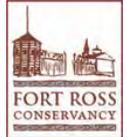


Fort Ross & Salt Point Parks News



November 2015

This issue features:

FRC Update
Sign-up as a Member!
Black Friday
December Potluck
FRC Bookshop
Remembering John
Sperry

Fort Ross is open
Fri-Sat-Sun-Mon
10am-4:30pm

The Call House Museum and
Garden is open first weekend of
each month from 1 to 4 PM.
Please visit our website for more
information on the park hours.

Fort Ross Conservancy
501c3 / California Cooperating
Association
www.fortross.org
707-847-3437
info@fortross.org
Tours in English & Russian
Information on special events
Visitor Center and sales

California State Parks
Interpreters at Fort Ross
Fort Ross State Historic Park
www.fortrossstatepark.org
ELP, ELDP, & School Groups
Junior Ranger & Boy Scout
programs
Talks at the fort compound
707-847-4777

Dear friends of Fort Ross,

It has been five years since Fort Ross was rumored to be on the closure list, and what an amazing five years it's been! We've celebrated our bicentennial in fine form, grown to love our new windmill, orchestrated dozens of events each year to encourage visitation, thrown more than a few volunteer work days at both Fort Ross and Salt Point, and with the help of many new friends, put our parks on the world map. Fort Ross is beloved by Russians, Americans, Russian Americans, the Kashia and Alaska Natives, our Ranchera friends, and of course our pomology and pinniped advocates. Truly something for everyone!

We have learned a few things along the way, and our priorities are clear: FRC is most devoted to creating meaningful and widely accessible programs that bring young people to our park, and building the infrastructure to allow that to happen.

Our goal in the new year is to grow our [Marine Ecology Program](#). This program for middle and high school students introduces marine ecology and ocean stewardship, honoring the cultural history of Fort Ross while embracing the pristine natural beauty of our coastline - now protected as part of the Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary.

FRC continues to support Fort Ross and Salt Point parks by funding interpreters and working hard to provide State Parks with the support it needs to keep our parks open and accessible.

Please show your support by joining or renewing your membership. And if you support our goals, please consider making an end-of-year [donation](#) to Fort Ross Conservancy. We rely solely on funding from grants, donations, and the bookshop, so without your help, we cannot continue the educational, environmental and diplomatic work that we do. We hope that you join us.

Warmest regards,

Sarah Sweedler

Recommended Websites
California State Parks Foundation
Wikipedia on Fort Ross
California State Parks
Salt Point State Park

Fort Ross Conservancy
President & CEO
sarahs@fortross.org



Register or Update Your Email
Address

Contact Us

Fort Ross Conservancy
Fort Ross State Historic Park
19005 Coast Highway One
Jenner, CA 95450

info@fortross.org
707-847-3437

Fort Ross Website

Sign up for FRC Membership Now!

New Members: Get a two-year membership for the price of one!



Please show your support by joining or renewing your membership. Making a donation is very easy, simply click on this [DONATE](#) link to make a generous end-of-year donation to Fort Ross Conservancy. We rely solely on funding from grants, donations, the bookshop, and support from people like yourself. Thank you!.



For a \$100 donation you can join a specialized tour focusing on the historic fort compound and windmill, guided by Fort Ross Conservancy's bilingual Programs Manager Hank Birnbaum. April 24th, 2016.

A \$200 donation entitles you to a lovely Russian-style picnic for two in the historic orchard with local expert Susan Rudy or a ranch-era outdoor picnic and tour of the Call House, with local expert docents. April 24th, 2016.



For a \$100 donation you can join State Parks interpreter Susanna Barlow for an exceptionally low tide foray. Discover the exquisite intertidal creatures of Salt Point's Gerstle Cove. March 6th, 2016.

For a \$500 donation you will receive a copy of the newly-released two volume Russian California 1806-1860, a History in Documents (retail value \$184), autographed by editor and Russian American scholar James R Gibson.



In addition to membership gifts, members receive our monthly Enews, once a year hardcopy newsletter, and a 10% discount at our bookshop and online store.

[Download our membership letter here.](#) Please let us know if you have any questions. Send an Email to info@fortross.org or call 707-847-3437.

BLACK FRIDAY AT OUR PARKS



"Above the garden, at a spot in the forest where wood used to be burned to make charcoal, there is a redwood tree that has attracted a lot of attention. I carefully measured its circumference and found it to be 33 English feet. It follows that the tree's diameter is 11 feet."

-- The Khlebnikov Archive, Unpublished Journal (1800-1837)

Thanks to Save the Redwood League, many parks are free on Black Friday, November 27th. What a great idea -skip the retail therapy by giving nature therapy a try! [Check online to get a free pass](#) before you go.



In this spirit, FRC's Hank Birnbaum wants to show off Fort Ross' redwoods by offering a special Redwood-centric walk and talk this Friday. Meet at Fort Ross Visitor Center at 1:00pm, then carpool to redwoods (Spyra Memorial Grove), where walk/talk will begin at 1:15pm.



HOLIDAY PARTY and COMMUNITY POTLUCK Fort Ross Auditorium - 12:30PM



Mark your calendars for our end-of-year celebration as we bring friends and family together to celebrate the holiday season and make plans for the new year. In the morning we have our final Fort Ross Conservancy board of directors meeting of 2015, which is open to the public.

Lunch starts at 12:30 -- we'll provide some hearty protein but bring something to share. Questions? Email info@fortross.org



FORT ROSS BOOKSHOP



The holiday spirit has definitely arrived at the Fort Ross Bookshop. Our collection of natural history books alone makes this a worthy destination, and we've got holiday ornaments, seasonal cards, and gifts for the nature lovers on your shopping list. Big thanks to FRC's Sondra Hunter and her artistic eye for making this Sonoma coast's best shopping destination!

FRC bookshop at the Visitor Center is open on Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays. In addition we are open December 22nd, 23rd, 24th and from December 26th to 31st. We will be closed on Thanksgiving & Christmas Day.



REMEMBERING JOHN SPERRY



Our John Sperry died in early July, just 93 years old and still planning his next project. We never knew what it would involve: a new hiking trail, a kayak outing, climbing a mountain peak, or visiting a new part of the West, usually with Jodi, his wife of many years. Maybe the best label for him would be "The Enthusiast". His sparkling eyes and eternal curiosity were embodied in him as in no other I have known. It is a gross understatement to say that he will be missed, at Fort Ross and Salt Point and at the Fort Ross elementary school, where he made himself useful and often indispensable.



The Sperrys came to our coast in 1988 and promptly built (literally) a comfortable home nestled in the redwoods. Then they jumped into the community. Jodi taught primary school for several years in Pt. Arena. John zeroed in on Fort Ross. In the 1990s, he and I were corralled by Lyn Kalani into editing the historical booklet *Fort Ross*, still a best seller today - and a great learning experience for all of us. This was the first time I saw John in action, but there would be many more. When the Call House began to be renovated, John was there: He and Paul Chappell crawled under and above the rooms, inspecting underpinnings and structure. Who knew or remembers? When the House later had any slight mechanical or electrical problem, John offered to fix it, and did, cheerfully; you could depend on it.



Any Fort Ross program involving boats, particularly kayaks and especially the Russian baidarkas, was sure to include John, usually as program manager as well as a participant. He even set up a baidarka-building workshop in our barn for a few eager paddlers; John was one of the few who was able to manage, when finished, these very delicate kayaks. (John's own baidarka rests at the moment on a rack in our barn.) His interest in Alaska was longstanding; he had taught school on King Island in the Bering Sea long before we knew him. John read widely (and shared) Alaskan books on history and exploration, and at Fort Ross promoted programs which included Alaska natives and scholars, with his usual enthusiasm - and follow through.



John's community involvement extended as well to the public Fort Ross School, always eager for scientific and mathematical volunteers. His former students still talk about his influence on them: especially his careful exposition of the mysteries of algebra and higher math. (Fort Ross Conservancy board member Tim Kelly recently wrote on his blog a well-deserved tribute to his former mentor, telling how John had changed his life.) John's degrees and interests were in engineering and physics; (he and three other local science aficionados, Bob, Jerry, and Frank, had a lively discussion group, the Jabberwocks. But his interest in the natural world was also great: I saw him observe - more than once - the metamorphosis of Monarch butterflies and a group of *Cecropia* moths. And he enjoyed making careful drawings of small creatures that interested him.



John's last Fort Ross project involved its new historical replica Russian windmill. He and master woodworker Chris Feddersohn have spent many hours fine-tuning this exciting new feature at the Fort. Early on, John improved the windmill's four heavy stabilizing poles with a more efficient rope and pulley system; recently they secured the mill's main axle with a metal cap to keep it from jumping out of its designated path. This spring, John designed and helped build a big, 36" wooden wheel to help ease the turning of the windmill's blades into the wind. The last thing he did was to buy and put together special jute ropes, finished with fine shipwright's knots and wooden fasteners for the new pulley system. These he stowed away, and showed Chris where they were kept. And then he left us.



Bon voyage, John.

-Lynn Rudy, FRC Volunteer, and author of *The Old Salt Point Township*
