

MARE ISLAND SHORELINE HERITAGE PRESERVE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2ND ANNUAL MARE FAIRE CELEBRATION GEORGE C. LARSEN, PEARL HARBOR SURVIVOR WILL SPEAK OF WWII MEMORIES AT COMMEMORATION OF 65TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PORT CHICAGO MUTINY

[VALLEJO}, CA – Saturday, August 8 and Sunday, August 9, 2009 the *2nd Annual Mare Faire* will take place at the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve. The Preserve has been opened to the public by volunteers of Arc Ecology, a non-profit organization, on the second Saturday of each month since April of 2008. The Preserve is located on the U.S. Navy's oldest Naval Ammunition Depot in the Pacific dating back to its founding in 1857. This year, like the past 3 years, Preserve volunteers will offer a free public event on the second weekend of August featuring historic commemorative services, naturalist guided hikes and docent led tours of historic house grounds, the Naval Cemetery and bunkers and magazines formerly used to store munitions, displays and exhibits in the Visitor Center – a former munitions storage magazine–live music and an art show. New this year, is an audio tour featuring the voices of Preserve advocate Myrna Hayes and former resident, Lorene Palmer Seward. The audio tour accompanies the trail route and is complemented by the recent installation of 14 interpretive signposts along the 3-mile roundtrip trail route. Also new this year is the refurbished picnic grounds and two spur trails, one with a San Pablo Bay vista point on the old road to the former lighthouse and the other a paved, flat route for wheelchair use. Returning will be the popular gourd art station in the eucalyptus grove, and music by Benicia keyboardist Guy Arrostuto and friends and an art and photography show.

Saturday, August 8th at 2:30pm at the Visitors Center, Building A-167, the public will have an opportunity to meet former Naval Ammunition Depot (NAD) resident Lorene Palmer Seward who grew up before, during, and after, WWII at the National Register of Historic Places listed Ordnance Worker's housing. Now a resident of Sonoma, she lived at the NAD from 1930 to 1952. In an informal conversation with Preserve Volunteer Myrna Hayes, she will describe her vivid recollections about life at the NAD and her dreams for the future of her former Navy neighborhood.

On Sunday, August 9, 2009 at 2pm a free event at Berth 24 located just beyond the U.S. Army Reserves on Railroad Ave on Mare Island, will commemorate the 65th Anniversary of the Port Chicago Mutiny. An American flag that was flown over the U.S. Capitol by the office of Congressman George Miller will be raised and a wreath laid in the Napa River/Mare Island Strait to acknowledge the actions of 258 African American Navy sailors in Vallejo on August 9, 1944. The Mayor of Vallejo, Osby Davis will read a City Proclamation honoring the the men who participated in the Port Chicago Mutiny. George C. Larsen, a survivor of Pearl Harbor, will share his memories of visiting Port Chicago immediately after the Explosion to restore communications. He has recently self-published a book of his WWII recollections, which he will have available for sale. Reverend Diana McDaniel will represent Friends of Port Chicago, a group which works with the National Park Service to champion the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial and support Congressman Miller's legislation making the National Memorial a unit of the National Park Service with an interpretive center. While barracked in Vallejo and under the command of the Mare Island Naval Ammunition Depot, their somewhat impromptu refusal to return to work given what they had experienced as unsafe work conditions following the Port Chicago Explosion 3 weeks earlier, resulted in the integration of the U.S. Navy and many would say was the founding of the modern American civil rights movement.

Artists of all ages, professional or student, are invited to exhibit their original paintings and photographs. No pre-registration is required. In addition to the opportunity to enter three recent art or photography works for the award judged show, the weekend will include a chance to participate in a plein air "paintout" in which artists' canvases are date-stamped and they fan out throughout Mare Island to paint, returning their work for award judging Sunday afternoon. A Gourd Art Contest will be judged and awards given each day at 3pm. See attached **Call for Art** for more details.

The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve is located on the portion of Mare Island that is the original Island totaling about 900 acres as compared to the now more than 5,000 acres created by the Navy's filling of the bay. Visible from the hilltop vantage point is some of the most breathtaking views and scenery in California, including scenic vistas of 7 Bay Area counties, the Carquinez Strait, Mt. Tamalpais and Mt. Diablo. The property's 150 years of Navy history and natural wildlands make it a magnet for history buffs, birders and nature lovers and artists and photographers. The property has been off limits to the public until recently due to sensitive Navy munitions manufacturing, storage and transport and more recent environmental cleanup.

Saturday, August 8, beginning at 9am guided outings and self-guided walks and opportunities to paint and photograph, will be followed by afternoon and evening programming until 7pm. Continuing on Sunday, August 9, 9am-7pm the public will learn about the search for buried munitions as part of the Navy's environmental cleanup, future plans for an expanded regional park, the difference between a magazine and a bunker, and archeological history of the property in free guided hikes and tours led by naturalists, archeologists and historians.

Food and beverages will be available for purchase throughout both days. The event is free. Sponsors and volunteers are needed. For information and directions visit www.mareislandpreserve.org or call 707-557-9816 or 707-649-9464.

The Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve

Although planned as a park, regular access is currently limited to the Second Saturday Access Day each month, 9am-7pm (9am-5pm winter) hosted by Arc Ecology, during which the public has free access to 98 acres of the future 215 acre parkland for hiking and bicycling on the paved roadway, visiting the cemetery, picnicking and birdwatching. Visitors may view displays about the history and natural features of the parkland and an art show by members of the Benicia Plein Air Group portraying paintings in The Preserve at the future park headquarters and visitor center in a former munitions storage magazine, Building A-167.

The first parcels of the property in which the Access Day takes place, were transferred to the City of Vallejo in a grant from the California legislature through the California State Lands Commission in 2002 for public trust uses for all Californians. The remainder of the 215-acre site is still undergoing environmental cleanup by the U.S. Navy and is not open to the public except through occasional hikes led by the Sierra Club Solano Group.

Please note: Tours of The Preserve are available to any reporter or photographer covering this event. Call Myrna Hayes, 707-557-9816 or 707-249-9633 (cell) to schedule.

Directions

Online maps aren't yet accurate because they haven't found us yet. The best directions are on our website. www.mareislandpreserve.org

- From I-80 east or westbound: Exit Tennessee St., continue west to Mare Island. Follow Mare Faire signs.
- From Napa and Sonoma: Travel south on Highway 29 to Tennessee St., turn right and follow directions above.
- From Contra Costa County: Cross the Benicia-Martinez Bridge on I-680. Take I-780 west toward Benicia and Vallejo. Continue on I-780 for approximately 7 miles. Exit at I-80 east. Continue on I-80 toward Sacramento. Exit on Tennessee St. and follow directions above.
- From Marin and Sonoma: Travel east on Highway 37 to the Mare Island exit just before the Napa River Bridge. Turn right at the north entrance to Mare Island; continue to stop at G St. Turn left. Continue 2 blocks to Nimitz Ave. Turn right.
- Mare Island Directions: Continue on Nimitz Ave. to a right turn at 15th St. Turn right to Railroad Ave. Turn left. Continue to PARKING beyond the gate within the Preserve.

Hours

- Saturday, guided outings 9am-11am; 12:30-2pm; 3-7pm; self-guided walk with 14 stops, 3-mile roundtrip scenic route with Trail Guide, 9am-7pm. Bring snacks. Music by Guy Arrostituto and friends 12noon-4pm. Exhibits and presentations: 9am-7pm. Food for purchase: 9am-5pm. Gift basket raffle, silent auction. All ages. Accessible. Pedestrian and bicycle only.
- Sunday, guided outings 9am-11am; 12:30-2pm; 3-7pm. Exhibits and presentations: 9am-7pm. Food for purchase: 9am-5pm. Gift basket raffle, silent auction. All ages. Accessible. Pedestrian only. Shuttle available for those with mobility challenges for commemoration service.

The complete Schedule will be available online at www.mareislandpreserve.org by August 1.

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