

RANCHO BODEGA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DID YOU KNOW? **Bohemian Grove**

“Redwoods Hideaway for the Elite Goes On, but Protest Days Fade.” A 2010 NY Times article about the San Francisco-based Bohemian Club, which dates back to 1872. “For more than a century, thousands of men have shed wives and cares to hike, listen to lectures, drink, discuss current events, celebrate the arts, drink, share frat-boy traditions, enjoy boon companionship and drink. Predominately white, affluent and Republican, they stage theatrical acts, enjoy like-minded company and imbibe, amid mature redwoods and old posters from past gatherings.”

Some of the 125 camps within have their own valets, and there is even a gift shop. The opening Cremation of Care ceremony, an elaborate production in which hooded characters burn “Dull Care” in effigy at an altar, is meant as a cathartic release of life’s worries. And the club’s motto, “Weaving Spiders Come Not Here”, reflects the prohibition against any conducting of business. The folks who protest, believe “that if you corral thousands of privileged men and throw in some fine wine and food, they cannot help but make valuable connections and occasionally, public policy.”

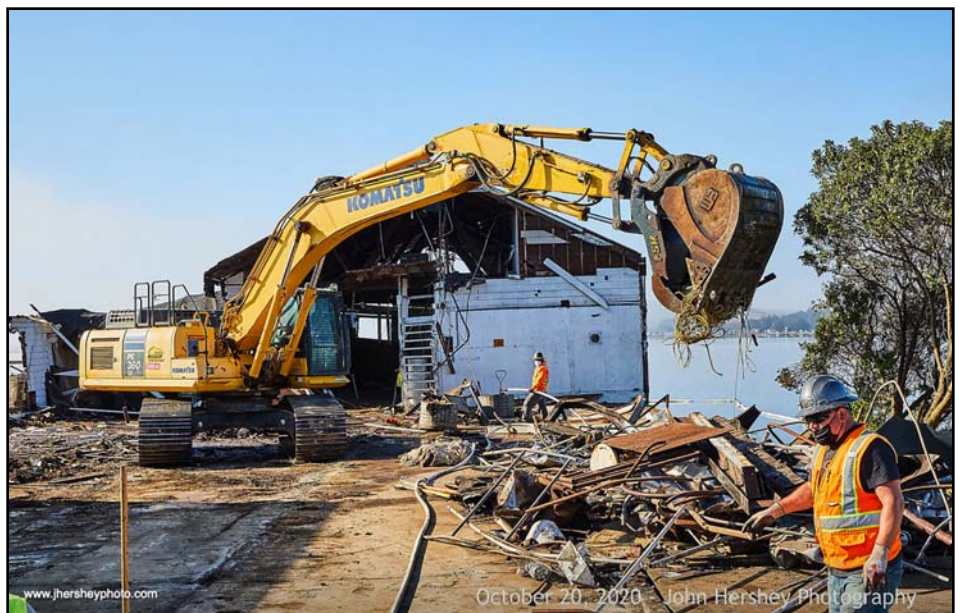
Farewell to Meredith Wharf

by Andrea Granahan



As heavy equipment removed chunks of piers and the dock, piece by piece an important part of Bodega Bay’s history disappeared. The old wharf was once home to a thriving sea food business that employed men and women in Bodega Bay and was once an important part of the war effort.

After the jetties and the channel were built in 1940, fishing became even more important in Bodega Bay. The commercial fleet rapidly increased during World War II when protein-rich food sources were critical in the effort to feed troops and the home front. *continued page 2*



MEREDITH WHARF

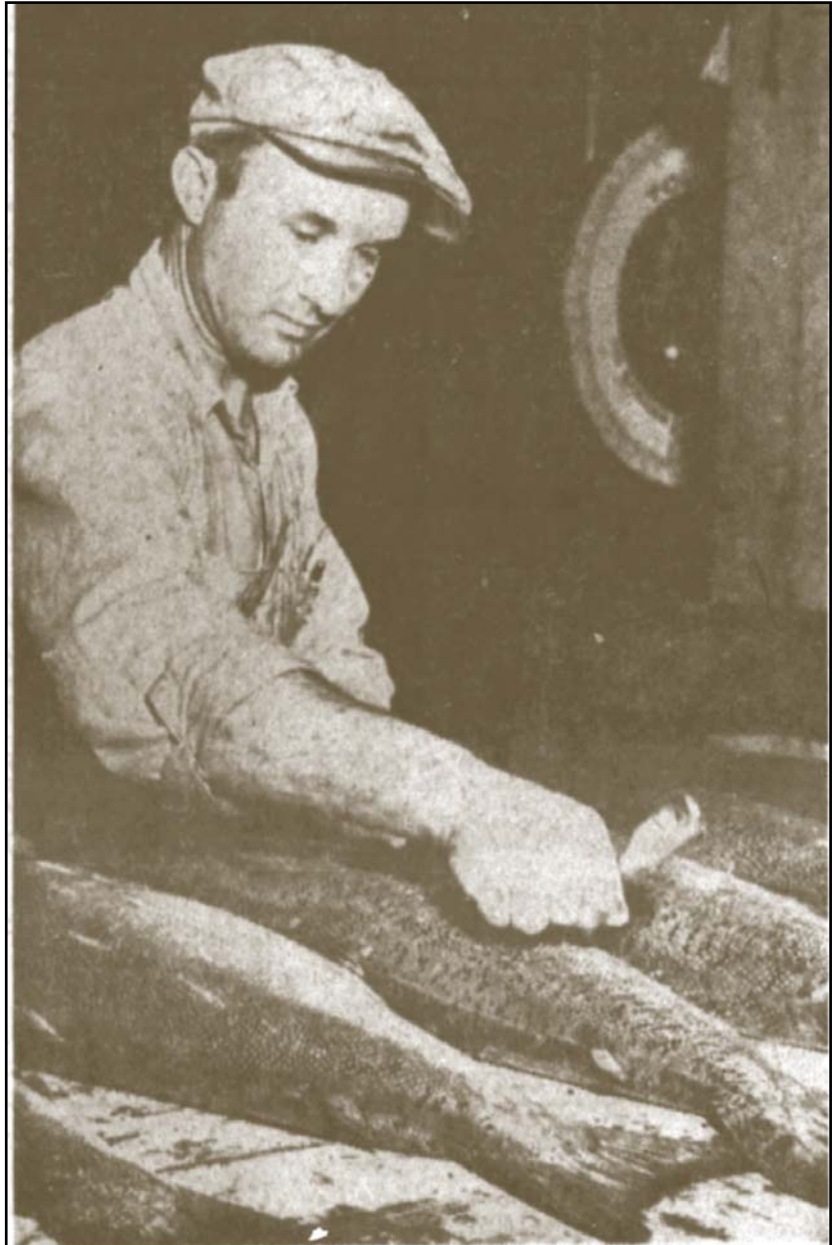
Fifty years before, Craddock Meredith of Sacramento founded a fish-buying company, hence the name of the pier. Two men, Lloyd Turnacliff and Mark Jensen bought Meredith's company in 1942 and constructed the fish cannery and pier to help with the war effort. It later became Washington Fish and Oyster Company under the management of Frank Lucido. For the next of couple decades, the processing line employed 70-80 people, including many women during the war, like Evelyn Cassini's mother, picking crab, cleaning shrimp, shark, cod, hake and salmon to ship in salt barrels back East.

Bodega Bay resident Ned Mantua recalls getting a job there when he was ten years old, although the legal age for a work permit was twelve. "I had to collect livers from the cod," he says, not a particularly fun job, but cod liver oil was big business.

Several generations of fishing families were born and raised in the area. Ed Fomasi, a driver for Bodega Bay's creamery in the 1930's, had a son Amadeo who eventually took over management. Everyone who remembers Amadeo does so with affection, the fisherman's friend who managed the Pier for 45 years.

"When I was a kid Amadeo invited me to go with him to deliver fish to Sacramento. He told me that on the way, we would get run over by a train. I lay in bed the night before, worrying. At five the next morning we left. Amadeo timed the delivery, just as a morning train leaving Sacramento went over an overpass, we were under it. That's how we got run over by a train and lived to talk about it," Ned Mantua laughs.

Sonoma County officially signed just a month-to-month agreement with Meredith Wharf owners in 1961 charging a monthly rent of \$41.80. By 1964 Meredith Wharf succeeded in getting a lease, but the county discovered in 1977 the lease had never been officially recorded. Negotiations restarted and were concluded in 1983 with a 50-year lease for \$170 a month.



SCORING—Amadeo Fomasi uses a scoring knife on a salmon preparatory to splitting. The small holes cut in the skin allow salt to penetrate during the curing process. (Staff photo by John LeBaron.)

MEREDITH WHARF

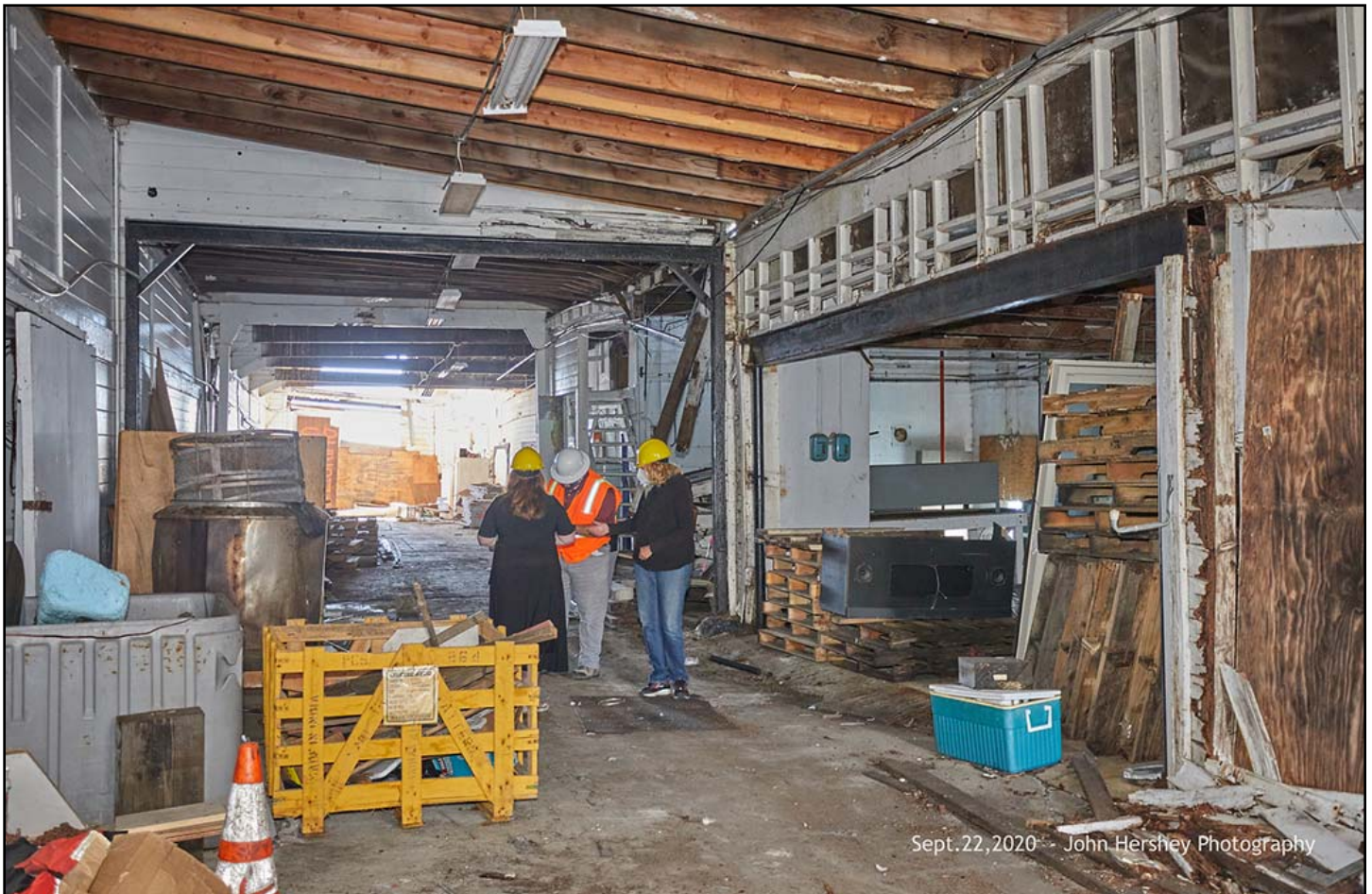
In the meantime, Amadeo kept it running. He offered a cot at the wharf as a refuge where deckhands back from an unsuccessful fishing trip could bunk until landing a job with hopefully a more successful captain. When times were hard, he offered credit to fisherman so they could keep fishing.

In 1990 Eureka Fisheries took over Meredith Wharf. The new owners made a big announcement about their proposed cannery then promptly declared bankruptcy and disappeared after some reportedly shady dealings.

Amadeo died in 1994 after having retired from the wharf. His death was a blow to those who had known him through the years. During the annual Fisherman's Festival and Blessing of the Fleet, from the Lead Boat, Bev Burton would toss floral tributes to honor Amadeo as they passed Meredith Wharf on their way to and from the Tides dock.

With Amadeo gone and the bankrupt owners having skipped town, the wharf fell into disrepair. There was some talk of turning it into a fishing museum. A man named Sean Eaddy purchased the wharf with hopes of building a big tourist complex. Time, the salty air and storms from the sea had done the old wharf no favors and in 2004 the county finally condemned it.

This year in 2020, the county finally brought out its wrecking equipment. And now it's time to bid farewell to a Bodega Bay institution. *Demolition Photos - John Hershey* <http://tinyurl.com/pier-demo> ■



Sept. 22, 2020 - John Hershey Photography

CONTROVERSY SWIRLS AROUND BODEGA HARBOR (PART 3)

Bay Harbor Master Plan Allowed to Gather Dust

In 1958 the Press Democrat¹ reported “only through tideland development will Bodega Harbor become the great commercial and recreational center that almost everyone interested believes it could be. The more boats, wharves, ship’s chandleries, marine ways and so on, the more you have the salty flavor and useful facilities that attract both the visiting pleasure boatman and the landlubber tourist.” The dream for Doran Park was to supply fresh water and sanitation instead of carrying water by jug from town several miles away. “Hundreds of sportsmen towing boats on trailers line-up bumper to bumper to get to the meager public boat ramp. If they get in parking lots are jammed, toilet facilities are insufficient with no fresh water.”

Eight years had already passed since 1951, when CA State granted “certain tide and submerged lands to the County of Sonoma.” That left only two short years for Sonoma County to act and show real improvements to the State. At the County Board of Supervisors meeting at the end of 1957, a letter from a Fish Processor in San Francisco surfaced with interest in building a fish hoist and wharf at Doran Park. But with only three of five Supervisors present, knowledge was scant. (Absent was Fifth District Supervisor Nin Guidotti the key Supervisor responsible for Bodega Bay.) One Supervisor mentioned that Bodega Harbor’s Master Plan had not been adopted. But in fact, the Master Plan was adopted two years earlier and apparently laid idle. Sonoma County, with acceptance of the 1955 Master Plan of Development for Bodega Bay, had put owners of shoreline property and potential investors on notice that development guidelines, including rent for use of tidelands, would be forthcoming.

Meanwhile investors large and small were ready, waiting and losing faith in the County’s ability to come up with a fair, simple formula to rent the tidelands presumably to the owners holding property adjacent to the tidelands, in time for the State deadline.

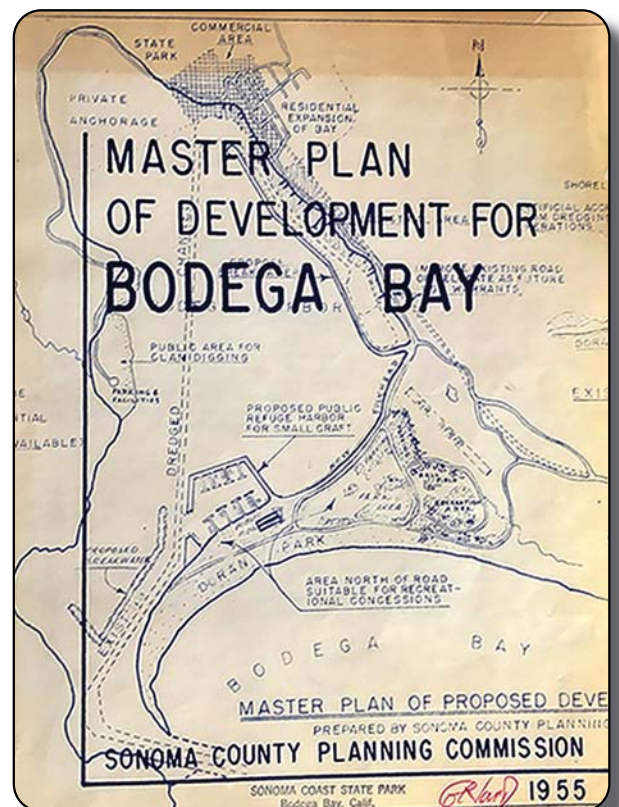
Ray Carpenter – respected, articulate, resident leader. 35 years fishing up & down the Pacific Coast. Owns harbor frontage. Father-in-law of the future post-mistress was “just sitting tight ... and waiting.”

Ivan Davis – experienced seaman from Sebastopol, forced to moor in San Rafael. Owned 250 ft of frontage planned a dredged mooring basin, a break water to protect boats and rental berths. “I’ve given up in disgust.”

Burt Bean -- garrulous, big, brawny former commercial fisherman who owned a marine engine and boat repair shop said “Would you buy a pig in the poke?”

Ray Shaw -- owned 1,200 feet along the shore with the Beach Hotel and Mystery Spot cannot sell or build without knowing if the County will not lease the tidelands to someone else.

Paul Hindringer -- sub-leased his wharf to Harbor Fisheries with the stipulation the “government” could step in and nullify the lease at any moment.



CONTROVERSY SWIRLS AROUND BODEGA HARBOR (PART 3)

The plan was conceptual. It said: "Everyone would benefit." California would have an open accessible harbor from land and sea. Increased commercial fishing, expansion of fish processing plants giving jobs to locals, more facilities for recreation. Fees would pay for the facilities. Better shipping for the inland fish markets, beautification of the harbor, a good refuge harbor and more use by pleasure craft to bring customers into local business. Not only would the County profit from increased business and increased assessed property valuation but also by the fees collected from users of tidelands and public facilities. These fees could help pay for some of the improvements. Everyone would profit."

So, what IS going on? Controversies continue....

The premise of Press Democrat's Bodega Dream articles was that the failure of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors to take action on implementing the harbor master plan for Bodega Bay amounted to a "dream in arrested development."

Fifth District Supervisor E. J. (Nin) Guidotti was particularly pilloried in the Fletcher articles for his failure to move the Bodega Harbor plan forward. Guidotti had prior history as a Supervisor in the 1940's. A rough relationship with a vocal political faction in Bodega Bay unseated him and kept him off the Board of Supervisors for six years.

Guidotti's opponents still showed strength in the 1954 special election that returned him to his seat as Fifth District Supervisor. Not incidentally, the intervening Supervisor Miller was said to have promised Bodega Bay voters that the County would not collect tideland rents while he (Mr. Miller) was Supervisor.

In 1955, a Court House Committee had appointed Guidotti to make an early report on a uniform system for leasing the County's tideland for private development. He was Chair of the Bodega Bay Development Committee but failed to make a report to the other Supervisors in more than two years. Guidotti felt the other Supervisors sided with his opponents when they asked County Counsel for an opinion as to the County's Title to the tidelands. Guidotti was rumored to be "out to get" his opponents, which he denied. Then he asked to be relieved of his Chairmanship of the committee.

Burt Bean was once a leader of the opposition to Guidotti but said the time is long past for an end to the squabbling over the rights and obligations. Mr. Bean said previously that the adjoining upland owners could prove in a long and expensive court action that they, not the County, own the Tidelands "But we all want to consider that a dead issue, he said *"I'll pay a reasonable rent, if they tell me what it is."*

So what IS going on? Who or what IS stalling the process? Political infighting, benign neglect, preference for a large developer over a hodgepodge of several property owner plans? Or perhaps insider knowledge of things to come? ■

¹Seven Part Article The Bodega Dream by Fred Fletcher appeared in the Press Democrat the first week in Jan 1958 . The Series earned Reporter Fletcher a second-place award at the CA State Fair newspaper competition that year.



FACES OF BODEGA BAY

Meet Ren Brown

Ren was born in 1947 in Berkeley, California, where his father taught Japanese History. His mother had been born and raised in Japan. So it seemed natural that the family lived first in Hong Kong and then in Japan when Ren was a young boy.

He remembers being about seven years old and going to school in Japan, where he learned enough Japanese to get by.

About two years later, the family returned to Berkeley. Ren became interested in print making while in high school. After graduation, Ren attended Swarthmore College, a small Quaker College in Pennsylvania. He had his first show there in 1966 featuring Japanese stencil prints. He traveled to Japan during the summer when he was about 20 years old and then earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in History.

Ren believes one of his main accomplishments during college was self assessment, which led to his acceptance of being gay. While at Swarthmore, the Vietnam War Draft Lottery came into effect. Ren registered as a conscientious objector which required a two-year tour of duty in a civilian capacity. Ren worked in a hospital and became a respiratory therapist, a job that he did for about 20 years. While working as a respiratory therapist at Children's Hospital, Oakland, he met Robert DeVee, an impressionist painter.



Ren and Robert purchased a home in Jenner, CA and then decided to purchase a Bodega Bay commercial building in 1989. After extensive remodeling the Ren Brown Collection Gallery opened in February 1990 featuring contemporary Japanese prints and ceramics, as well as work by local artists, jewelers and potters. The Gallery has two floors of beautifully displayed art and a framing workshop on the second floor. (1781 N. Highway One)

Ren and Robert remodeled the house located in back of the Gallery. Of course, it includes many pieces of Japanese art along with some of Robert's paintings. The gardens are also done in a Japanese motif and include a koi fish pond in the front yard, a teahouse and a stone garden. Ren and Robert were together for 35 years; married in August 2008, and Robert passed away in January 2017.

Ren is active in the Redwood Rainbows square dancing club in Sebastopol. He enjoys square dancing, as it involves physical movement in a social environment and requires quick thinking. Ren says happiness comes when you live where you choose, are self-employed, are involved with the arts, and do gardening—which is why he chose this occupation and this community. He enjoys teaching people about art and helping aspiring artists. Ren joined Rancho Bodega Historical Society (RBHS) and became an RBHS Board member.

Ren says the ocean, the stars, the quiet and the wide array of interesting residents are what make Bodega Bay special for him. -- Susan Teel ■

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If you have artifacts or stories of Bodega Bay History to contribute to RBHS, please reach out to Robin Rudderow, our Archivist at <RBHS@bodegamoon.net
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WINTER EVENTS

SHELTER IN PLACE Almost all events in Sonoma County ARE CANCELLED, POSTPONED, OR RESCHEDULED, Museums and Exhibits are or will be closed, however, some organizations may have online (virtual) events.

SCHUNRS Sonoma Coast Historical and Undersea Nautical Research Society would like to take the opportunity to share our second newsletter, The Ground Swell, and let you know what we've been keeping busy with since the previous issue. This time, we describe some of our work mapping the enormous but fragmented site of the SS Norlina, wrecked at Salt Point in 1926. Please visit us at <www.schunrs.org>. We're happy to answer any questions you may have about our mission to advance public knowledge and awareness of Pacific Coast Maritime Cultural Heritage through education, research, and exploration.

FREE VIRTUAL EVENTS AROUND SONOMA COUNTY

Sonoma County has many virtual events such as virtual Wine Tasting, tours of various parts of Sonoma County, Cooking Classes, Wine Bingo or explore the Coastal Sonoma County <www.sonoma.com/events/>

The Press Democrat has a listing of virtual events, such as Peanuts Origami, Poetry Book Club, Spark Your Inspiration, Meet the Artists! or take a Creative Writing Classes <www.pressdemocrat.com/Events/>

The Bay Area Science Festival has gone virtual. Watch the many varied science topics, including Astronomy, Geology, Robotics or the Stanford Remote Tours <www.bayareasciencefestival2020.org/schedule/>

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