

DELTA VOICE



The voice of those who live, work and play in the Delta.

Fall 2016

printed on recycled paper 

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Barrels are ready to age the wine harvest in Clarksburg



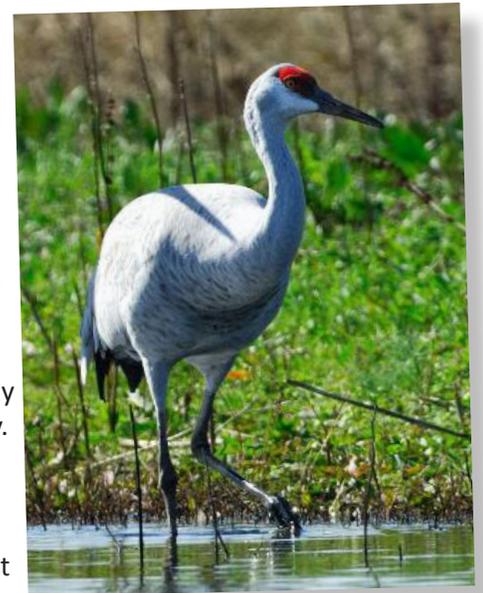
A Whoopin' and a Hoppin' in the Delta

Whoopin' and hoppin', an activity once thought to primarily apply to teenagers and the inebriated, is soon to be upon us again. Catching thermals in the sky as they make their way along the Pacific Flyway, the Sandhill Cranes are returning to the Delta.

The annual migration

Traveling from Canada and Alaska, the cranes fly south up to 400 miles a day to return to the same winter roost year after year. The Woodbridge Ecological Reserve (a.k.a. Isenberg Sandhill Crane Reserve) provides one of the Delta's premier viewing opportunities for these ancient birds. One of the oldest known surviving bird species, dating back 10 million years, sandhill cranes were nearly hunted to extinction in the 19th century. In 1983, state recognition of the greater sandhill crane as a threatened species began the recovery of the species through strategies to provide key habitat for wintering and nesting cranes. Today, habitat loss, high-voltage power lines and human disturbance pose the greatest threats to sandhill cranes.

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Above: A Greater Sandhill Crane displays distinctive coloring

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The Hoppin' is the crane's courting dance, though they are known to hop for any good reason, and sometimes for no reason at all. Distinctively dressed in shades of gray with a bright red forehead, they stretch their wings, pump their heads, bow and leap. Standing an average of four feet tall with a wingspan of seven feet, the cranes and their mating dance make quite a sight out in an open field.

The Whoopin' begins at dusk. After feeding on bugs and leftover grains during the day, the cranes, who mate for life and stay with each other year-round, call for their mate at the communal roost. After reuniting each evening, they roost in shallow water, resting with heads tucked under their wings.

Come watch the Fly-In! Docents for the California Department of Fish and Wildlife take enthusiasts on tours of the Woodbridge Ecological Reserve on weekends, October through February. Book a tour and plan to arrive 90 minutes prior to sunset, at the south viewing site of the Preserve, which is west of Interstate 5 off Woodbridge Road. Docents will explain crane lifestyle, the natural history of the surrounding area and the management of the Reserve before you caravan to the north site where a viewing shelter hides visitors from the incoming cranes. At dusk the fly-in begins as the cranes come to roost for the night. The tour ends about ½ hour after dusk, giving you plenty of time to enjoy a beautiful Delta sunset.

Other birds observable at the Reserve in the fall and winter include tundra swans, snow geese and Canada geese. Local residents include the red-wing blackbird, black-shouldered kite and American kestrel, ring-necked pheasant, meadowlarks and other small songbirds. The tours fill up quickly, so book yours now at <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Regions/3/Crane-Tour>.

Don't forget, Lodi will be hosting the 20th Annual Sandhill Crane Festival on November 4-6, 2016. During this time, tours are offered by Festival volunteers rather than by California Department of Fish and Wildlife docents.



SANDHILL CRANE (*Grus canadensis*) FACTS

Height: 3 to 4 feet
Wingspan: 6 to 7 feet

Weight: 6 to 12 lbs
Lifespan: 20 to 40 years

To watch and hear Sandhill cranes a-whoopin' and a-hoppin', see this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_O40AC9EpM

Sandhill cranes winter in the Central Valley where they feed on grain in the valley's farms, grasslands and marshes. In the spring they head north, and begin building nests, either in shallow water amid vegetation or sometimes on dry land near water. Females typically lay 2 eggs in April to late May, and incubation lasts for 29-32 days. Juveniles can leave the nest within 8 hours of hatching and are capable of swimming, and stay with their parents for 9 to 10 months. Adult cranes mate for life and stay with their mates year round.

A crane's bill is very sharp and sturdy, and the edges are serrated to grasp slippery food like worms and snakes. Not only is it used for preening, it is also used as a weapon, working in conjunction with the feet and legs. The foot has three long toes terminating in very sharp claws, very useful both for scratching in dirt to find food and for protection. When a crane is threatened, it will use its wings to maintain its balance and then jump up and strike at the attacker with its feet.

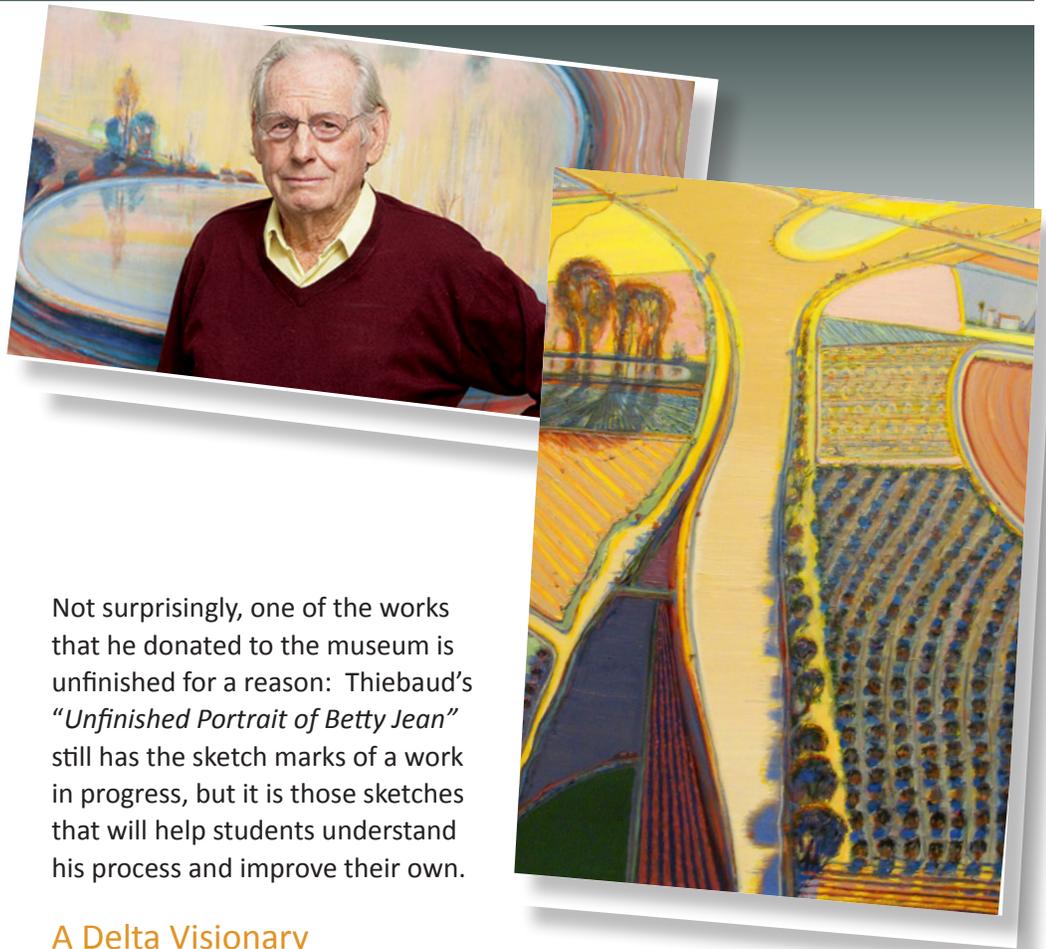
New Point of View

Wayne Thiebaud's contributions to Delta appreciation grace a new art museum

Set to open November 13, 2016, the new Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art at UC Davis will be the nation's primary home of the works of Wayne Thiebaud, thanks to Thiebaud's recent generous donation of 72 of his own works and 300 works by other artists.

A Unique Point of View

What makes Thiebaud a truly unique artist is his ability to transform everyday life into scenes of wonder. Whether Thiebaud is painting pieces of cake, city streets, or Delta farmland, his subjects become luminous and almost surreal under his brush. Soon, museum visitors in Northern California will be able to enjoy a wide range of his paintings and gain insight into his mastery. The museum's location on the UC Davis campus is significant for Thiebaud, a professor emeritus in the art department. Thiebaud, now 95, taught at UC Davis until retiring at age 70. Thiebaud preferred to teach the very beginning undergraduate painting classes, and guiding those with the "beginner's mind" was Thiebaud's specialty.



Not surprisingly, one of the works that he donated to the museum is unfinished for a reason: Thiebaud's "Unfinished Portrait of Betty Jean" still has the sketch marks of a work in progress, but it is those sketches that will help students understand his process and improve their own.

A Delta Visionary

Thiebaud began a series of Delta paintings in the 1990s. Exploring the fields and levees, the colors and seasons, he uses his gift to show the world how beautiful the Delta is. The unusual vantage points, playful colors, and toy-like scale that he used in his Delta series have helped viewers experience the Delta in a brand new way. Talking about his painting *River Intersection*, Thiebaud says, "For me, painting has a lot to do with the exercise of empathy, where you have to believe that you're walking the path or under the trees, that you are somehow able to transfer yourself into that picture." Thiebaud's Delta paintings are invaluable treasures, as they offer viewers who may never set foot into the Delta a chance to step in and discover its beauty.

Above left: Renowned artist and teacher Wayne Thiebaud.

Above Right: "River Intersection", painted by Thiebaud in 2010 (courtesy of the Crocker Museum of Art)

Thank you, Wayne Thiebaud, for inspiring countless students and museum-goers with your art, and for contributing to the understanding of the Delta as an irreplaceable ecological and cultural treasure.

Don't miss the chance to see the country's largest collection of Thiebaud's works up close and beautiful at the Jan Shrem and Maria Manetti Shrem Museum of Art at UC Davis.

Kristi Lin was a summer 2016 intern at the Delta Protection Commission. She attends UC Davis, and is majoring in landscape architecture.



Almonds on the tree



Almond Blossoms in San Joaquin County



Almond hulls look like peach pits

Growing Almonds - Not Really Nuts!

In the drought we've been hearing a lot about almonds as a water-sucking crop, mostly isolated factoids reported with an eye toward attention-grabbing headlines like "One Gallon of Water to Produce a Single Almond". Of course we already knew that almonds have been exploding in popularity – in 2013, almond snack introductions grew 52% worldwide. In North America, 89% of consumers agree that almonds have the best crunch of any nut, 88% think almonds have the best taste, and 83% rank almonds as their favorite nut – no wonder that California growers have stepped up to produce 100% of the US supply and about 80% of the world's almonds.

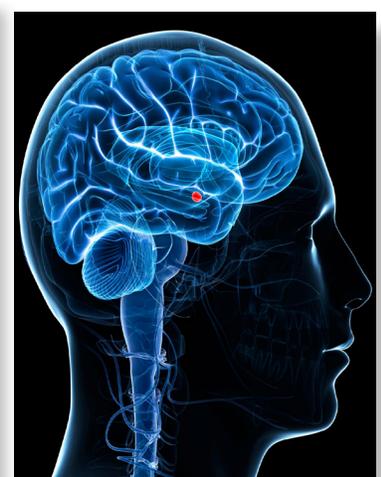
Almonds aren't true nuts, but the edible seed of a member of the Prunus family (cherries, peaches, plums and apricots are Prunus relatives of the almond.) In those fruits, the outer covering of the seed is fleshy and delicious, while the outer covering of an almond is a leathery green coat. Inside, the shell looks somewhat similar to a peach pit, and inside THAT is the almond itself. Almonds are one of the top ten nut and fruit crops grown in Yolo, Solano and San Joaquin counties, accounting for more than 56,000 acres in 2015 (over 3,000 in the legal Delta in 2009, the last year tallied) with a state-wide value of nearly \$6.3 billion (nearly \$9 million in the legal Delta in 2009).

Native to the Mediterranean and Middle East, wild almonds are poisonous, as crushing or chewing the seed creates prussic acid (hydrogen cyanide). How early humans worked through that little problem to domesticate the tree is anybody's guess, but scholars believe that almonds were one of the first domesticated fruit trees. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that almonds are easily raised from seed, so no grafting or propagation technologies would have been required. Domesticated almonds appear in archaeological sites from the Early Bronze Age (3000-2000 BC) and were found in King Tut's tomb. Another factor supporting almond antiquity is their very name: *amandula* in Latin, *almande* in Old French and *mandorla* in Italian are all easily recognizable variations of the original Greek *amygdala*. Interestingly enough, *amygdala* also refers to small almond-shaped structures in the human brain, and *mandorla* refers to the almond-shaped haloes that enclose figures of Christ and the Virgin Mary in historical Christian art. From neuroscience to art history, the almond has made its impact.

But what of the accusations of almonds as water hogs, a crop that contributes to our drought troubles, a crop you'd be nuts to plant in an arid climate, no pun intended?



Mandorla



Amygdala

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TASTY? YES. CRUNCHY? ABSOLUTELY. BUT DID YOU KNOW THAT ALMONDS ALSO PACK A SERIOUS NUTRITIONAL PUNCH?

- HEART HEALTH***
 - High in monounsaturated ("good") fat
 - No cholesterol or sodium
 - A top food source of the antioxidant vitamin E
 - [Learn More >](#)
- ENERGY**
 - 6 grams of protein per ounce
 - 12 vitamins and minerals
 - 13 grams of "good" monounsaturated fats
 - Rich in magnesium
 - [Learn More >](#)
- DIABETES**
 - Low glycemic index
 - May improve certain risk factors
 - Curbs cravings
 - [Learn More >](#)
- POWERFUL NUTRITION**
 - Tree nut highest in six essential nutrients
 - Prebiotic potential
 - Plus protein and fiber
 - [Learn More >](#)
- GLUTEN FREE**
 - Naturally 100% gluten free
 - Lots of forms to choose from
 - No-stress substitutions
 - [Learn More >](#)
- WEIGHT MANAGEMENT**
 - 6 grams of power-packed protein
 - 3.5 grams of satisfying fiber
 - Good fit with popular weight-loss plans
 - Just 160 calories per ounce
 - [Learn More >](#)

Almond infographic courtesy of the Almond Board of California

Research cited by the Almond Board of California paints a different picture than those out-of-context headlines. Since 1994, long before the current drought, almond growers have cut the amount of water needed to grow a pound of almonds by 33%, and in 2016 the industry is funding over \$2.5 million for research into innovations and responsible practices.

All food crops use water – it’s best to focus on which growers employ the best practices. As for sending “all the nuts to China” if California grows 80% of the world supply, certainly some go to China, but 100% of the US supply means a whole lot stay right here – and agricultural exports are a tremendous boost to the state’s economy.

So feel free to grab a handful of almonds - those perfectly crunchy, positively tasty, hydrologically responsible not-really-nuts, and enjoy them – you’re NOT really nuts!

DELTA FLOOD SAFETY FAIR 2016

BE AWARE, BE PREPARED, TAKE ACTION!

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22ND 10 AM TO 2 PM

DELTA FARMERS' MARKET, HWY 12 AT HWY 160

INSURANCE EXPERTS | LEVEE ENGINEERS | FLOOD FUNDS | RESCUE DOGS | PET & LIVESTOCK SAFETY
 FARMERS' MARKET | BARBECUE | DELTA WINE TASTING | LIVE MUSIC | U.S. COAST GUARD

For More information visit DELTA PROTECTION COMMISSION - www.delta.ca.gov/BePrepared.htm

ANTIOCH

Before it was a Bay Area suburb, Antioch was the industrial heart of the early Delta



Although many Bay Area residents think of Antioch as a relatively new suburb along Highway 4, the city is actually one of the oldest towns in California, dating back to 1850. You can explore the rich history of Antioch and enjoy arts and culture by visiting attractions in Downtown Antioch – also known as Rivertown – and around the city.



Above top: A map from 1851 refers to Antioch as “New York”
Above: This 1911 building is where the milk carton was invented

The town was built in 1850 near a busy shipping pier called Marsh’s Landing by brothers William and Joseph Smith. They named their settlement “Smith’s Landing”, and it was referred to, more ambitiously, as “The New York of the Pacific.” A preacher persuaded them to change to the name of the biblical city in 1851. The town rapidly became an agricultural, manufacturing, mining and shipping center, particularly after coal was discovered in the hills south of town in 1859, and copper in 1863. A few sites that showcase the early history of Antioch are listed on the prestigious National Register of Historic Places, including:

- Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, a great place to learn about mining history, hike, and have a picnic.

- The Hard House, a brick, two-story Italianate structure located on West First Street, home to the first mayor of Antioch.
- The Shannon-Williamson Ranch, at Lone Tree Way and Indian Hill Drive, which was originally homesteaded in the late 1860s.

Some of Antioch’s historic buildings now serve as cultural and arts centers. The Riverview Union High School building has had nine lives, first opening to students in 1911, then housing, in succession: the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Fibreboard Research Laboratories, the local fire district, and the Antioch Historical Society. It was here that Fibreboard scientists developed the first milk carton.

The building now houses the Antioch Historical Museum, which includes the Antioch Sports Legends Hall of Fame, featuring local athletes such as Pro Football Hall of Famer Gino Marchetti and World Series champion Aaron Miles.

The ostentatious El Campanil Theatre, built in the Spanish Colonial style, opened on November 1, 1928 with vaudeville shows and a state-of-the-art movie projection system. A group of community leaders restored the building in the early 2000’s and now the theater presents a wide variety of

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The John Nejedly Bridge, commonly called the Antioch Bridge, is a graceful span on Highway 160 linking Sherman Island to Antioch, and serves as the Bay Area's gateway to the Delta.

Opened in December 1978, the steel plate girder bridge is 1.8 miles long and has 135 feet of vertical clearance. This vertical clearance is important because the previous vertical lift bridge, built in 1926, was hit by freighters three times - in 1958, 1963 and 1970. The final hit required five months of repairs.

The bridge is named after California State Senator John A. Nejedly, who represented Contra Costa County from 1969 to 1980 and authored Senate Bill 25, which authorized the design and construction of the bridge.

Senator Nejedly also authored or co-authored a number of important environmental bills including the Suisun Marsh Preservation Act of 1974, the Forest Protection (1973) and Wilderness (1974) Acts, and two bond acts for purchasing park lands. After leaving the Senate in 1980 he fought to stop the Peripheral Canal and earned the John Muir Conservation Award for his efforts to protect Mt. Diablo.

His daughter, Mary Nejedly Piepho, is a Contra Costa County Supervisor and currently chair of the Delta Protection Commission.

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entertainment, including classic films, live theatre, concerts, dance, and comedy. El Campanil is also host to numerous local dance and community-based organizations.

Like the rest of the Delta, Antioch also has memorable events and irreplaceable ecosystems. Downtown Antioch is home to the Saturday Summer Concert Series, the Contra Costa County Fair in June, and the Delta Blues Festival in September. The Antioch Dunes National Wildlife Refuge is the only national wildlife refuge in the country established to protect endangered plants and insects, specifically the Antioch Dunes evening primrose, the Contra Costa wallflower, and the Lange's metalmark butterfly. The refuge is open to the public during monthly guided tours and special events, and for special projects.

Below: The original El Campanil Theater, built in 1928, was restored by community backers in the early 2000s and now hosts a wide range of events



Above: The Shannon-Williamson Ranch

DELTA EVENTS



October

- Fridays and Saturdays - Pumpkins in the Pears, Steamboat Acres. www.steamboatacres.com
- 1st: Delta Thunder VII Powerboat Races, Antioch. www.apba.org/races/delta-thunder-vii-8006
- 7th: 5th Anniversary of the Tong Gallery, Walnut Grove. www.facebook.com/tonggallery
- 7th-9th: The 69th Annual Bass Derby, Rio Vista. www.bassfestival.com
- 8th: Second Saturday Delta Art Walk, Old Sugar Mill, Clarksburg. www.oldsugarmill.com
- 20th: Delta Protection Commission Meeting, West Sacramento www.delta.ca.gov
- 22nd: Delta Flood Safety Fair, Delta Farmers' Market, Hwy 12 @ Hwy 160. www.delta.ca.gov

November

- 4th: First Friday Gallery Walk, Walnut Grove. www.facebook.com/events/721593197962722/
- 4th-6th: The 20th Annual Sandhill Crane Festival, Lodi. www.cranefestival.com
- 12th: Second Saturday Delta Art Walk, Old Sugar Mill, Clarksburg. www.oldsugarmill.com
- 17th: Delta Protection Commission Meeting, Knightsen. www.delta.ca.gov

December

- 2nd: First Friday Gallery Walk, Walnut Grove. www.facebook.com/events/721593197962722/
- 3rd: Delta Reflections Lighted Boat Parade, Marina West Yacht Club. www.mwyc.org
- 10th: Bethel Island Lighted Boat Parade, San Joaquin Yacht Club. www.sjyc.org

To receive a print version of this newsletter by mail, please contact us at (916) 375-4800 or email your name and address to dpc@delta.ca.gov.



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