



# AMIA

THE ANDERSON MARSH INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION  
*Promoting education & interpretive activities at  
Anderson Marsh State Historic Park*

PO BOX 672, LOWER LAKE, CA 95457 (707) 995-2658 WWW.ANDERSONMARSH.ORG SUMMER/FALL 2021



The entrance meadow at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park is being restored through a partnership with the Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association and the State Department of Parks and Recreation.

## **AMIA partners with State Parks to restore the entrance meadow at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park**

**By Henry Bornstein**

With the help of a Wildfire Resiliency and Prevention grant from California State Parks Foundation, AMIA is partnering with the Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) to restore and rehabilitate the entrance meadow that first greets visitors to Anderson Marsh State Historic Park. In 2016, the meadow was burned as the Clayton fire spread into the park.

The project will help create a defensible space around the park's historic buildings through the

clearing of non-native species and overgrowth and the replanting of native grasses, shrubs, and trees. At the conclusion of the project, the entrance meadow will be restored to a more natural state and a native plant demonstration area will be created where visitors can compare the treated native entrance meadow to the adjacent untreated areas, and learn about the advantages of native plants in the control of wildfires.

Despite challenges presented by windy condi-

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# President's Message

By Roberta Lyons

Last winter we were deep in the throes of the Covid-19 pandemic and getting over the dreadful smoke from the LNU complex fires. Because of



nearby fires, the Ranch House was “evacuated” of the historical items that reside there along with all of the interpretive objects that AMIA members often use during house tours to explain what life was like in Lake County during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

We expressed hope that work on the foundation of the home and rodent control could proceed and that maybe, just maybe, everything could be moved back in and we would be allowed to present our annual “Christmas at the Ranch” event.

Rodent control in and around the house has proceeded and it looks like the mouse problem is getting solved. However, because of the current “surge” in Covid infections, State Parks has not yet come to a decision about when to re-open indoor activities at the park. Also, it remains unclear when the furniture and other historical items will be returned to the ranch house and tours resumed. The timing on the hoped for “shoring up” of the foundation and other repairs also remains unclear as these State Park projects get put on a funding list and can remain there for years. The hope is that the items can be returned, and events resumed even if the structural work is delayed. There is nothing that presents a hazard to the public that needs to be resolved, but foundation work needs to be done that over time will help preserve the building.

Sadly, with things is such a flux at this time, we

still cannot announce whether there will be a Christmas at the Ranch event or if there will be a First Day Hike on New Year’s Day. Because of the number of people who attend this hike, usually over 100, the State is hesitant to make a decision now about holding it. The First Day Hike at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park has been the most well-attended of all of the State Parks in California.

All is not doom and gloom, however, even though it does feel that way sometimes. Some exciting work is being done at the park by the State. The historic back shed area of the South Barn has been extensively repaired and the South Barn itself, where many interpretive items are stored and interesting field programs are held, has been “bat proofed” so that volunteers no longer have to clean up the bat droppings every time they uncover the displays.

Also, AMIA is partnering with State Parks on a wonderful project to restore the entrance meadow to the park to a more natural state that will help make the park more resilient to wildfire (see front page article).

Finally, for the first time, we now have a State Park Interpreter assigned to take over organizing and leading walks, school field trips and other public events at the park, freeing up volunteers from this job that they have carried out for the last 12 years without this support from State Parks.

So, I guess the takeaway is that the situation with AMIA and Anderson Marsh State Historic Park is the same as the rest of the world these days – it is almost impossible to predict what will happen next, but through the dedicated work of individuals (both in AMIA and State Parks), we are confident that someday (soon?), we will all be getting together at the park to enjoy everything this special place has to offer.

# Board welcomes new member: Anne Riggs

The Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association (AMIA) is pleased to welcome Anne Riggs to the board.

Anne grew up in Lake County and attended Lower Lake area schools. She received her



Bachelor of Architecture degree from Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, PA. She lived in Pittsburgh for a total of seven years before returning to California where she first lived in Los Angeles. She moved to San Francisco after

**Anne Riggs** taking a job with the architectural firm of David Baker Architects and then back to Lake County where she is able to work remotely.

Her dad, Robert Riggs, was a long-time board member of AMIA (now retired from the board) and according to Anne “sparked” her interest in the organization. But it wasn’t just her dad “roping her into” the position; Anne has long had an interest in historical preservation and the historical aspects of small, rural communities.

When she was in Pittsburgh, she worked for the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation and was Main Street Manager on several projects for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. She worked in small, rural Pennsylvania towns that received funding through a Main Street Program to improve their central down-

towns. She provided assistance to shop owners, residents, and organizations on how to make storefronts more consistent with main street values and increase the economic activity in the central downtown areas. She also worked on events to increase tourism in many of these historical downtowns.

The company she works for now is involved with affordable multi-family housing projects, including homes for formerly unsheltered individuals.

She moved back to Lake County about a year ago because she feels a connection to Clear Lake and to the community. The affordable price of housing was also a draw.

Anne has memories of her dad working with AMIA on the Bluegrass Festivals of the past that were held at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park. But mainly, she is interested in the park for its natural and cultural values. “I’m passionate about local ecology, cultural resources and equity. Anderson Marsh State Historic Park is an amazing site with incredible natural and cultural significance. It’s great to have a chance to be part of it,” she commented.

Along with other roles she will be working on building membership in the association and how to better communicate AMIA’s mission to a wider variety of people and generations. The AMIA board is thrilled to have Anne as a new member and as part of our team.

## ANDERSON MARSH NEWS

is published by the  
Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association  
Board of Directors

**Roberta Lyons** - President

**Don Coffin** - Vice President

**Nicola Selph** - Treasurer

**Gae Henry** - Secretary

**Gordon Haggitt**

**Henry Bornstein** - Co-membership chair

**Anne Riggs** - Co-membership chair

**Robert Riggs** - Emeritus



Newsletter Layout - Robin Winniford

# Let's look at the importance of membership in the age of Covid and why supporting AMIA matters

By Henry Bornstein, Co-membership chair



Henry Bornstein

Well, I have to admit that I still can't believe it is late in 2021 and we're still talking about the pandemic and we still don't know when things will "open up" at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park. We do know that it is not likely that we are going to have

"inside" tours or events any time in the near future. The fate of Christmas at the Ranch is unclear, but I certainly wouldn't want to bet the farm on it happening this year. We are about to start offering monthly nature walks, but the January 1<sup>st</sup> First Day Hike is very questionable due to the large crowd that always attends. We'll just have to wait and see how things develop.

Good things, however, are happening at the park. You can read in this Newsletter about the repairs to the South Barn and the rehabilitation of the entrance meadow to the park, which was burned over in the 2016 Clayton fire. We also have a new State Parks Interpreter who is beginning to offer programs and doing program development in anticipation of things further opening to us eventually.

How does AMIA fit into this?

At AMIA, we believe it's important for people to understand and experience what Anderson Marsh State Historic Park has to offer. While COVID has put field trips and docent led hikes on hold, we raise funds for park staff and park improvements to ensure that as many people as possible can personally experience the rich resources found in the park. Because when people understand what they have they want to protect it for future generations.

AMIA has been hard at work assisting State Parks in the projects mentioned above and others, such as the recent rebuilding and upgrading of the Cache Creek Nature Trail boardwalk and the purchase of audiovisual equipment for our new interpreter so he can work remotely with public schools until in person events are possible.

So, why does this article stress membership?

Well, AMIA needs funds to do this work and unfortunately, funds have been in short supply during the pandemic for many people, including many of our donors and members. So, despite the generosity of so many people, we are seeing a significant decrease in our income.

So if you are not yet a member of AMIA, please consider joining using the Membership Application at the end of this newsletter, or visiting [www.andersonmarsh.org](http://www.andersonmarsh.org) and using the [How to Support AMIA](#) link.

If you are already a member, it may be time for you to renew. (If you are not sure when you last made a membership donation and want to know, you can email me at [info@andersonmarsh.org](mailto:info@andersonmarsh.org) and I will let you know.)

To keep things simple, however, and to make it easy for everyone who wishes to support AMIA to do so, **we are asking everyone who wants to support AMIA to send us a membership donation now. Everyone who joins now will be a member for 2022, whether or not they have already made a 2021 donation.**

AMIA will be here helping to support our park when lean times come, as they always do. Please help us keep Anderson Marsh State Historic Park open and thriving by making a membership donation of any amount now.



AMIA is very pleased that Gae Henry has had one of her nature photographs included in an important recently-published field guide. Gae has served AMIA as secretary of the Board for over 14 years and often kayaks into Anderson Marsh from her home in Highlands Harbor. The Peterson Field Guide to North American Bird Nests, published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, contains this photo of a mixed nesting colony of Western and Clark's Grebes. The photograph is included on page 90 of the field guide, and was taken by Gae in 2017 in Anderson Marsh.

# Iconic Anderson Ranch South Barn receives crucially-needed repairs and upgrades

**By Henry Bornstein**

If you've visited Anderson Marsh State Historic Park, you have undoubtedly noticed the building next to the information kiosk in the parking area. This is the South Barn, one of two historic barns in the park. Although originally built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the barn collapsed during the "great snowstorm of 1947" and was rebuilt in 1949 using much of the existing lumber from the collapsed building.

The "lean to" shed on the west side of the barn was the only part of the original 19<sup>th</sup> century structure that survived the building's collapse. This historic structure has been deteriorating for years and was in danger of collapse. AMIA is happy to report that thanks to the dedication of Northern Buttes Superintendent Matt Teague and his hard-working staff, this historic shed has been saved by a State Parks project that stabilized the building and substantially rebuilt the shed, including new foundation work.

The work was done with an eye of preserving the historic look of the building, even to the extent of "aging" the siding using Matt Teague's secret "fine steel wool and white vinegar" method. It looks great and no longer smells like pickles.

Not content with preserving the historic shed, Matt and his crew also gave AMIA and visitors to the park a wonderful present – the entire South Barn has been extensively refurbished and the bats have been excluded. For the past 10 years, AMIA has been gradually working on converting the South Barn into an interpretive center containing historic exhibits that have been used during school field trips visiting the park. The main obstacle to using the barn on tours has been the many ways that bats and squirrels could get into the building, requiring all exhibits to be covered or stored away after each use and extensive cleaning of the interior of the building between tours.

As Harry Potter would say, "mischief managed." Wooden battens have been attached to cover the spaces between siding boards, and screen-covered wooden blocks and netting have been used to cover the holes in the roof and other areas to prevent bat roosts.

The building looks great and can now be cleaned inside without a fear of immediate "contributions" from the local fauna. Big thanks to Matt Teague, District Archeologist Brian Walsh (who coordinated the work on-site) and the rest of the hard-working State Parks staff.

***"If you received this newsletter through the US mail, it may be because we do not have your email address. If you would like to receive the newsletter via email, along with other news about happenings at the Park, please email us at [info@andersonmarsh.org](mailto:info@andersonmarsh.org)."***



**South barn shed shown undergoing repairs. The barn shed is the only part of the building that survived the great snowstorm of 1947.**



**Repairs, including new foundation work, have stabilized the shed, keeping it from collapse.**



Kirk Thomas Olsen meets with AMIA members at the north barn.

# Introducing Kirk Thomas Olsen, our new State Parks Interpreter



**Kirk Thomas Olsen**

**By Henry Bornstein**

AMIA members recently had an opportunity to meet with our new State Parks Interpreter, Kirk Thomas Olsen. Kirk provided an update on the new guided walks and other events he will be leading at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park and

answered questions posed by those attending.

The hiring of an Interpreter to design interpre-

tive and education events and tours to be held at the two Lake County state parks will provide a wonderful addition to the visitor experiences offered at our park.

Kirk was born and raised in Ventura, California, in an area north of town called the Rincon. His family lived right on the ocean, with chaparral-covered hills on the other side of the highway. Kirk says that his appreciation for nature and the natural world began with living so close to the Pacific Ocean, seeing the jackrabbits and red-tailed hawks in the off-shore hills and the many kinds of marine life on the beach and in tide-

*(Continued on page 9)*



# Welcome new AMIA Treasurer, Nicola Selph



**Nicola Selph**

Nicola Selph has joined the Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association's board of directors as treasurer. We are pleased to welcome her to this important position and appreciate her willingness to help out with the many duties involved with operating a non-profit.

Nicola is also treasurer for the Redbud Audubon Society, so her skills are certainly sought after!

She and her husband, Ventura Negrete, moved to Lake County in 2012 where they live in Soda Bay. She retired early from E&J Gallo in Modesto, where she worked in the Information Technology Department. She joined the Redbud Audubon Society board as treasurer in 2013. Before moving to Lake County, she was treasurer for the Golden Gate Audubon Society.

Nicola was born in San Francisco and grew up in the Bay Area. She graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in biochemistry. She went to graduate school at Michigan State University, where she took up birding as a hobby. Her interest and love of nature and birds has led to her involvement in our local conservation organizations. She has long been a volunteer for the Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association, leading walks, attending work parties and doing other volunteer activities. She loves kayaking, so Anderson Marsh State Historic Park fits well into that agenda too. Welcome Nicola!

## Introducing Kirk Thomas Olsen

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pools. He says that he would probably have become a marine biologist except for the challenge of being terrible at any kind of math beyond algebra. He attended the only Junior College in the western United States that trained zookeepers, but left after being bitten by a lemur!

Internships led to his job with California State Parks. Kirk has worked as a Park Aide and Park Interpretive Specialist at Donner State Park, Hearst-San Simeon State Park, Fort Ross State Historic Park, Salt Point State Park and Plumas-

Eureka State Park. He has also been a guide at Hearst Castle and at Vikingsholm at Emerald Bay State Park. He has an A.S. in Wildlife Biology from Feather River College and a B.A. in Environmental Education from Prescott College in Arizona.

Kirk worked for six years to become a permanent state park employee and says that he is thrilled to have this wonderful opportunity to provide interpretation and education to park visitors at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park.

# AMIA partners with State Parks to restore the entrance meadow at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park

(Continued from page 1)

tions, the project got off to a successful start in late February and early March, when the initial prescribed burns were carried out before the burn season came to an end. The burns were performed on the area surrounding the Anderson Ranch House and Barn complex, including the 3.2-acre entrance meadow, and produced a beneficial fire that removed most of the thatch and dead weedy material left by previous growth of invasive nonnative plants, including Yellow Starthistle and Common Teasel.

Later in the spring, plant stalks and skeletons remaining after the burn were removed by hand by State Parks staff and herbicide was spot-applied to emerging teasel rosettes and star thistle sprouts in the 3.2-acre entrance meadow.

With the arrival of the dry, hot summer weath-

er, the work that already has been performed will act to reduce the risk of wildfire damage to the historic Anderson Ranch buildings. Further work on the project will have to await the fall and the first rain that will make planting of the native grass seeds possible. Planting of the native shrubs and trees will occur after sufficient rainfall in the fall and winter.

When the project is completed, it will create a beautiful entrance to the park and provide an excellent opportunity to educate park visitors about the benefits of native plants in reducing the risk of wildfire. AMIA thanks California State Parks Foundation for its support that has allowed AMIA to once again work with State Parks on a project that will further enhance visitor experiences at Anderson Marsh State Historic Park.

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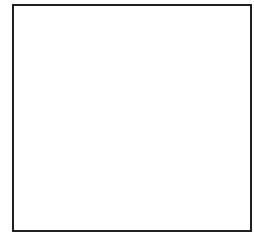


**Prescribed burns last February and March will allow planting of native species this fall and winter after sufficient rainfall.**



# ANDERSON MARSH INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

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## ANDERSON MARSH INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION

*Dedicated to the preservation of all facets of the park. New members are always welcome! Come Join the Fun!*

### 2022 AMIA Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interests (circle all that apply): History Nature Education Archaeology

**Yes, I would like to know about volunteer opportunities**

AMIA members receive the satisfaction that comes from supporting a community treasure and working to preserve it for future generations. Also included in membership are two (2) newsletters a year and special invitations to attend events held at the park.

#### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES:

##### Annual

Amount	Membership Level	Member Benefits
<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	Educator/Student	Newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	Individual	Newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/> \$35	Family	Newsletter
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50	Supporter, Individual	Newsletter and Newsletter Mention
<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	Sustainer, Individual	Newsletter, Newsletter Mention, Donor Event and DVD of "A Walk Through Time" film
<input type="checkbox"/> \$250	Patron, Individual	Sustainer benefits + special recognition at event
<input type="checkbox"/> \$100	<b>Supporter, Business</b>	Newsletter, Donor Event, Newsletter Mention, Website Link on AMIA site
<input type="checkbox"/> \$250	<b>Sustainer, Business</b>	Business supporter benefits +DVD of AMSHP film

Please send check and completed application to

### AMIA

**P.O. Box 672  
Lower Lake, CA 95457**

Or join online by  
visiting us at

[www.andersonmarsh.org](http://www.andersonmarsh.org)

For more info call AMIA  
at 707-995-2658