

MOSQUITO BYTE

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MOSQUITO



Volunteer Fire Association

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MVFA UPDATE

by MVFA Board of Directors

Welcoming June in the Mosquito Community

June arrives with that unmistakable shift in the air — longer days, warmer evenings, and the first hints of summer settling across the ridge. Around Mosquito and Swansboro, this time of year always brings a renewed sense of energy. Gardens are waking up, trails are filling with hikers and birdwatchers, and neighbors are spending a little more time lingering outdoors to catch up.

For the MVFA and our community partners, June also marks the start of a busy season of preparation and connection. Fire season readiness efforts are already underway, with volunteers, firefighters, and residents working together to keep our community safe. You'll see more activity at Station 75, more training sessions, and more opportunities to get involved or simply stop by and say hello.

It's also a month full of local traditions — from early-summer events at Finnon Lake to the return of outdoor gatherings that make this community feel like family. Whether you're new to the area or a long-time resident, June is a reminder of what makes Mosquito special: neighbors who show up, pitch in, and look out for one another.

As we move into the heart of the season, the BYTE will continue sharing updates, stories, and ways to stay engaged. Here's to a safe, vibrant, and community-strong June.

If you have questions about your subscription or are needing to renew, please reach out to us at MVFA95667@gmail.com

A STANDING-ROOM-ONLY JOURNEY INTO MOSQUITO'S PAST

Memorial Day in Mosquito was more than a day of remembrance this year — it became a remarkable celebration of our shared history. Over one hundred residents filled the Mosquito Fire Station on May 25th for a special 2-plus-hour presentation that proved to be one of the most well-attended community events in recent memory.



Mosquito's local historian **Steve Vrabel** and historian **Mike Roberts** guided the audience through a sweeping exploration of the region's past, beginning with the Native peoples who lived here long before modern settlement. Their stories — rich with leadership, resilience, and cultural depth — set the stage for a broader look at the forces that shaped the Mosquito area.

From there, the presentation moved into the Gold Rush era, highlighting the rise and fall of

Nelsonville, once a bustling foothill town whose cemetery still whispers its history. Attendees also learned about colorful local figures such as the **Goat Doctor**, as well as the industrial legacy of the **Pino Grande sawmill** and the long-gone **Bret Harte Hotel**, both of which played memorable roles in the community's development.

The afternoon took a powerful turn when Mosquito pioneer family descendent and lifelong resident **Gwen Reid** delivered a gripping poem recounting the darker side of regional history — the hangings in Placerville. Her performance brought a solemn, human dimension to events often mentioned only in passing.



The combination of historical insight, storytelling, and community spirit made the presentation an unforgettable success. For many, it was a reminder that the places we live are layered with stories — some inspiring, some sobering, all worth remembering.

Thank you to everyone who attended, and to the presenters who brought our past to life. Mosquito's

history is alive and well, and it continues to bring our community together.



The MVFA Board meeting will be on Thursday, June 18th at 3:00 pm at the Diner

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Fall Festival at Fannon Lake - 10 am - 3 pm Free Lunch September 12, 2026

Trunk-R-Treat - 6 pm - 8 pm October 24, 2026

Christmas Dinner at Station 75 - 5:30 pm Free Dinner December 5, 2026

INTRODUCING A NEW HISTORICAL ARTICLES SERIES

The MVFA is pleased to announce the launch of a new **Historical Articles** series. Each installment will feature stories from local historians, highlighting the rich and often surprising history of the Mosquito region. This month marks the **first article in the series**, with many more to come. Stay tuned as we explore the people, places, and events that shaped our community.

MOSQUITO HISTORY – PAINTED LADIES

By Steve Vrabel

The pioneer Gold Rush town of Nelsonville, which was located along Mosquito Cut Off and to the south, burned in 1865 as gold mining was dying off and was never rebuilt. It was a thriving town and had its share of businesses.

Nelsonville's businesses, like most small towns of that era, included several saloons. Saloons back then served many purposes, most of which were designed to separate miners from their generally hard-earned cash. Nelsonville's saloons were known to have "dancing girls", a common part of the saloon practices in the old west. Many might wonder what is a dancing girl. Common portrayal in western-themed films and shows frequently suggested that they were lowly prostitutes, sometimes governed by a tough but honest madam. Hollywood, as usual, may not have had the facts quite right.

It is reported that five dancing girls died in a Nelsonville fire and are buried in unmarked graves in Nelsonville Cemetery, located off La Paz Road on private property. To better understand who these women were and what their lives were like, please see the following excerpt from legendsofamerica.com.

Painted Ladies of the Old West

In the Wild West, the harsh Puritan sanctions were not as "practical" as in America's more conservative eastern counterpart. And though the "proper" ladies still labeled those who didn't share their values — by virtue of dress, behavior or sexual ethics, as "disgraceful," the shady ladies of the West were generally tolerated by other women as a "necessary evil."

California '49ers labeled these women with names such as "ladies of the line" and "sporting women", while the cowboys dubbed them "soiled doves." Other nicknames for these women, who were as much a part of the Old West as were the outlaws, cowboys, and miners, were "scarlet ladies," fallen angels," "frail sisters," "fair belles," and "painted cats," among dozens of others.

The biggest difference in the American West was the presence of girls in saloons. This was unheard of east of the Missouri River, except in German beer halls, where the daughters or wives of the owners, often served as barmaids and waitresses. There were two types of "bad

girls” in the West. The “worst” types, according to the “proper” women, were the many painted ladies who made their living by offering paid sex in the numerous brothels, parlor houses, and cribs of the western towns. The second type of “bad girl” was the saloon and dance hall women, who contrary to some popular thinking, were generally not prostitutes — this tended to occur only in the very shabbiest class of saloons. Though the “respectable” ladies considered the saloon girls “fallen”, most of these women wouldn’t be caught dead associating with an actual prostitute.

A saloon or dancehall girl’s job was to brighten the evenings of the many lonely men of the western towns. In the Old West, men usually outnumbered women by at least three to one – sometimes more, as was the case in California in 1850, where 90% of the population was male. Starved for female companionship, the saloon girl would sing for the men, dance with them, and talk to them – inducing them to remain in the bar, buying drinks and patronizing the games.

Most saloon girls were refugees from farms or mills, lured by posters and handbills advertising high wages, easy work, and fine clothing. Many were widows or needy women of good morals, forced to earn a living in an era that offered few means for women to do so.

Earning as much as \$10 per week, most saloon girls also made a commission from the drinks that they sold. Whiskey sold to the customer was generally marked up 30-60% over its wholesale price. Commonly drinks bought for the girls would only be cold tea or colored sugar water served in a shot glass; however, the customers were charged the full price of whiskey, which could range from ten to seventy-five cents a shot.

The term “painted ladies” was coined because the “girls” had the audacity to wear make-up and dye their hair. Many were armed with pistols or jeweled daggers concealed in their boot tops or tucked between her breasts to keep the boisterous cowboys in line.

Most saloon girls were considered “good” women by the men they danced and talked with; often receiving lavish gifts from admirers. In most places, the proprieties of treating the saloon girls as “ladies” was strictly observed, much because Western men tended to revere all women, and also because the women, or the saloon keeper, demanded it. Any man who mistreated these women would quickly become a social outcast, and if he insulted one, he would very likely be killed.

In the early California Gold Rush of 1849, dance halls began to appear and spread throughout later settlements. While these saloons usually offered games of chance, their chief attraction was dancing. The customer generally paid 75 cents to one dollar for a ticket to dance, with the proceeds being split between the dance hall girl and the saloon owner. After the dance, the girl would steer the gentleman to the bar, where she would make an additional commission from the sale of a drink.

Dancing usually began about 8:00 p.m., ranging from waltzes to schottisches with each “turn” lasting about 15 minutes. A popular girl would average 50 dances a night, sometimes making more a night than a working man could make in a month. Dancehall girls made enough money that it was very rare for them to double as a prostitute, in fact, many former “soiled doves” found they could make more money as a dance hall girl.

To the saloon owner, the dance girls were a profitable commodity and gentlemen were discouraged from paying too much attention to any one girl, as dancehall owners lost more women to marriage than in any other way.

Though most patrons respected the girls, violent deaths were one of their biggest professional hazards. More than a hundred cases were documented, but there were, no doubt, probably many more. One saloon girl, who was savagely beaten, had repelled the advances of a drunken customer. When a cowboy approached her, she responded: "I don't mind the black eye, but he called me a whore."

MOSQUITO CRAFTERS

By Natasha Cutter

Hello, Mosquito neighbors! Summer is back, and the air is buzzing with creativity as our talented crafters dive into exciting projects! Last month's Mother's Day pop-up at Smoke on the Water was a smashing success. Stay tuned for more details, as we gear up for a few fantastic pop-up sales this summer. You won't want to miss out! We're currently working on a variety of exciting



new ideas! We're now featuring a delightful range of recycled denim crafts, including trivets, handbags, cup coasters, decorative bowls, and much more! This is just a glimpse of what we have in store. Who knows what we'll create next? Don't forget to find and follow us on Facebook!

MVFA CRV RECYCLE PROGRAM

Please drop off bags of **Plastic Bottles** and **Aluminum Cans (Sorry no Glass)** at the back of Station 75. Note: Lids and caps on plastic bottles must be removed before they can be redeemed. Lids and caps can be included for redemption. Stay green, stay responsible, and happy recycling! ♻️



BIRDING AT FINNON LAKE

May Bird Watch: A Month of Subtle Shifts and Spring Voices

May brought a gentle but noticeable shift in bird activity around the Mosquito and Finnon Lake area, with several spring singers making their seasonal appearance and a few familiar species showing up in smaller numbers than earlier in the year. Even so, the month delivered a rich mix of residents and migrants, offering plenty for observers to enjoy.

A small group of **Canada Geese** continued to linger near the water, joined by single sightings of **California Quail**, **American Coot**, **Killdeer**, and **Pied-billed Grebe**. Two **Double-crested Cormorants** and a lone **Red-shouldered Hawk** added variety to the morning skies.



Bewick's Wren

Woodpeckers remained active, with an impressive **25 Acorn Woodpeckers** recorded — a reminder of how strongly this species thrives in our oak woodlands. Other regulars included **Black Phoebe**, **California Scrub-Jay**, **Common Raven**, and **Oak Titmouse**. A single **Violet-green Swallow** made a brief appearance, gliding over the water in classic spring fashion.

The understory and brushy edges were lively as well, featuring **Wrentit**, **White-breasted Nuthatch**, **Bewick's Wren**, and a bright **Orange-crowned Warbler**. Finches and sparrows were quieter this month, with just one **Lesser Goldfinch** and one **Spotted Towhee** noted.

Blackbirds dominated the count, led by **Red-winged Blackbirds**, **Brown-headed Cowbirds**, and a striking group of **Great-tailed Grackles**. Rounding out the list were two **Black-headed Grosbeaks**, their bold colors and rich songs adding a welcome splash of spring energy.

The June bird watch will be on the 6th and the starting time will now be 8:00 am due to the warmer weather.

As always, thank you to everyone who continues to support and participate in our monthly bird watches. Each sighting helps us better understand the rhythms of our local wildlife and the health of the habitats we share.

The Count

8 Canada Goose	1 Black Phoebe	2 Bewick's Wren
1 California Quail	1 California Scrub-Jay	1 Lesser Goldfinch
1 American Coot	1 Common Raven	1 Spotted Towhee
1 Killdeer	3 Oak Titmouse	24 Red-winged Blackbird
1 Pied-billed Grebe	1 Violet-green Swallow	2 Brown-headed Cowbird
2 Double-crested Cormorant	2 Wrentit	10 Great-tailed Grackle
1 Red-shouldered Hawk	2 White-breasted Nuthatch	1 Orange-crowned Warbler
25 Acorn Woodpecker		2 Black-headed Grosbeak

SMOKE ON THE WATER

by Kirk Bronsord and Matt Ridgeway

**It's that wonderful time of year again —
Summer Time!**

School is out, vacations are underway, campgrounds are buzzing, and everyone is ready to soak up the sunshine. What could be better than relaxing lakeside with family and friends,

Diner Hours:

Monday - Friday- Closed

Saturday - 11 am - 6 pm

Sunday 8 am - 2 pm

(Breakfast served on Sunday only)

<https://www.facebook.com/smokeonthewaterplacervilleca>



sharing a delicious meal and a cold refreshing beverage?

Nature is showing off at its finest, and if we're lucky, we might even catch a glimpse of our beautiful eagles soaring overhead.

Come on out, enjoy the view, savor a great meal, and let us handle the cooking. We can't wait to welcome you!

Your friends at Smoke on the Water

AIRCRAFT DISPLAY DAYS

By Kim Purcell

The Swansboro airport is home to many interesting aircraft, both homebuilt as well as production built. We are doing our aircraft display June 12, 13 and 14th from 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM each day at the airport. Aircraft that are unique as well as older than 35 years will be out and you are invited to look but be sure to remain well clear of the active runway. Please also be respectful and look but do not touch without guidance from owners. If you have any questions, would like further information or a guided tour you can contact Kim Purcell at (530) 621-1049.

MOSQUITO COMMUNITY CLEANUP DAY

By Kim Purcell

The Swansboro Pilots Association with the assistance of El Dorado Disposal will again be hosting a community cleanup day. The event will be held on Saturday June 13th from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm or until dumpsters are full which usually occurs about noon. Members of the pilots group will be on site to assist with unloading. We cannot accept appliances, tires, hazardous waste or construction material. You can also bring your CRV plastic and cans for the MVFA recycling program which benefits the Station 75 fund. If you have clean bedding and towels you wish to get rid of please bring them and they will be distribution to various animal rescue groups in our area who will be very appreciative. We will also be accepting donations to our scholarship fund for Mosquito senior high schools students headed to college. If you have any questions, contact Kim Purcell 621-1049

SCPOA REPORT

By Meredith Blain

The Swansboro Country Property Owners Association (SCPOA) Board of Directors generally holds monthly meetings at the MFPD Fire Station, located at 8801 Rock Creek Road, on the fourth Wednesday of each month. All SCPOA members are invited to attend.

The next SCPOA meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 24, 2026.

Meeting notices and agendas are posted on the bulletin board at Dyer Lake and on the official SCPOA website at SCPOA.info.

Visit SCPOA.info for general public information. SCPOA members can also access details about upcoming meetings, agendas and minutes, association bylaws, individual unit DC&Rs, use of the Swansboro Airport and common areas, and more.

Member access requires a login. If you need login credentials, please email Kpaulscpoa@gmail.com or Ashley.silva@managementtrust.com.

SWANSBORO PILOT ASSOCIATION SCHOLARSHIP

by Kim Purcell

The Swansboro Pilots Association is offering Swansboro/Mosquito high school seniors a chance to compete for a college scholarship of up to \$1000. If you are a high school senior going on to college this fall, we hope you will apply. We've had some amazing winners and applicants in the past and look forward to seeing more!

To apply, send at least a one-page, double spaced, typed essay that states:

- Your life and college plans
- Any community service projects you have done.
- What college you plan to attend.
- Your high school grade point average.
- Mailing address, phone number and email address.
- Send your essay, postmarked no later than June 30th to:

Swansboro Pilots Association

2724 Swansboro Road

Placerville, CA 95667

If you have any questions, please contact Kim at (530) 621-1049.

NEW NEIGHBORS

If you are new to the area, or know someone new to the area, MVFA has welcome packets that contain great information about our community and helpful guidance for living in a high risk fire area. Please contact us at MVFA95667@gmail.com so we can get one delivered to your door!

DISTRICT AUXILIARY aka D'Ax

By Meredith Blain

D'Ax* was happy to host refreshments for the May 25th *History of Mosquito* event presented by Steve Vrabel—an event that was tremendously successful! More than 150 guests attended.

D'Ax*'s mission is to serve the Mosquito community through fundraising, education, and support of the fire department, and we were pleased to show our support for this educational event. D'Ax* looks forward to helping with more events like this in the coming year.



We have asked the MFPD Chief for approval to host a Pancake Breakfast on July 11, 2026, and we hope to receive the go-ahead to proceed. It has been a long time since our community has had the pleasure of gathering with fire department staff to enjoy a Saturday breakfast together!

Please mark your calendar and check *The BYTE* next month or follow social media for updates.

We sincerely hope you're all enjoying this beautiful weather, and we look forward to seeing everyone in July!

CLASSIFIED ADS

(Classified Ads are free to all paid subscribers)

WANTED

LOCAL ORGANIC FARM

Seeks manure source, specifically goat, sheep, chicken, llama or alpaca. Please contact Ryan at THREE GOATS FARM. (530) 497-4279 or farm3goats@gmail.com

FOR SALE

THE GOAT DOCTOR OF THE SIERRAS

book by Gloria Hockensmith is available locally. Call Taffy (530) 626-8689 to buy your copy. A great fact based read about a local legend. Perfect for gifting, \$20.00. A few books with section of upside down pages are still available for \$10.00.

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MEETINGS

MOUNTAIN FELLOWSHIP

Join us for Christian worship and fellowship Sunday mornings 11AM at 3342 Stope Drive. Bible studies throughout the week. (530) 295-0503

SERVICES

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Tired of paying outrageous prices for wood? I will cut and split downed trees and/or rounds for you. Call Daniel @ (530) 919-8878

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FLORIST ON THE HILL

I am your community florist providing long lasting flowers for all occasions. We ALWAYS deliver FREE on the hill! Stop by and check out our collection of Honey House products, gifts, jewelry, & handmade cards. Also offering flower subscriptions specifically created for you. Call me Elaine Galvan (530) 295-0503 for all your floral needs.

HANGTOWN RANGE

Located at 1540 Broadway, Placerville CA. We are now a full, fire arm, archery, and retail indoor shooting range for all of your needs and wants. We offer a 10 lane 25-yard shooting range for all hand guns, shotguns and long guns up to 3200fps (some restrictions apply) and an 8-lane indoor 20-yard archery shooting range. We also have a full line of rental guns and archery recurve bows. We are now a fully stocked retail department for hand guns, long guns, archery supplies and ammunition.

We offer CCW and Renewal classes in our onsite classrooms along with all private and group classes to improve your shooting and safe handling skills, and also offer archery lessons in our indoor range, and let's not forget the available Women's classes. Come in and try our Milo Virtual shooting range using your own hand gun and live ammunition with over 200 different challenging and fun scenarios to choose from.

We are open from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday and from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm on Sundays.

Give us a call at 530-497-5443, for Range or 530-621-4500 for new sales.

WELDING & FABRICATION

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REAL ESTATE SERVICES

Live the American Dream: the ownership of a home and a little acreage to call your own! Sally Long Johns, your resident Mosquito Road Realtor, will help you buy or sell any property in El Dorado County! You can reach me at www.mosquitoadneighbors.com or (530) 295-4641 or toll free 866-SALLYRE, snlongjohns@yahoo.com.

REAL ESTATE SERVICES

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FREE

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48 - 12 X 12 Tiles Beige

36 - 12 X 6 Tiles Terracotta

36 - 12 X 12 Tiles Terracotta

Plus More (530) 642-9084 or (916) 539-5395

June 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Support Group Training 9am Station 75
7 MFOM Mountain Fellowship Gathering, 11am	8	9	10	11	12 MFPD Firefighters Training 6pm Station 75	13 Bird Watching Finnon, Day Use area 8am Clean Up Day 9am – 1pm
14 MFOM Mountain Fellowship Gathering, 11am	15	16	17	18 MVFA Meeting 3pm Diner	19	20
21 MFOM Mountain Fellowship Gathering, 11am	22 D'Ax Meeting 6pm Diner	23	24 SCPOA Board Meeting 6pm Station 75	25 MFPD Board Meeting 1:00pm Station 75	26 MFPD Firefighters Training 6pm Station 75 Crafters Meeting 10am	27
28 MFOM Mountain Fellowship Gathering, 11am	29	30	31			

Local Area Web Links

Mosquito Volunteer Fire Association (MVFA)
 Finnon Lake Recreation Area
 Mosquito Fire Protection District (MFPD)
 District Auxiliary - Mosquito
 Swansboro Country Property Owners Association
 Mountain Fellowship in Mosquito (MFOM)
 El Dorado County Fire Safe Council

<https://www.gomvfa.org>
<https://www.finnonrecreationarea.com/>
<https://mfpd.us>
<https://dax-np.org>
<https://scpoa.info>
<https://mfom.net>
www.edcfiresafe.org

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Editors have the right to edit, limit, or refuse any article submitted for publication. Authors are responsible for article accuracy and their opinions do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the MVFA Board of Directors or the editors. MVFA is organized as a non-profit tax-exempt entity and is funded entirely by grants, donations, fundraisers and rents and fees at Fannon Lake - which it owns. MVFA receives no tax revenues, nor any dues money from SCPOA. As per IRS mandate, MVFA gives no cash nor has any financial connection to any non-501(c)(3) organization or to the Mosquito Fire Protection District (MFPD). MVFA has no paid employees, and operates primarily with volunteers who donate their own time and often their own money to make our community a better place. If you would like to enhance your membership in MVFA, please become a volunteer. MVFA is a 501(c)(3) organization and donations may be tax deductible. A letter stating your donation will be provided on request. Send your donation to MVFA, 9009 Orval Beckett Ct., Placerville CA 95667.

MVFA values and promotes voluntary efforts in our community. MVFA continues to carry on the work begun by its predecessors many years ago. If you have any questions about MVFA, please attend the MVFA Board of Directors meetings on the first Thursday of each month at the Mosquito Fire House, 8801 Rock Creek Road, Placerville at 3:00pm. At the meetings, you have the opportunity to obtain correct and updated information about MVFA and its committees, legal obligations at Fannon Lake and events and volunteer opportunities. Mosquito residents may request a copy of approved MVFA Board meeting minutes by emailing your name and address to mvfa95667@gmail.com, or by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to: MVFA, 9009 Orval Beckett Ct. Placerville CA 95667.

ADVERTISING POLICY

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The MOSQUITO BYTE accepts ads from subscribers without endorsement.

The MOSQUITO BYTE and other updates are posted each month on the www.gomvfa.org website.

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