

# Delta Voice

*Highlighting unique values of "Delta as place"*



*Fall 2013*

## About Delta Voice

The Delta Protection Commission (DPC) is proud to resume publication of its newsletter with this edition of Delta Voice. This quarterly newsletter will showcase the unique values of the Delta as a place, with features on current and historic aspects of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its residents.

The DPC marks its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2013, and throughout its history, the DPC has been honored to serve as "The Voice of Those That Live, Work, and Play in the Delta." Established in 1992 by the Delta Protection Act, the DPC has expanded beyond its original role as the Delta land use management agency and now facilitates numerous programs to protect and enhance the unique agricultural, ecological, recreational, cultural, historic, and economic values of the Delta. The DPC has established partnerships with numerous local organizations and hosts regular public meetings and events to ensure that efforts are genuinely reflective of local interests.

Like all of our activities, the DPC wants Delta Voice to truly reflect the voice of the Delta community! We encourage you to share your thoughts about this publication. Got any ideas on topics which you would like to see featured? Please send them to [dpc@delta.ca.gov](mailto:dpc@delta.ca.gov). We hope you enjoy this issue!

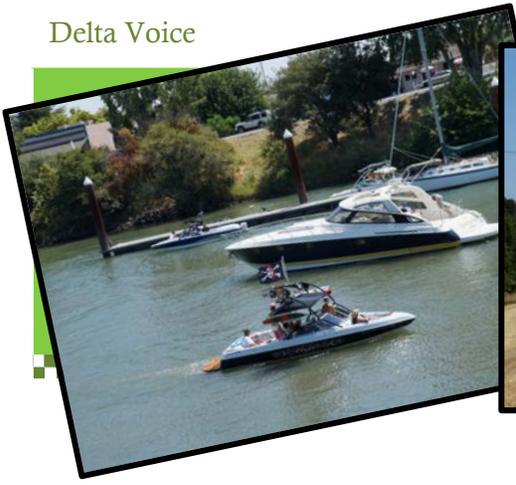
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### Harvest Time

*Fall is an exciting season in the Delta -- its bounty of crops are ripe and ready for dinner!*





## DPC welcomes Erik Vink as Executive Director

Delta residents and friends,

I'm thrilled to be joining the Delta Protection Commission at such an exciting time, following on the great work that Michael Machado completed over the last several years. We're lucky to have a new and fresh corps of staff at the DPC to guide our work moving forward.

That work is not without significant challenges. The proposed Bay Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) continues to generate concern throughout the Delta region over the direct impacts of a massive construction project and the effects

of proposed diversions from the Sacramento River, as well as the scale of restoration projects contemplated. Local governments continue to grapple with the appropriateness of locating projects (everything from rural residential parcel splits to solar installations) in the Primary Zone of the Delta. The DPC continues to evolve in the post-Delta Reform Act world; we remain the state agency "Voice of the Delta", and we are now joined by sister agencies (Delta Stewardship Council and Delta Conservancy) working to improve conditions in the Delta.

Although I've traveled widely throughout the Central Valley and areas of the Delta over more than 20 years of land conservation work, I still have much to learn about the heart of the Delta region. I'll be relying on the friends and supporters of the DPC to continue to apprise me of concerns and opportunities. Please call on me if I do not reach out to you first. I'd like to hear your thoughts on how the DPC can help.

—Erik Vink

## Meet the DPC Staff!

In reflection of its increased responsibilities, the DPC staff recently grew to six full time staff members, all dedicated to our mission of protecting and maintaining the Delta! We remain committed to efforts and programs throughout the Delta and enjoy working together with local community members on projects and activities. Please stop by our West Sacramento office sometime to meet us in person!



Upper left to lower right: Natalie Smith (Assoc. Environmental Planner), Alex Westhoff (Assoc. Environmental Planner), Bree Kaminkas (Commission Clerk), Raymond Costantino (Assoc. Environmental Planner), Erik Vink (Executive Director), Catherine Caldwell (Asst. Executive Director)



## Destination Branding

“The Netherlands of America”, “The Fruitbasket of America”, “Where Agriculture and Industry Meet.” These are a few taglines that have been used to promote the Delta region over time. Historic Delta promotional material often evoked feelings of **tranquility and comfort**, encouraging travelers to escape the bustle of city life by car, boat or train. Visitors sought a peaceful experience in the lesser known Delta region, with its countless **miles of waterways** and some of the **richest farmland** in the world.

**The Netherlands of America** marketing campaign compared the Delta with Holland, a country from which many early settlers of the Delta had originated. Parallels were drawn between the two

landscapes, which both featured levees, productive farmlands, and busy rivers and sloughs filled with ships for commerce and recreation.

**The Netherlands Route** was a Southern Pacific Steamer Service that ran in the early 1900’s, linking to several Southern Pacific Railroad stops in the Bay Area and Sacramento. The Navajo, Modoc, and Apache steamers transported people and goods along the Sacramento River with pickup locations in San Francisco and Sacramento, stopping at towns along the way, including Benicia, Rio Vista, Isleton, Walnut Grove, and Clarksburg.

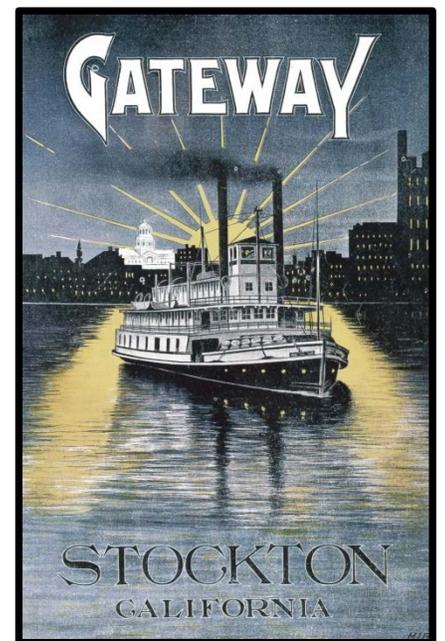
The steamers were advertised as more **luxurious and comfortable** than Dutch canal-boats, with wide promenades, luxurious salons, and cozy staterooms. Brochures boasted of **amazing scenery** along the way including Italian fishing vessels in the San Francisco Bay, early Californian architecture along the Carquinez Strait, and waterfowl in Suisun Marsh. **Delta attractions** included numerous salmon canneries, diked islands with lush fields and orchards, prosperous homes and houseboats, and small towns. Interestingly, the town of Hood even had a quite spectacular “**Hotel Netherlands**” at one point – an establishment with Dutch-

## Delta Brands: A Historical Context

As efforts are underway to brand the Delta as a destination, it is important to know that it is not such a new concept. Both destination and product branding have been integral to the region’s recreational and agricultural economies since the 1800’s. Let’s take a look back...

inspired architecture to further promote the brand.

Many Delta towns, often referred to as the **legacy communities**, began as steamboat landings, and continued to depend on steamers to transport freight and connect the residents to the outside world. The Netherlands Route was an **earlier century’s Delta brand**, to support both the Delta’s recreational and agricultural economies—the unique values of the Delta as a place.



Recent planning efforts promote Stockton as a **Delta Gateway**. Interestingly, Stockton was previously referred to as a Gateway, depicted in this 1904 image, with its waterways as passages for goods and people from the Central Valley to overseas.

## Product Branding

In addition to branding the Delta as a unique destination experience, **unique produce** of the Delta were branded and promoted with labels applied to wooden fruit and vegetable crates from the early 1900's until the early 1970's.



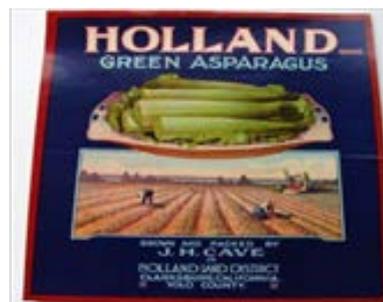
To learn more, DPC staff visited with **Jim Dahlberg**, a past President of the **Sacramento River Delta Historical Society** and one of the founding members of the **Pear Fair**.

Known as “Jimbo” by Delta residents, Jim grew up in Walnut Grove and began collecting vintage fruit labels in the 1960's. His wife of 55 years, Barbara, was born and raised in Walnut Grove. Although they now reside in Elk Grove, their “feet are still there [in the Delta].”

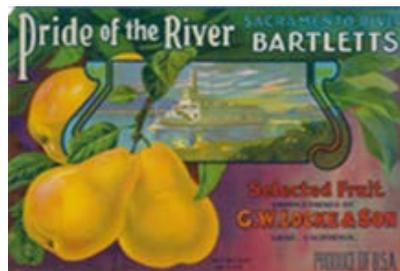
Over time, Jim has acquired **thousands of vintage fruit labels**. Together, Jim and Barbara have collected “**a million stories**” about the Delta, its history, and its people.



As in destination marketing, **Netherland themes and images** were depicted on vintage labels for Delta produce. The tagline for Rio Vista Brand pears was the “**Capital of the California Netherlands.**” A Walnut Grove packing house produced the Rivermaid Brand using Dutch imagery. Holland Brand asparagus originated from a farm in the historic Holland Land District near Clarksburg.



These Dutch-inspired brands may have been influenced by farmers' heritage as well as the landscape. According to Jim, **tulips used to be grown in the Delta**, and some of the North Delta levees were constructed “Holland style”. These levees were wider at the base and have never been reported to have failed in the Delta.



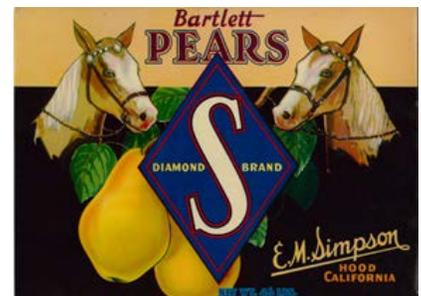
In some instances, brands include a tagline, like Pride of the River Brand pears. This brand captures the scenic Sacramento River landscape found in the Delta.

Brands like Wingdam Brand pears reflect other unique aspects of the Delta. **Wing dams** were used to

reduce or eliminate bank erosion by controlling the flow of the water. Wingdam Orchard was located adjacent to a wing dam on the Sacramento River at Ryde.



Some brand labels reflected personal meanings to individual farms. These brands depicted **images of farmers, family members, or cherished animals, pets, and ships**. The label for Diamond S Brand pears has images of Pearl and Whiskey Mary, the Simpson family's beloved horses.



Overall, branding portrays an image, a likeness of a place, and it tells a story. Historic destination and product branding efforts in the Delta have portrayed the Delta landscape, its other unique features, and the influence of the local culture.

In moving forward with future Delta branding efforts, it will be important to capture the identity and expression of the Delta in a way that will enhance its communities for generations to come.

## Giant Pumpkin Growing in the Delta



Rob Globus, a resident of Walnut Grove since 2006



Transporting a giant pumpkin through the Delta to weigh-offs



Last year, Rob took the **first place** prize for the heaviest pumpkin at **Elk Grove's Giant Pumpkin Festival**. The pumpkin weighed in at 1,650 lbs. His record is not far off from the heaviest pumpkin Guinness Book of World Record of 1,818 lb 5 oz.

## Pumpkin Harvest

As the seasons change, pumpkin harvesting will soon be underway. Based on conversations with several Delta farmers, the fall harvest will come earlier than normal this year.

In 2009, there were more than **2,100 acres of pumpkins in the Delta**, which grossed almost **\$8 million in revenue**.

Important to the Delta economy, pumpkins also provide opportunities for agritourism. U-pick operations, pumpkin patches, hayrides, mazes, and festivals offer outdoor recreation and entertainment, while providing opportunities to learn about the important role that farming plays in our everyday lives.

There are numerous farms throughout the Delta and the surrounding region that provide opportunities for agritourism during the fall season.

**The majority of pumpkins grown in California come from the Delta.**

Perhaps what is less well-known is that the **Delta is also home to pumpkin giants**. On a Bartlett pear orchard in Walnut Grove operated by its previous owners, Rob Globus has made a hobby of growing these giants.

Like commercial farming, it takes dedication to grow a prize-winning pumpkin.

From April to the weigh-off season in mid-September, Rob would spend up to **6 hours a day** setting up wind fences to protect young plants from the Delta breezes, burying vines,

hand spraying and fertilizing the plants.

Last year, he took the first place prize for the **heaviest pumpkin at Elk Grove's Giant Pumpkin Festival**.

Recently married, Rob has taken this year off to spend with his new wife; however, he plans to be back at the competition in 2014.

**“There are some unique challenges in the Delta, but it has some of the best dirt around.” – Rob Globus**

For more information about fall agritourism opportunities in the Delta, visit: <http://calagtour.org/> and <http://www.pumpkinpatchesandmore.org/CApumpkins.php>

## Pumpkin Facts

- Pumpkins are one of the top 20 crops grown in the Delta
- 80% of the pumpkin supply in the United States is available in October
- Pumpkins originated in Central America
- Pumpkins are the world's largest fruit
- Pumpkins are members of the vine crops family called cucurbits, which also includes cucumbers and squash
- Pumpkins are 90% water
- Pumpkin flowers are edible
- Pumpkins contain high levels of potassium and Vitamin A

## Upcoming Events

### October

- 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> : 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Bass Derby, Rio Vista. [www.bassfestival.org/](http://www.bassfestival.org/)  
29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> : State of the Estuary Conference, Oakland. [www.sfestuary.org/SOE/](http://www.sfestuary.org/SOE/)

### November

- 4<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> : Delta Flood Preparedness Week. [www.delta.ca.gov](http://www.delta.ca.gov)  
9<sup>th</sup> : Flood Preparedness Week Information Table, Walnut Grove  
21<sup>st</sup> : DPC Meeting and 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration (tentative), Oakley

*For more special events, check out the Delta Chambers calendar: [californiadelta.org](http://californiadelta.org)*

*Have an event you would like listed? Please email it to [DPC@delta.ca.gov](mailto:DPC@delta.ca.gov)*



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