Dear friends of Fort Ross,

Let us begin with good news: Fort Ross State Historic Park will continue to be open seven days a week through November 2nd. (After November 2nd we will be open Friday through Monday, closed Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays.) Being open full time in August, September and October has been such a refreshing change from the past four years and we are very grateful to State Parks for increasing our days of operation. Autumn is truly a great season to visit the coast and we'll do our best to persuade you to spend some time with us.

One event not to be missed: our October 17th Fort Ross-Seaview Harvest Festival, which is less than three weeks away. The Grand Luncheon features four of Sonoma County's best chefs and the Fort Ross-Seaview Winegrowers is pouring spectacular wines - read on to see the full four-course menu and wine pairing, or consider just joining us in the Grand Wine Tasting tent. Both the food and wine tents are set up in high style on a bluff with dramatic views of the Pacific Ocean. We'll also have plenty of family-friendly entertainment, including a horse and buggy ride, pumpkin carving and crafts, roaming musicians such as the glorious Kitka ensemble, and old-world crafts and song with Russian House Kedry. Tickets for the Grand Luncheon are selling fast and close on October 12th so act fast! See our website for details.

In other news, FRC Treasurer Jan Phelps and I just returned from a two week, three city trip to Russia. We traveled to Pskov and Izborsk on the Estonian border as part of a US Embassy Peer to Peer grant, where we are now partnering with an open air fortress and historical museum. In St Petersburg we met with the US Consulate and Kunstkamera museum staff to discuss the digitization and cataloging of the Native California collection. We then finished our trip in Moscow, meeting with friends, academics, and sponsors. It was a busy and successful trip that will enable us to forge ahead on various projects well into the new year.

Closer to home I must admit that it's been a rough year for all of us at Fort Ross. As I reported in our last newsletter, District Superintendent Liz Burko died in a terrible driving accident. We've also lost two community members, beloved John Sperry and Barbara Black, both of whom gave so much to the Fort Ross community over many decades. They both lived long and admirable lives but we miss them, and we are reminded of their absence daily. I'm grateful that friend and local community historian Lynn Rudy has written tributes to remember them both by, the first of which we will published in this newsletter.

Wishing you all a lovely fall season, and warmest regards from all of us at Fort Ross,
FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW HARVEST & GRAND LUNCHEON
October 17th, 2015
10:00 am - 5:00 pm

Harvest is the time to enjoy autumn's fresh air with friends and family, acknowledging all that the seasons provide us. Harvest Festival starts out with a morning of gentle apple picking in the historic orchard, where we'll harvest fruit while enjoying the Eastern European harmonies of Kitka Women's Ensemble and Russian House Kedry. The celebration then moves to the historic Fort Ross compound where we'll enjoy the old-world charm of the 19th century Russian settlement. Harvest Festival runs from 10am to 5pm.

FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW WINEGROWERS · SONOMA COUNTY
2015 WINE FESTIVAL

Grand Wine Tasting (12pm-4pm, $40 per person):
Presenting a remarkable selection of wines grown in the FORT ROSS-SEAVIEW VITICULTURAL AREA that consists of the steep ridge top vineyards that overlook the Pacific Ocean and produce wines of structure, balance and finesse. The Grand Tasting features local grape growers and winemakers, and a chance to meet and greet the people behind the wines. Includes cheese sampling with Omar Mueller of Freestone Artisan Cheese and Sonoma County cheesemakers.

Wineries pouring at the Grand Wine Tasting Tent include:

- Flowers Vineyard and Winery
- Fort Ross Vineyard
- Kutch wines
- Martinelli Winery
- Precious Mountain Vineyard/William Seylem Winery
- Raen Winery
- Tin Barn Vineyards
- Wayfarer
- Wild Hog Vineyard

Grand Luncheon (1pm-3pm, $125 per person):
Includes a four-course meal of seasonal fare expertly paired with wines from the area, prepared by renowned local chefs and served on a marine terrace overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Includes entrance to Grand Tasting and Fort Ross Harvest Festival activities. Grand Luncheon tickets are available by advance purchase only and will sell out.

Grand Luncheon Menu
First course prepared by Barbara Hom
Trio of Corn: Chilled Soup of Corn Essence, Shellfish Oil
Corn and Crab Salad, Cherry Tomatoes, Arugula, Cilantro Lime Dressing, Chive Oil
Corn and Cheese Tuille
Wine pairing: Flowers Camp Meeting Ridge Estate Chardonnay 2013

Second course prepared by Andrew and Liya Truong, Michelin star chefs at Terrapin Creek Cafe
Marinated Black Cod served with sunchoke and potato puree, roasted mushrooms and celery
Wine pairing: Wild Hog Estate Pinot Noir 2013 and Fort Ross Pinot Noir Sea Slopes 2013

Third course prepared by Michele Anna Jordan
Grilled Sonoma County butterflied leg of lamb with extra-virgin olive oil, fresh garlic, smoked paprika, and a coriander and black pepper rub, accompanied by a warm farro salad with local Merguez, cherry tomatoes, local sheep milk yogurt, red onion, Italian parsley, smoked paprika and preserved lemon
Wine pairing: Piazza Del Dotto Pinot Noir 2013 and Wild Hog Estate Zinfandel 2012

Dessert prepared by Jamil Pedan, Applewood Inn
Buttermilk panna cotta with chardonnay poached quince, candied orange zest, puffed buckwheat, and brown butter
Wine pairing: 2013 Fort Ross Late Harvest Chardonnay

Special Event Fees Apply. For more information see our Harvest page.

Tickets are on sale at Eventbrite now! Questions? Email Fort Ross Conservancy at info@fortross.org, call us at 707/847-3437.

We thank our partners and sponsors!

Remembering Barbara Black

Barbara Charles Black, who lived almost all of her nearly 97 years on the Charles ranch above Grade Meyers, died in Santa Rosa on Sunday,
September 20. She was well known here as the daughter of two Sonoma Coast pioneer families and as an expert sheep raiser and horse breeder. Her featured published obituary centered on this side of her life, but we in the neighborhood and at Fort Ross also knew another important part of this amazing woman: as a devotee not only of the local ranching history and practices, but of its natural history, and its social, cultural, and industrial happenings as well.

Barbara's maternal family, the Calls, are mentioned but briefly in the paper's obituary, but they and Barbara, as an important Call descendant, played a big role in the history of Fort Ross, beginning with George and Mercedes Call's 1873 purchase of 2500 acres of the Muniz Rancho (including the old Russian Fort), through their management and enlargement of their holdings into the 1970s. Barbara's mother, Mary Addie (Call) Charles, the fourth Call child, born in 1872, instilled in her daughter a great love for and interest in everything concerning the Call House and Ranch. Mary Charles lived until 1957; she was a good historian, a longtime powerhouse up at the Fort Ross School, and of course a heavy influence on Barbara, who also supported the school in her time.

When FRIA, the Fort Ross Interpretive Association began, Barbara, a widow in 1974, quickly became one of its authorities on the Ranch Era. She was chairman for a while, contributed to its newsletters, wrote booklets, on the Dairy and the Fort Ross School, helped write grants, and was an active member for some years. When the movement began to renovate the Call House and Garden for visitors' tours, Barbara was invaluable for her knowledge of furnishings. She supervised important purchases, and her remembrances of her grandmother and other family in the house during her childhood were most helpful to all those who were involved with this big project. Since the house opened in 2002, she has given many old family items for display, as well as advice and rose bushes for her grandmother Mercedes's garden.

She was indeed, as her nephew Anthony suggested, the Grande Dame of the Ridge; I understood that from my mother-in-law (1950s). She had taught Barbara at Fort Ross School in 1933; they remained dear friends. Barbara's reputation was well earned; everyone knew she was strong-minded and rightly confident, but she was not arrogant. Barbara and George Black had no children of their own, and Barbara leaves no close family; her only sibling, Juanita, died in 1942. But she was always eager to talk about "old times", especially with younger folks. She was curious and was always happy when they were! Her own memory was phenomenal, even in her last years. As I worked on our local history, I found her always open to discuss a myriad of subjects, on the phone, by letter or in person. (I kept many pages of notes, and others have her on tape). If sometimes my records differed from her memories, she was always willing to change her mind, if she was convinced. And of course, it was usually she who was right, and I who thus gained much invaluable information for my books. In her 90s, when she was sure she couldn't remember some certain item after I mentioned it, she would sometimes get a memory flash, which really pleased her.

Barbara's passing leaves us with just one Call grandchild, her cousin Laurie (Carr) Horn, of Sebastopol, 97 this past July. She, too, is a special asset for those of us interested in the Ranch Era at Fort Ross. We have been especially lucky to have two fine old ladies with excellent memories and sharing ways. Barbara Black, a superlative local, will be missed by all the neighbors and everyone who has been associated with Fort Ross over the years.

--Lynn Rudy, FRC Volunteer, and author of The Old Salt Point Township
FRC's Marine Ecology Program

Fort Ross Conservancy offers a one day or overnight Marine Ecology Program for middle and high school students. Fort Ross State Historic Park, situated on a pristine stretch of Sonoma County coastline, boasts abundant marine mammals, rocky intertidal zones, sandy beaches and waters now protected in the recently expanded Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary.

Fort Ross also has significant cultural history, with its historic buildings and exhibits telling the story of 19th century seafaring and fur trading. At Fort Ross we can witness the human impact of resource exploitation and its subsequent but slow recovery. This intersection of natural and cultural history helps to teach ocean stewardship and resource management through the long lens of history.

For more information about this exciting new program, please see FRC's website or contact Sondra Hunter at sondrah@fortross.org.

Park Champions
October 10th, 9am - 2pm

Join us at Fort Ross for a Park Champions Workday
We will continue to build the fence around the garden used by the school kids, and take on various chores needed to prepare the park for upcoming Harvest Festival. All skill levels appreciated, come enjoy the day at Fort Ross. Free tent group camping for registered volunteers @ nearby Salt Point State Park for Friday and Saturday.

Kids 8+ welcome w/ legal guardian.

Sign up today!

And thank you California State Parks Foundation!

October 8th, 6:30pm
Bay Area Discovery Museum

Our friend and partner Renova Fort Ross Foundation is throwing a great party to benefit Fort Ross and you are invited!

Download the full invitation.

Get your tickets here!