Henry remained living in the house until his final years, passing away in 1953. Over the years several families have called the stately Thomas house their home, including: Thomas (1899-1920), Dirr (1920-1947?), Farren (1950’s), and Gregorski (1960’s-2016).

The museum is open Saturday and Sunday from 1:30 to 4:30 pm Tours are available by appointment, please call (707) 374-5169. For additional information, visit the museum website at: www.riovistamuseum.com and check it out on Facebook.

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RioVision Roundup

RioVision stayed busy during this past year. Here's what we were busy doing!

RioVision created and distributed three issues of the Discover Rio Vista Magazine to the Delta and beyond.

- The Riverview School Gardens is an ongoing project with vegetables donated to the Rio Vista Food Pantry. There are also dedicated gardeners maintaining the succulent garden in front of the Rio Vista Library.
- RioVision partnered with the City of Rio Vista by donating US flags for use on Main, Front and N 2nd Streets.
- RioVision volunteers also maintained US flags at the Western Entrance and the foot of Main Street.
- The City Art Program has been planning new art in Rio Vista. Projects include Rock the Spot (fire hydrant painting), Rock the Flock 2 that includes a sheepdog, bass, herons, and more sheep. There are plans for painting the walls at the Skateboard Park and murals in the downtown area.
- Delta Hwy Coalition has been gathering data regarding accidents and traffic for delta highways to present to elected state and federal officials.
- The RioVision Gallery has expanded its collection of art to include sculptures, small works of art and wreaths. Of course, there's still See's Candies, too!
- The RioVision Litter Pickers have removed litter from Church St., Airport Road, Promenade Park, and many other locations each month. They also started a program at the Rio Vista Library to check out litter picking supplies, so more people get involved with keeping our streets and sidewalks free of litter.

Finally, there were 3 events in 2023:

- The 9th Annual Hog August Bites was a huge success with 10 chili cooks, 37 rib cooks, over 100 vendors and 75 cars in the car show. Donations from the proceeds were distributed to the Boy Scouts, the Soroptimist's Club and Riverview Middle School.
- The ever popular Turkey Trot and ending the year with Holiday Home Tour featuring 4 homes in downtown Rio Vista and 4 homes in Trilogy.
- Next year promises to bring even more fun as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of Hog August Bites, create a new art event called the Riverfront Arts Fest, and continue with three editions of the Discover Rio Vista magazine and many of our other signature projects and programs.

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The Golf Club at Rio Vista is experiencing a rebirth as this Ted Robinson Sr. - designed course and supporting operations undergo a substantial refurbishment.

Both the course itself and the club restaurant are once again proving popular destinations with the recent and continuing dramatic improvements. This hidden gem is located within the Trilogy Rio Vista senior community, but it is fully open to the public. The beautifully designed golf course has been listed in Golf Digest multiple times as one of the "Best Places to Play" in California. The Monarch Grill bar and restaurant has a menu that rotates with the seasons featuring daily specials with a creative flair.

The Club had fallen on hard times after years of neglect by the private owner/operator who sought to sell the property and nearly abandoned it. Experience indicates that when a development loses its golf course operation, the entire development suffers significant loss of property values. The homeowners within Trilogy voted to purchase the club rather than see it continue to deteriorate and their homeowner's association purchased the club in August 2019. They brought in CourseCo, a Petaluma-based management company that manages 44 golf courses in the western US and prioritizes working with the communities where the golf courses are located. CourseCo immediately got to work on the many needed maintenance and improvement projects.

The choice of CourseCo was a fortuitous decision as they proved to be an extremely accommodating and responsive manager throughout the bumpy transition of ownership and the Covid pandemic that shut down all improvement projects other than critical ongoing operations. Now that these restrictions are gone, improvements on the course have been steady, with dramatic results.

Players who regularly use the course comment that conditions are "100% better than five years ago," citing restored grass, putting greens that are up to par, refurbished bunkers, restored water features, many repairs to the irrigation systems, and a new variety of more drought-tolerant grass (that will go dormant for a few months in the winter). Players note that they never tire of playing the course because of its excellent design. Golf fees are quite reasonable (currently \$48 weekdays for 18 holes including a golf cart and \$53 on weekends with special rates for 9 holes, twilight hours and for junior players). See the website playriovista.com for details. Even the non-golfers in Trilogy see the great improvements and are mostly pleased with their decision to purchase the club.

The bar and restaurant had also fallen on hard times, with only the bar regularly operating, and the restaurant opened sporadically with few menu offerings. The current Club manager, Robert Ellison, had a background as an executive chef at large venues including the Concord Hilton and Indian Wells Golf Resort. As part of CourseCo, he transitioned to management of all golf club operations. Under his guidance, the food and drink operations of the Golf Club at Rio Vista have improved to the point where there is sometimes a waiting list for a table at lunch or dinner. In addition, the Trilogy HOA is pursuing plans for substantial improvements in the restaurant and kitchen. This all amounts to a true rebirth of a great asset in the Rio Vista community.




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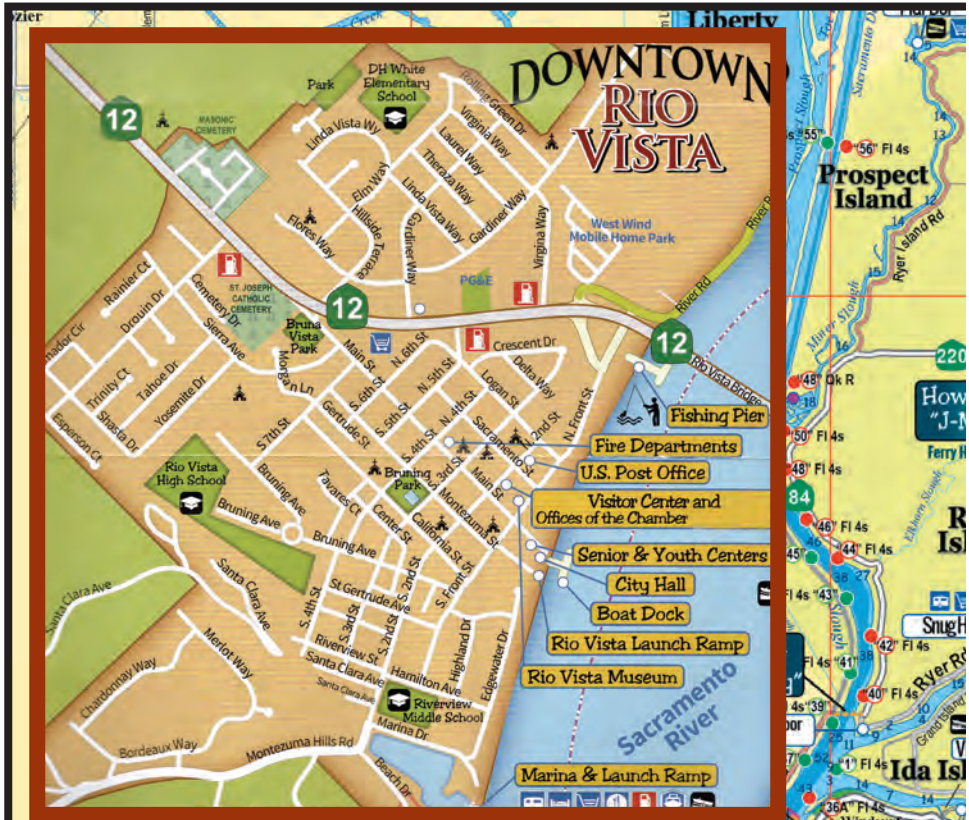
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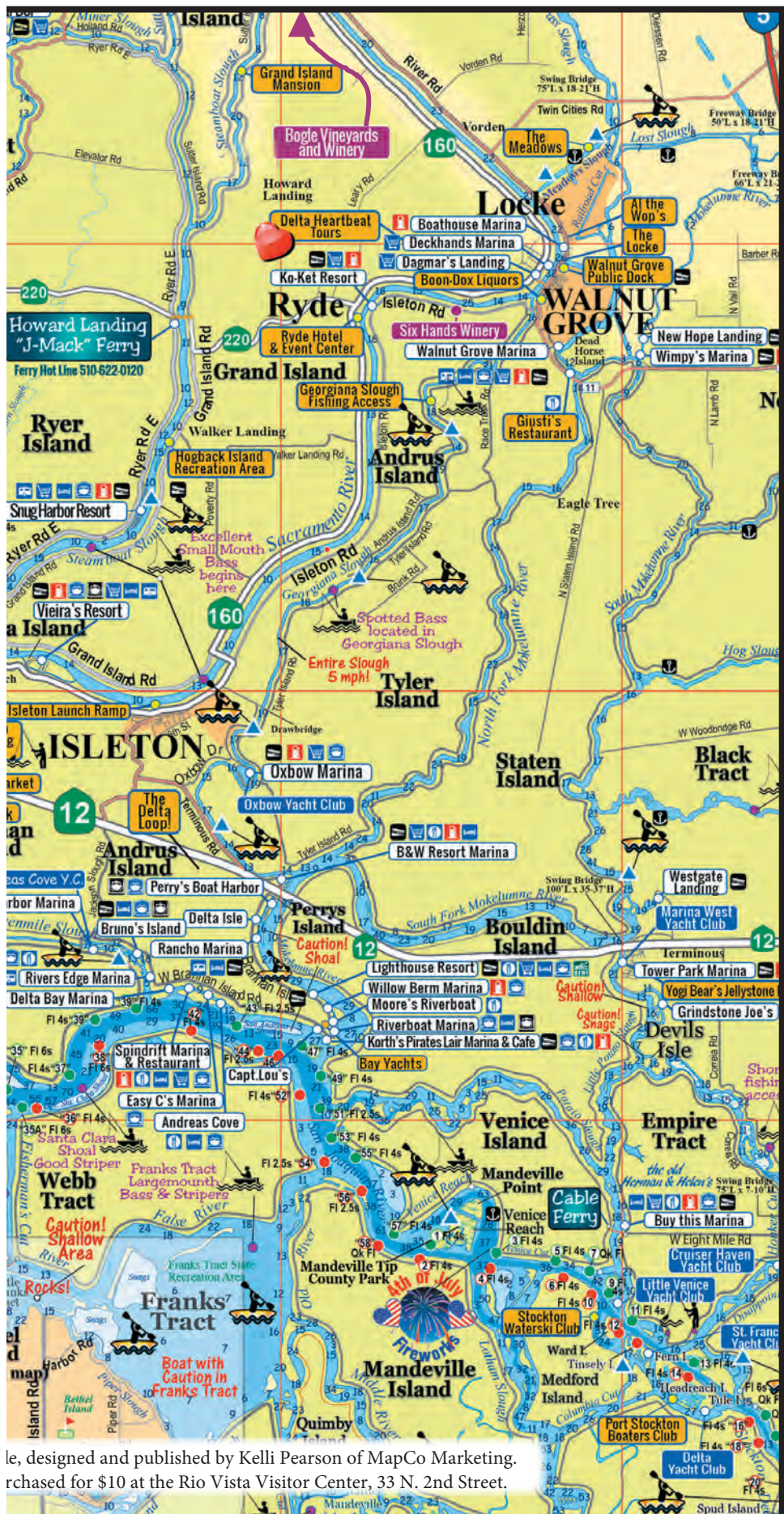
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Rio Vista High School, a Whole New Experience

STORY BY DENNIS AND MERILYN ELLIOTT

Meeting your new high school principal is usually a nerve-wracking experience for any student, be it the top athlete, the straight-A student, or the class clown. More so if the principal is as big as an NFL first-round draft pick. It is certainly understandable that



students feel apprehensive upon first meeting Clarence Isadore, Rio Vista High School's new principal. But his friendly handshake, welcoming smile, and Hawaiian shirts hint at the possibility of actually liking him. Then he says, "you can call me Izzy." He tells his students, "My job is to help students love to learn, to love high school, and enjoy getting a diploma. To do better than me." He also commits he will "encourage you to go on to college after graduation, and to think about taking extra-curricular college classes before you graduate." After 35 years in education, Izzy's love of learning and of school is still genuine and infectious.

He was a late-in-life only child for his hard-working parents. His dad was a concrete finisher in his hometown of Vallejo and his mother held down three jobs. His parents were not wealthy, and never got beyond third grade themselves, but school was never allowed to be taken for granted. He says it was his mother's faith in education and support of his participation in a variety of activities that "saved" him.

One of his early accomplishments was earning a martial arts black belt before he turned 18. And it was his high school football success that got him a full scholarship to Langston University in Oklahoma. There, he got his bachelor's degree in health, physical education, and recreation, as well as his teaching credential. He returned to the Bay Area and earned a master's degree in education administration, all the while working full time as the supervisor of the St. Vincent School for Emotionally Disturbed Boys. He was there for 12 years, then transitioned back to his old high

school, St. Patrick-St. Vincent in Vallejo, as the Dean of Students. Before coming to the River Delta Unified School District, he was the co-principal at Deer Valley High School in Antioch, a school of over 3500 students. There, he dramatically reduced the student drop-out rate and increased yearly graduations. In 2010 he earned the Antioch and Contra Costa County Principal of the Year Award.

He went on to become the principal of the racially and academically troubled Rodriguez High School in Fairfield. The school was soon thriving under his leadership and earned its first California Distinguished School Award in 2021. Each year, only 5% to 10% of California schools receive this award for excellence.

Izzy has four goals for Rio Vista High School: Increasing the student attendance rate to 95%; reducing school dropouts and maintaining a 97% graduation rate; motivating and enabling students to go on to college; and winning a California Distinguished School Award for Rio Vista. Principal Isadore has only been on the job since June, but when you visit the campus, it becomes clear that the students and teaching staff are enthusiastic about his approach to education.

As a result of his successful track record, he was elected to be the President of the Sac-Joaquin Division of the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) for two years. Since 1914, CIF has grown to be the largest youth agency in the nation, with more than 800,000 student athletes. The Sac-Joaquin Division is the 2nd largest in California, encompassing 198 high schools, overseeing 26 athletic leagues and over 225,000 students.



Even though Rio Vista High School has a student population of only 375, Izzy never slows down. He says that after the school day is over, his second job begins. He attends every school sporting event, and his popular jazz band may even play at half-time for the football team. He is at every prom and evening event for the students, hosts campus tours for parents or other interested parties, and speaks at many Rio Vista community organization meetings.

Rio Vista High School students are extremely fortunate to have such an experienced and dedicated educator as Principal Clarence Isadore.

RIVER FRONT arts fest

APRIL 27, 2024

STORY BY DORIS NORIEGA & DIANN MURPHY - PHOTOS DORIS NORIEGA & ROBIE WILLIAMS

Prepare to be enchanted by the beauty and emotional pull of art on April 27th, 2024, in downtown Rio Vista! Enjoy a day of art, crafts, entertainment, and refreshments hosted by RioVision. Art events will be held in the Youth & Community Center at 45 Main Street including a People's Choice award competition featuring original art on canvas and photography, artistic floral arrangement raffles and more. Producing art involves creative and imaginative talent. Here in Northern California, there is an abundance of active and vibrant artists who display their perspective in a variety of different mediums and genres. The quality of life in communities is enriched by their vision.

Highlighting the community's budding artists will be a Children's Art Show. Art helps children to think in new ways and to explore ideas. It helps to enhance their self esteem, academic and social skills. Feel the joy by looking at the world through their eyes and appreciate their unique creative perspectives.



moment outside of a studio), and other art media will be presented. You may be inspired to pick up a paint brush!

The stage for the musical performances will be at the end of Main Street with a covered seating area with tables and chairs to enjoy the sounds of a variety of bands. While listening to the music visitors can purchase refreshments from the food and beverage trucks on both sides of Main Street. Beer, wine, coffee, lemonade, and margarita booths are there for your drinking pleasure. A variety of food trucks and booths will serve tantalizing foods. Dessert booths will satisfy your sweet tooth with baked goods, shaved ice, and ice cream. Additionally, water will be sold at various booths.

Browse along Front Street where there will be vendors selling art, photography, jewelry, crafts, woodworking crafts, toys, t-shirts & hats, gems & minerals, and other innovative creations.



Come and have fun with the entire family in the "Children's Art Zone." Children will enjoy coloring and making kites, creating Chalk Art on the sidewalk, and face painting.

Several artists will enrich everyone's experience by demonstrating their art for festival visitors at the Artists Booth for approximately two hours each. Techniques for watercolor, plein air painting (the artist paints in the

An Information booth will provide visitors with information not only about the festival but also about the stores and businesses that will be open during the event. Visitors are encouraged to visit the RioVision Gallery at 116 Main Street and view the amazing murals painted on various downtown buildings including the Rio Vista Museum, the old bookstore at S. 2nd and Main Street and the Rio Vista Fire Station at 350 Main Street.

You are cordially invited to come together and have a relaxing day of art appreciation, entertainment, and family fun!

For up to the minute information visit our website www.discoverriovista.com and Facebook pages.





Rio Vista Hidden Gem

STORY BY TOM SURH AND PHOTOS BY RIO VISTA FOUNDATION

The Rio Vista Foundation has been quietly working to fund worthy projects and activities in Rio Vista for over 50 years. It has recently become more visible with an infusion of energy and ideas led by its current Chairperson Mark Stokes along with an active Board of Directors. Last May they launched the first fundraising tea in the British tradition that will continue in May, 2024. On February 3, 2024 at Noon the Foundation will sponsor a Soup Lunch at the Senior Center, featuring at least four soups for sampling. You will then receive a full bowl of your favorite selection, followed by a dessert. There will also be a raffle of desserts.

Such fundraising activities have recently enabled the Foundation to fund hydration stations and to complete the installation of interactive computers in all classrooms at the Rio Vista High School and to continually raise money to support the Rio Vista Sharks Swim Team.

In addition to directly funding projects, the foundation provides some unique services to organizations performing charitable activities by acting as their fiscal agent. This enables projects that do not have their own tax-deductible status to nevertheless receive funding from donors who make tax deductible contributions.

Donations to the Foundation may be made with restrictions that can assist in estate planning. As an example, a donor wants to leave an ongoing legacy grant to an organization but does not want to set up a foundation for that purpose. By making a restricted donation to the Rio Vista Foundation for the specific benefit of that organization or cause, the expense and red tape of creating a new foundation may be avoided.

Examples of this are the Rob Lucas Memorial Fund, the Barkman Memorial Fund for scholarships, and funds for First Step, a suicide prevention program.

The Foundation was created with a project very much in keeping with the spirit of Rio Vista: people coming together to help a neighbor in need. The High School Principal at the time fell ill with a kidney disease and needed daily dialysis. Friends and neighbors got together to raise the funds to purchase at-home dialysis equipment. This evolved into an on going effort to raise funds for other community needs.

The foundation's largest project by far was the 10 year effort to raise funds to refurbish the Rio Vista swimming pool. Built

in about 1950, the city pool was very much in need of major renovation and improvements. Led by Jack Krebs, about one million dollars was raised. The new facility was designed by John Bento, who also oversaw the construction. Completed in 2011, the new pool was named the Simonsen Pool after Henry Simonsen, a major donor to the effort.

The Rio Vista Foundation reflects a common dynamic in small rural towns without a large stable tax base. Local fundraising and many volunteers giving time and energy make up for the lack of civic funding. For all its success, the Rio Vista Foundation has always been run with only dedicated volunteers. It is truly a hidden gem. For additional information, their website is: www.riovistafoundation.com.

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Gallery Artists

STORIES BY ROBIE WILLIAMS & PHOTOS BY JAN VICK

Aubri McCoy is the January artist of the month

At the age of 10 Aubri started taking art classes. She admits it had a lot to do with her older sister taking them. She worked in watercolors and even entered an art show.



Aubri concentrated on other things for twenty years and spent more time drawing than painting. Then during the covid pandemic she picked up her brushes and started painting again. Currently, she is concentrating on celestial bodies. Enjoying many facets of the art world, Aubri attended school and obtained a Bachelor

of Music degree with a vocal emphasis. She enjoys composing music and using sound to express her vocal art. She also is an actress and loves performing. When she's not painting, composing, singing, or acting, Aubri writes poetry and short stories. Aubri uses auditory art to paint a picture in the listener's mind. She recognizes color in high spectrums and is in tune with the frequencies of color. "When you're doing art, you are bearing your soul and human condition. It makes one feel normal and sane", said Aubri as we finished our conversation.



Stop by the Gallery on January 20th between 3 and 5pm to visit Aubri and enjoy her art.



Jamie Victor is the February artist of the month

February features Jamie Victor, who founded Knitterbug Designs in 2004, making this year the 20th anniversary of creating elegant and luxurious hand knit one of a kind knit scarves. These scarves are crafted with premium quality yarns: custom or hand-dyed silks, cashmere, and extra fine mohair.

In 2015, Jamie began learning Nuno felting from felt artist Linda Fead and now creates Jamie's Felt Flower Designs. Nuno felting is a fabric felting technique developed around 1992 by Polly Stirling, a fiber artist from New South Wales, Australia.

The technique bonds loose fiber, usually wool, into a sheer fabric such as silk gauze, creating a lightweight felt. Learning the art from Linda Fead, as well as from YouTube videos, Jamie fell in love with the technique and has been working to improve her flowers for the past few years. Jamie starts with a felt top, which comes in every imaginable color. Then she adds luster fibers such as silk and viscose that gives a sheen to the flower. If mohair is added, it creates a lovely halo. Jamie loves vintage and uses many unique pieces to finish off her flowers, such as silk and velvet flowers, stamens, and of course her long-time favorites, Czech art glass buttons.

Jamie's talents are recognized at a reception on February 17th from 3:00 to 5:00 pm.



of the Month

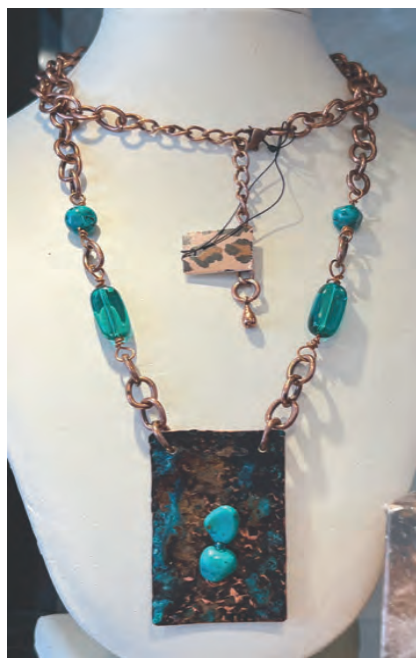
Amy Schmidt is the March artist of the month

March highlights Amy Schmidt who recently retired from the Gallery as curator. Amy moved to Rio Vista in 2002. She volunteered to help set-up the Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center with the RioVision Gallery on 2 nd Street in 2015. Later, in 2016, she helped move it to its current location at 116 Main St.

Amy is an award-winning artist for both her mixed media and jewelry, having won ribbons at the Solano County Fair, and the Fairfield Annual Juried Art Show in multiple years. Much of her jewelry is copper, and Amy points out the medical efficacy of wearing copper jewelry. She also uses brass, natural stones, abalone, pearls, beads, and unique glass. She has a variety of designs which are hammered, torched, and twisted into beautiful shapes.

Until 2021, Amy taught Shibori style clothes dying. Recently, Amy has dabbled in wood working and is also using clay to create different art. Amy was an integral part (and helped paint) both the 911 Mural at the Rio Vista Fire Department and the mural on 2nd Street on the Books Rio V building. Check out the utility box at Main and Front Street by the old Haps Bait shop and you will see another Amy creation. Amy isn't at the Gallery, as often now that she retired her position, she still shows her art and volunteers. She is pursuing her art and volunteers for Habitat for Humanity and at the Veteran's home in Yountville.

Visit with Amy and view her various genres of art on March 16 from 3 to 5 pm.



Garen Patterson is the April artist of the month

Garen Patterson is the featured artist in April. Garen's earliest memory of drawing is when he was 6 years old. While attending public school in Menlo Park, his teacher left the room. Garen proceeded to "teach the class", the penalty was getting kicked out of the school. While his parents made decisions about where he should go to school, Garen drew. The decision was made for Garen to go to Peninsula School where children learn in a nurturing environment that encompasses the whole child, and social justice in a progressive learning atmosphere. Garen later attended Woodside High School and then was an art student at California College of Art in Oakland graduating with a Bachelors in Fine Arts. Continuing his education, he also received a Master's in Early Childhood Education from Sonoma State.



Sonoma is where Garen landed and started Patterson Painting and Decorating. A business that he built and worked for 50 years. Just recently he sold the business and left Sonoma where he was very active in the community. However, Sonoma got to be too big and too commercial and he yearned for the small-town life. He found it when he moved to Rio Vista with his wife Dianne.

Soon after Garen's mother passed away, just shy of her 100th birthday, Garen went for a walk in Rio Vista. He looked around and grabbed his phone to take pictures. He draws or paints from the photographs and brings them to life, interpreting what he sees in the photos. They are distinctly his style. Garen is well known on Facebook's Delta News page where he shares his drawings. He wasn't sure about sharing on Facebook, he's not a technology type guy. However, his wife showed him how and he started sharing his drawings titled "Where am I?." Garen enjoys getting feedback from the Facebook community as it is almost instantaneous.



When asked what it is about art that moves him Garen responded that "It is a spiritual connection, I've been wired that way from birth."

The reception for Garen will be held on April 20 th , from 3-5pm.



Rescuing Wildlife in the Suisun Marsh

STORY BY JAN VICK & PHOTOS BY SUISUN WILDLIFE CENTER

In the Bird of Prey Flight Aviary, the Golden Eagle stretches his wings and flies from one side of the aviary to the other. He is ready for release to join his mate after his rehabilitation at the Suisun Wildlife Center. In another enclosure a baby raccoon climbs on the wire enclosure, waiting for the food that will make him strong enough to be released to live his life free. Spread across the large area behind the main buildings, several birds and animals spend their time recovering from injuries or waiting to be old enough to be released into the wild. There are also several non-releasable birds and animals that are used to educate school children and the public about the birds and animals in the area.



Dedicated to the rescue, care and release of injured and orphaned wildlife, the Suisun Marsh Natural History Association (SMNHA) operates the Sandra Emanuelson DMV Memorial Wildlife Center in Suisun City. Also known as the Suisun Wildlife Center, it was incorporated in 1977 after Earth Day, and has released over 18,000 wild birds and animals back to the wild. The Wildlife Center began as a grassroots volunteer organization and continues today with only two paid staff members who receive half time wages, and a large number of volunteers. Monique Ligouri is the Executive Director and began as a volunteer as the Environmental Education Director in 1983. Wendy Bellow also began as a volunteer and is now the Wildlife Care Director. The Center depends on its volunteers to provide both the care and feeding of the wild residents and the animals who are part of the educational programs. The Center received the John Muir Conservation award in 2016 During the 2017 earth Day celebration at the John Muir Historic Site in Martinez.



The Center is generally open 364 days a year to the public to receive wildlife for care and allow visitors to see the non-releasable birds and animals as part of their educational programs. Unfortunately, the Center has been closed for several years initially



due to COVID, then to a wildfire in 2020 that destroyed most of the buildings and killed several of the non-releasable animals and birds used in their education programs in schools and at the center. They lost Guinevere and Griffin—two great horned Owls used for their educational programs, as well as Milo, a well-known education Screech Owl and Zuma, a Golden Eagle. Due to many

donations, and hard work by the volunteer crew, the Center facilities have been rehabilitated. Currently, they are open on a very limited basis due to the avian flu epidemic. They are planning for a soft opening on January weekends, depending on restrictions for avian flu protection.



The SMNHA includes a lobby, exam room, animal wards for predators, songbirds, small mammals, and isolation, as well as an environmental education room. In addition to the basic facilities, there are several animal care enclosures, a

flight aviary for pre-release of birds of prey, as well as enclosures for both animals and birds in rehab and some who cannot be released. All of the extensive facilities were funded in part by funds from businesses such as Shell Oil Refinery in Martinez, Aggreko, LLC, and volunteers from businesses such as Home Depot, Travis Air Force Base and Shell Oil as well as the center's large number of dedicated volunteers. The Suisun Wildlife Center is located at 1171 Kellogg Street in Suisun City, at the northern edge of the marsh. Their phone is (707) 429-4295 for information regarding openings and programs.



Event Calendar 2024

JANUARY



January 13: RioVision Bingo – 5 to 8pm at the Veterans Memorial Building, St. Francis St. Bingo fun supporting RioVision projects and programs. Win Bingo prizes, raffle basket or 50/50 raffle. Contact info@rioivision.net for information.

January 27: Clothing Exchange – St. Joseph's Hall, 10am – 2pm. Bring your child's outgrown clothing to the semi-annual Children's Clothing Exchange sponsored by friends of St. Bridgid's Episcopal Church, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Joseph's, and Walnut Grove Community Church to exchange for free, usable garments. Please, children's clothing only! For more info, contact Wendy Ross at (509) 961-3198 or daveandwendyross@gmail.com.

FEBRUARY

February 3: Rio Vista Foundation will host a Soup Lunch at noon at the Senior Center. They will be featuring at least four soups for sampling, followed by a full bowl of your favorite selection followed by a dessert. There will also be a raffle of desserts. See article about Rio Vista Foundation on page 14.



MARCH

March 15: Daub'n for Donations – Rio Vista Care. A fun day of Bingo benefits Rio Vista CARE. Win Bingo prizes or a 50/50 raffle! Purchase tickets at the Rio Vista CARE building at 628 Montezuma Street or call Cindy Bradford at (707) 374-5243 for more info, including date and location.



APRIL



April 13: Mad Hatters Tea Party. Come on down the rabbit hole for the annual Mad Hatter's Tea Party at the Rio Vista Museum starting at 11:30am! Do not miss out on this fun event that includes raffle prizes, photo booth, games, and delicious food. Tickets are limited, so act fast! Contact Renee Tingey at (707) 374-2455 or buy tickets at Rio Vista Muffler. If you have any questions, please contact Nora Crane at (707) 334-6191

April 27: Riverfront Arts Festival – Be amazed by creative artists and crafters in a unique and new event in downtown Rio Vista. See the article on page 13.

ONGOING EVENTS

- Self-Guided Walking Tour Rio Vista Museum, 16 N Front St. Any time — at your convenience This booklet is available at the Rio Vista Museum. Take a self-guided Street-by-street walking tour of a selection of Rio Vista's historic homes. This booklet contains an easy-to-follow guide showing the locations of the historic homes as well as a brief history of each one.
- RioVision Community Forum at the Youth and Community Center, 45 Main St., 6:00-8:00 pm. Join RioVision on the 2nd Monday of the month for varied topics of interest for Rio Vista and the Sacramento Delta. Topics and information for each meeting are posted on social media and our website at rioivision.net For more information email info@rioivision.net or call (707) 469-3080.
- Self-Guided Art Walk – There is art to see in Rio Vista! Grab your camera and the Art Walk pamphlet (available at the RioVision Gallery, 116 Main Street) to find art in unexpected places.

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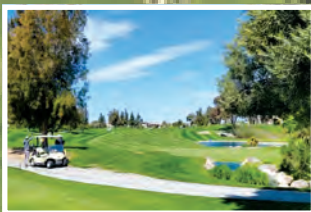
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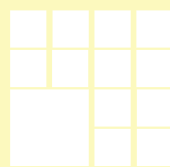
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