

RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DID YOU KNOW?

In the San Francisco Bay Area, the flood in 1982 documented more than 18,000 landslides in the span of three days. Severe damage occurred in the hills and coastal ranges where flooding, mudslides, and debris flows destroyed homes and businesses.

In Bodega Bay, it took three days for help to arrive. The landscape changed forever. On Hwy One in the canyon south of town, mud flows sheared off the hills down to bare rock. Salmon Creek Bridge on Route One was destroyed, cutting off the people north of Bodega Bay.

Below Bodega Bay's Church, the creek was a rushing river, washing out Hwy One at the hairpin curve. The "river" created an island leaving residents stranded between Bodega Bay and Salmon Creek. The mud flow dumped three feet of mud into Porto Bodega destroying the main road connecting Bay Flat Road with Hwy One.

But Bodega Bay's strong community saw to it that the mail was delivered to stranded residents! By sheer tenacity our fearless postal workers led by Postmaster Shirley Ames, hoisted a line and pulley basket to carry the mail over the washed-out creeks.

The Flood of 1982

by Andrea Granahan



As a long-time Bodega resident I was dismayed when I could finally make my way down off my hilltop in Joy Woods on Tuesday, 21 Jan 1982 and found my town looking like a war zone. My neighbors who were flood victims wept openly as they tried to clean up the wreckage of what had once been their homes, and the entire town was concerned for the families still stranded at the ends of blocked roads. Valley Ford and Bodega Bay were just as stunned. The first post-flood day everyone just helped each other dig out.

Outside help could not get through until much later in the day when more roads had been cleared and the Red Cross came to survey needs. By that time everyone was exhausted, cold, dirty, wet and hungry and for the most part, went to bed that way.

But by Wednesday morning the rest of the world knew of the victims' plight and donations began. Hot food and sandwiches arrived from other families and restaurants in the area. Supervisor Ernie Carpenter saw to it that some recently released federal surplus cheese found its way to the stricken area. Clover Dairy sent out 40 gallons of milk. Individuals arrived bearing clothing and groceries and often stayed to help clear the way for stranded families or clean up the muddy soup that was once a charming small town.

The Red Cross set up an office of sorts in the post office lobby and began interviewing victims and issuing vouchers for emergency food, clothing and shelter needs. Fifteen families in the town of Bodega were homeless,

FROM THE ARCHIVES

some temporarily, until repairs could be made; some permanently, their homes ruined beyond reconstruction.

News spread to other communities that help was available at McCaughey Hall in Bodega and homeless people from other towns began drifting in, grateful for a hot meal and even a pair of dry socks. Many of the people in the area were so used to being self-reliant that they found it hard to accept that they could use some help. One woman who had lost everything she owned including her small flock of chickens stopped in at the town hall and when asked if she'd like something to eat responded, "Oh I thought this was for other flood victims."

"The children stayed dry but could I borrow a pair of pants until my house is dug out?" A father asked. One truckload of supplies was sent down to the battered town of Inverness, where a group of CCC workers suddenly showed up in Marshall after a full day of hard work. A distress call was sent up to the Bodega hall asking for food, and those who drove the food south stayed to help cook it.

Over the next few days on through the weekend McCaughey Hall was the center of activity. Tears mixed with camaraderie as people gathered, comforted one another, spoke of how much worse it could have been, or suddenly burst into tears as another treasured possession was suddenly remembered and acknowledged as lost. Tears were shed again when people showed up to give money. "Here's \$20 for a family with children," "Give this to someone who needs it," "How can we thank them?" Was the constant response.

Teams organized to dry out salvageable homes or cart supplies into the ranchers still inaccessible by road. One afternoon a troop of Boy Scouts showed up with shovels and were promptly set to work.

By the weekend only one family, Charles 'Sunny' Welling and his wife Beverly were still digging out from the five feet of mud that had engulfed their road and demolished the bridges that connected them to the outside. Volunteers rode in on horseback to help them out. The last of the donated groceries



FROM THE ARCHIVES

had been distributed or cooked to feed those who still had no cooking facilities, and there were still so many clothes left it was decided to send them further south.

The immediate needs of getting everyone warm and

dry has been met for the most part. The Occidental Chamber of Commerce helped locate new furniture and household equipment for the families. The good part of a bad time in this case is that our communities discovered just how caring their neighbors were. ■

**FLOODED...
with water,
mud, then
food, clothing
and caring**

**Porto Bodega
still mired in**

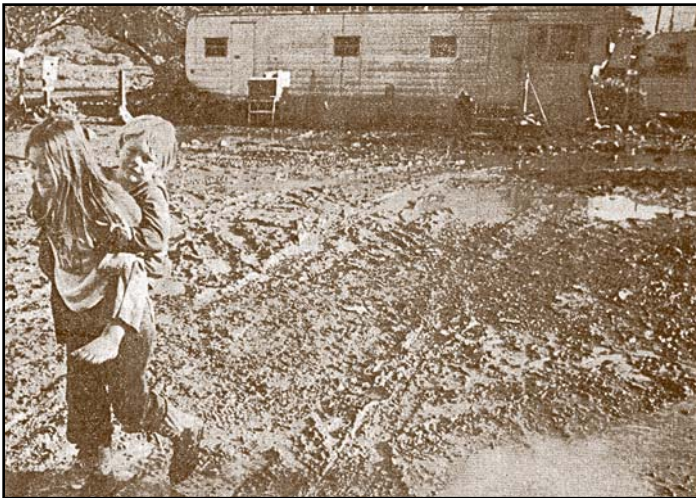
**Progress and
complications at
Porto Bodega**



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Porto Bodega Then and Now

In January 1982, a flood wreaked havoc throughout Rancho Bodega, from the Russian River south to Coleman Valley Road, Bodega Bay, all the way to Valley Ford and the Estero Americano, east to the western edge of Occidental and to the hamlet in Bodega on Salmon Creek Road. People lost homes, residents were stranded, and others risked their lives to rescue people and livestock. Local people, ranchers and the Volunteer Fire Departments rallied to aide and clean-up the mess immediately after the flood.



- Fishermen couldn't moor at the mud-filled docks causing extreme hardship, affecting the viability of the fishing fleet.
- Businesses remained closed, after the creek became a raging river washing out the bridge. The Sandpiper Restaurant, cut off and without power, gave away its food supplies before it spoiled.
- Residents suffered with cars, their homes and their storage sheds mired in mud. Sewer lines broke letting raw sewage run over the mud.

But unfortunately, two weeks after the January 4th flood, Porto Bodega looked much as it did the day after the disaster. Mired in three to four feet of mud, long-lasting damage affected its businesses,

marina, and residents. In Porto Bodega mud flowed downhill destroying the main road to and from Hwy One. The "dismal mess" left broken sewer lines and demolished the small bridge that leads to Ginochio's and Gourmet au Bay today. Mud filled the marina and silted in the boat slips. Two injuries were reported due to the conditions.

As privately owned property, responsibilities for flood control and repairs were vastly unclear. Clean-up, dredging, bridge and sewer repairs stalled. Were residents, the absentee landlord or the government responsible? A shortage of contractors for bridge and road repairs led to even longer timelines. After almost a month of quibbling with Federal, State, County, and local agencies, Porto Bodega's owner, Hans Schroeder, met critical deadlines for the County Health Orders. He began repairs but not without threats and hassles. After building a temporary bridge, Bodega Bay Utility District served notice to remove the bridge due to vulnerable electric and sewer lines. Fish & Game filed charges claiming that Schroeder illegally dumped mud into the bay. Schroeder retaliated, blocking County officials from his property saying,

"I'll get a bulldozer to block them and put fishermen with guns behind them."

Disgruntled fishermen replied, "If Schroeder sees fishermen with guns he'd better check where they're aiming."

By mid-March, most of the mud had been cleared, plumbing, sewer and electrical issues were fixed but the bridge still needed repairs and the Marina required dredging to accommodate the fishing fleet. Adding insult to injury, after receiving an extension from Bodega Bay's PUC the temporary bridge collapsed on April Fool's Day. Luckily

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Schroeder's permits and materials were ready. All that was needed was better weather.

The Marina's dredging permit finally arrived mid-summer. By winter, Fish & Games' charges against Schroeder were dropped. But arguments and lawsuits covering residents' expenses dragged on through at least 1989. Eventually Hans Schroeder sold the 15 acres to Robert Higa of Los Angeles who envisioned a Fishermen's Village. But subject to Tidelands Restrictions, Coastal Commission oversight, The County's General Plans and Zoning, improvements lagged. Moreover, an earthquake fault slices within 70 feet of the restaurant, introducing its own set of building restrictions.

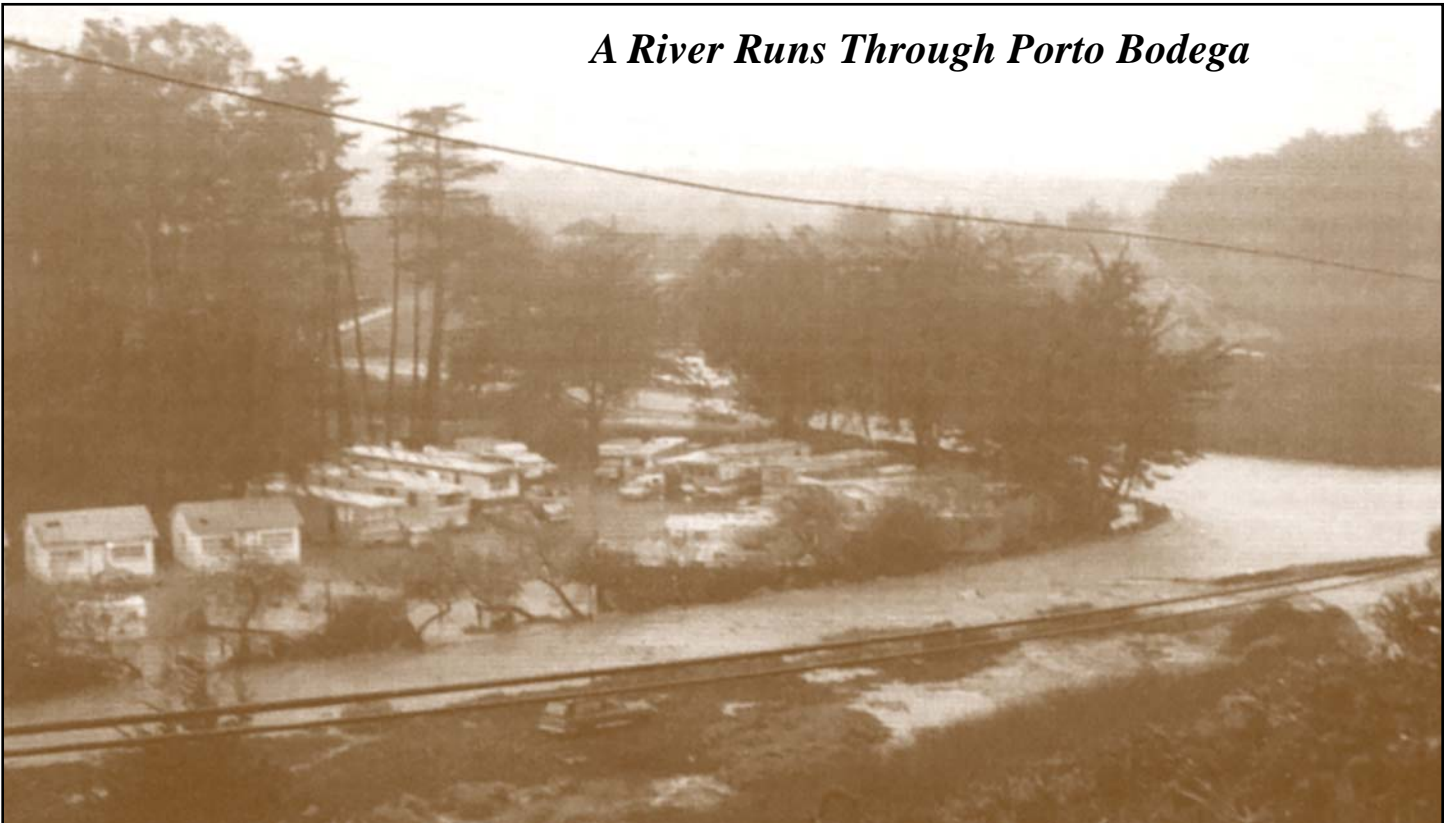
Today, we are happy to report a much-improved Porto Bodega. In 2007, Rich Battaglia bought the property along with the eventual Harbor View development across Route One. The Press Democrat described the sale of a "weather beaten property with a funky trailer park and marina that housed visiting sport fishermen and local workers."

Now, the RV Park is a cozy place for RVers. Kelly Martin, Porto Bodega's Manager, explains steady, ongoing improvements are the plan. Happily, much needed affordable housing remains available for local workers. For permanent residents, new "RV Park Models" offer small but handsome, affordable housing that is larger than "Tiny Homes" and smaller than conventional Mobile Homes.

The road and parking lot are re-paved. The bridge is in good repair. Ginocchio's replaced The Sandpiper. Gourmet au Bay moved into an old office building. There is a nice looking white and blue trimmed house with a turret. Cool-looking carved wood whale sculptures dot the parking lot. The docks were upgraded in 2020.

The laundromat has been remodeled and is cleaned daily. It's a good place now thanks to management. "A great place to live with good neighbors and diverse families. They've done a lot of work. The maintenance is good. It's close to stores. The neighbors share fresh fish. It's the way life should be." ■

A River Runs Through Porto Bodega



FROM THE ARCHIVES

Tales from the Flood *by Andrea Granahan*

A Bark in the Night Saves Four Lives. There used to be a house at the bottom of the hill at the coastal end of Coleman Valley Road. The family that lived in the house awoke to their dog, tied up outside loudly barking. Then they heard other noises. The couple and their two children ran outside and even in the dark they could see the hillside was sliding down towards them. They ran. There was a post firmly dug into the ground. A man grabbed the post and the couple clutched their children as the slide took their house sliding past them towards the sea. They lived but some people say because the dog was tied up it died, but one person insisted it had survived, too. The family left the area as soon as they could and never came back so there is no way of knowing for sure now. You can still see the remains of the house foundation.

Rescuing the Wilds. The Wilds were a retired couple who lived in trailer just north of the bridge on Salmon Creek Road in Bodega. They woke in the middle of the night to find a foot of water in their trailer. It was still rising. They grabbed their little dog and headed out for higher ground on the south side of the bridge. The flood had taken down a huge tree which lodged up against the bridge which was under water. That was lucky for the Wilds. The current was so swift on the bridge it would have swept them away if they had not grabbed on to the branches. They yelled for help. Mani Piazza, a rancher just south of the bridge heard them and got his bucket loader. He was able to get close enough that the Wilds, still clutching the dog, crawled into the bucket. Piazza dropped them off on dry ground. The little dog would not leave the bucket. He stayed in it for a week before the Wilds could persuade him to come out.

The Muddy CCC Kids. In the middle of the misery the kids of the California Conservation Corps swooped in for a few days before they were sent south. They were not afraid of the mud and dove in to clear it out of homes and ranch buildings. At the time they were led by a hero of the Vietnam War B.T. Collins, who lost an arm and a leg in the conflict, who gave them their proud motto "*Hard Work, Low Pay, Miserable Conditions.*" I stayed at McCaughey Hall, organizing donations, heating up donated food, and mostly mopping floors. The Italian restaurants in Occidental had sent over many


five-gallon buckets of minestrone and loaves of bread. The kids would come in on breaks exhausted, starving and filthy from head to toe. I'd feed them and when their break was over and they went out again, mop up the mud. In the three days they were there they made a huge inroad to recovery. We hated to see them go. But they were desperately needed by other flood victims.

The Stranded Wellings. Sonny and Beverly Welling lived at the end of Salmon Creek Road in Bodega. Two bridges were between them and town. Both were washed out. The water rose to their home and they and their cattle took refuge in their barn which was uphill. They were stranded. Everyone worried about two families that were beyond those bridges. The other family lived high up enough they could stay in their home. Each day I called our Supervisor Ernie Carpenter to let him know the conditions. Somehow the Wellings got word out about their plight. They were worried about food for their animals. Ernie arranged for a helicopter to drop feed for the livestock, and supplies for the family until the roads could be cleared.

Two Steps up. Three steps back. In 1982, Linda Danielson and her sons lived on Bay Flat Road. She remembers "it **POURED** all night long. 9 inches+ **AT LEAST!**" The next morning with no electricity, a passing driver stopped by with a message from her Mom to "come up to Diekmann's." Linda's Mom lived a short way up the hill with her husband, part-owner of Diekmann's store. Normally an easy walk from Bay Flat Road, the main road was washed out. Linda remembers a slippery, muddy ordeal, as they climbed the hill, scrambling up two muddy steps up and sliding back down three steps. To make matters worse when the electricity came on, she slid back down and climbed up again after turning off the electric lights left on the night of the storm. It took three full days for fresh supplies to arrive.

Remnants of the road damage are visible to this day. Before the Flood of '82, Eastshore Road was a two-lane road, the main connector from Bay Flat Road to CA Hwy One. The flood washed out the hill and at least half the road. Today only half the road remains with cement barriers still in place. ■

Our sincere thanks to our Advertisers, Supporters, Donors & new members



BUSINESS SERVICES UNLIMITED
ph. (707) 875-2183
fax (707) 875-2952

OPEN M-F 10-4
UPS: 2 PM • FEDEX: 2 PM
Packing & Shipping
Full Service Copies - Color / B&W
Bookkeeper • Secretarial Services

NOTARY PUBLIC
PO Box 115 • 1400 N Hwy 1
Bodega Bay, CA 94923
www.bodegabaycopy.com
email: shonaweir@mac.com



D. REN BROWN
1781 N. Highway One
Bodega Bay CA 94923-0156
707-875-2922
rbc4art@renbrown.com
www.renbrown.com

The REN BROWN COLLECTION

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

David & Marsha Lightfoot,
Mitchel Mahdavi
Karen Shapiro

THANK YOU TO OUR NEW SUPPORTER

Karen Shapiro

THANK YOU TO OUR RECENT DONOR

Thank you to The Bodega Bay Community Center for their generous donation to assist RBHS as we preserve the history and the neighborhoods along the Sonoma Coast.

If you have artifacts or stories of Bodega Bay History to contribute to the Rancho Bodega Historical Society, please contact Robin Rudderow, our Archivist at RBHS@bodegamoon.net

Coastal Treasures Bodega Bay
Seaside Gifts and More...
(707) 321-5696
1580 Eastshore Rd.
Blue Whale Shopping Center



John Hershey Photography
Bodega Bay Photographer
hersheyj@mac.com
www.jhersheyphoto.com


PO Box 477
Bodega Bay CA 94923
415 • 279 • 9649



Ginocchio's KITCHEN
BBQ Bakery Pasta


If you love us ...
f i yelp

707.377.4359
1410 BAY FLAT RD • BODEGA BAY CA 94923
www.GinochiosKitchen.com
GinochiosKitchen@gmail.com



Spud Point Crab Co
Bodega Bay, CA

1910 Westshore Road (707) 875-9472



The Tides Wharf
835 Hwy One, Bodega Bay, CA 707-875-3652

BECOME A MEMBER

Enjoy the history of Rancho Bodega. Please join us. Subscribe for a year and receive the RBHS newsletters, \$15 individual (\$20 family). Support the stories of Bodega Bay.
http://www.ranchobodega.org/membership_form.pdf

BOARD MEMBERS

President & Newsletter

Melinda Pahl
Melinda.Pahl@comcast.net

Treasurer

Linda Mark
LJMark2@comcast.net

Archivist

Robin Rudderow
rbhs@bodegamoon.net

Webmaster

John Maestri
JohnMaestri@comcast.net

Member at Large

Ren Brown
rbc4art@renbrown.com

Member at Large

Andrea Granahan
granahan10@gmail.com

Member at Large

Tom Petek
trpetek@gmail.com

Member at Large

Jeanette Petek
jwpetek@gmail.com

Rancho Bodega Historical Society, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation
PO Box 1027, Bodega Bay CA 94923



Rancho Bodega Historical Society
 Post Office Box 1027
 Bodega Bay CA 94923
www.RanchoBodega.org

IN THIS ISSUE

The Flood of 1982



The Red Cross set up in the post office lobby and began issuing vouchers for emergency food, clothing and shelter needs. Tears were shed when people showed up to give money. “Here’s \$20 for a family with children, Give this to someone who needs it.”

FALL EVENTS

BODEGA BAY FARMERS MARKET. Bodega Bay Community Center, 2255 CA-1, Sun, 10 AM – 2 PM. Memorial Day until the end of October. The open-air market thrives behind the Bodega Bay Community Center at the north end of town. Offering the freshest, locally grown produce specializing in organic, heirloom and gourmet varieties of fruits and vegetables, beef, goat, duck, pork, poultry and fish.

STURGEON’S MILL HISTORIC STEAM SAWMILL Demonstration Run, Sat/Sun, October 14-15th, 10-3, 2150 Green Hill Rd, Sebastopol (707-829-2479). Join us for live demonstrations of our 108 year old Steam Powered Sawmill under the historic giant redwoods. The cook shack will be open for delicious lunchtime snacks and meals that you can enjoy in our beautiful redwood picnic grounds. Free admission & parking. <<http://www.sturgeonsmill.com/>>

HITCHCOCK FILM FESTIVAL October 20th & 21st, 2023. Bodega Bay Grange Hall. Get ready for a thrilling weekend celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the release of The Birds. Prepare to be captivated by suspense, mystery, and haunting storytelling. Our first two-day event! Dan Sneed, Special Guest and Hitchcock Enthusiast, will open each film with interesting facts and highlights. Wine, beer, soft drinks and clam chowder by Spud Point Crab Company, hot dogs, popcorn and other concessions available for purchase. Photo ops! Prizes for best dressed Tippi, Alfred or Norman Bates. <www.eventbrite.com/e/hitchcock-film-festival-tickets-700556993827>

SONOMA COUNTY FINDING HISTORY DAY, October 21, 2023, 10 am - 2 pm, Finley Community Center, 2060 W College Avenue, Santa Rosa, (707) 545-0831 ext. 1682. Travel back in time and join over 30 local historical and cultural organizations as they showcase their collections, upcoming projects and hidden treasures! Free admission & parking. <www.sonomacountyhistory.org/>

For more local events, visit our website. <<http://www.ranchobodega.org/events.html>>