

Art district head discusses vision, goals

Francesca Cumero new president of the Eagle Prairie Arts District



Francesca Cumero is the new president of the Eagle Prairie Arts District (EPAD), taking over in December. She sees many activities that can be undertaken to fulfill the organization's mission of building community through art, but along with others in the organization, voted in January to not continue the gallery that has shared space at Wildwood and Columbus for the past five years with the chamber of commerce. "We need to focus our resources on other efforts like Arts on the Avenue," she said. (See separate article about the chamber's plans going forward to utilize this space.)

Cumero has many ideas in the works and hopes to see more volunteers join the organization to bring them to fruition. She formed a gardening club with city council-member Julie Woodall that the arts district is sponsoring, to grow flowers to decorate the community. Woodall installed baskets of flowers throughout the community last year, purchased with her own funds, and this year's effort is an outgrowth of that.

Cumero has lived in the county for 22 years and in Rio Dell for the past five. The mother of two, she has been busy these past 12 years with an organization she founded, Angelo's Angels, named for her great uncle, who died in World War II. Cumero happened upon a news story about the discovery of several sets of dog tags in the part of the Pacific where her uncle had fought, and it launched her into an effort to help those who found dog tags to return them to the veterans who lost them, or their families. "I always felt I had a true calling but never knew what it was before this," she says.

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Cloned trees replace those removed at Firemen's Park in Rio Dell

**Domenic Bongio (left) and fire chief
Shane Wilson (right) with one of the half-
dozen willow trees cloned and planted in
Firemen's Park.**

A wish to provide shade for those enjoying Firemen's Park in Rio Dell led a member of Scotia Band to clone replacement trees when some at the park needed to be removed for safety reasons.

Domenic Bongio has played tenor saxophone in Scotia Band since 1992 and his daughter and son-in-law are also band members. He recalls the shade the trees once provided during the band's Wildwood Days performance each year, which typically is scheduled for noon on Sunday of the festival weekend in early August. He recalls, "Scotia Band has performed during Wildwood Days for decades and we used to play under the shade of a row of pine trees on the east side of the park. Those trees were removed for public safety when the pines were weakened by the drought, then finished off by an attack of bark beetles."

When two willows that provided shade to most of the picnic tables also needed to be removed, Bongio said, "I wanted to get some shade growing back in the park," so he brought his horticultural skills to help out. "These trees were planted when the highway was rerouted out of downtown Rio Dell," he recalls of the original willows; this would have made them 50 years old. That, he said, is "pretty old for a willow. The trees were showing signs of heart rot, with dead branches and a loss of healthy leaves. I watched the slow decline of the trees for the last decade or more."

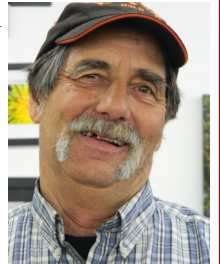
The larger of the trees broke down and was removed about five years ago, he recalls, while the second was removed last year. In anticipation of this, Bongio collected twigs off the last tree in February a year ago, just before it was to be removed. "The dormant stems were cut into about three-inch-long cuttings, dipped into a hormone powder and grown in containers," Bongio said. The cuttings grew to about five feet tall over last year's growing season, then went into dormancy for the winter. They were planted at Firemen's Park by members of the fire department on January 26 of this year.

Bongio lives in Eureka and has a degree in horticulture from Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo. He spent years as a reforestation nursery manager for Masonite Corporation in Ukiah and for Louisiana-Pacific Corporation near Crannell and was responsible for producing over 50 million trees to reforest harvested timberlands, as well as for growing the trees planted by Pacific Lumber on the South Scotia Flats along the Eel River. Today he works as a landscape specialist for Cal Trans District 1.

Advertise with us! Openings exist on the advertising insert in this monthly chamber newsletter. The cost is \$10 for a small ad or \$20 for a large ad, each month, payable in advance. There are 650 copies of the newsletter and insert produced each month and distributed in Rio Dell, Scotia and Fortuna as well as posted online. Check out the ads on the insert in this issue and support these businesses, which are helping support our communities, and see if your business or organization can benefit from a monthly ad. If so, call 707.506.5081 or email rdschamber@gmail.com.

Scotia Band to host free music event at River Lodge Scotia Band is bringing back a tradition it has hosted since the early days of the organization, in the 1930s . . . a free event showcasing the music of area residents. It will be held at River Lodge in Fortuna at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, March 15 (because the Winema Theater could not be reserved early enough to meet the group's planning requirements according to band manager Sharon Holt). All are invited to hear the band and other performances by area artists. Those wishing to participate in a future year are invited to contact the band, by email at thescotiaband@yahoo.com or by phone at 599.4872.

Chamber vice president paints Rio Dell school bus shelter Jim Brickley, professional painter and chamber of commerce vice-president, brought his house-painting skills to upgrade the inside of the school bus shelter at Wildwood and Center in Rio Dell. Newly-elected city council person Julie Woodall mentioned to him how unsightly the inside was, covered with graffiti. Brickley sees a need to return and do the outside as well, when the weather is drier, as the paint there is chipping. "I want to paint the whole town," he says, noting how the presence of color and kept up buildings raises the spirits of those who live there and draws visitors as well.



Rio Dell schools set March activities March 1 and 2 will be the 8th grade boys' basketball tournament in Crescent City. March 4 is the Parent-Teacher Organization meeting at 4 p.m. March 8 is the end of the second trimester. March 13 is the school board meeting, at 5:30 p.m. March 13 to 15 will be parent-teacher conferences, with an early release of 1 p.m. March 22 is the trimester awards ceremony and March 29 is for monthly awards.

Scotia school plans March events Scotia's Parent-Teacher Organization meeting will be March 4 at 3:15 p.m. The school carnival is March 8, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. The school board meeting is March 14, at 7 p.m. The school dance is March 15, the time to be announced. March 18 to 22 is school conference week.

Scotia home sales continue As of mid-February, 10 houses have sold of the 75 in Phase 2 of Scotia's home sales effort. Half of those were sold to the tenants occupying the house, according to Mary Bullwinkel who works in marketing for the Town of Scotia. She adds that, including the 39 homes sold in Phase 1, 49 of 270 homes are in private ownership. Two other Phase 2 homes are in escrow as well as the Catholic Church building, which was part of Phase 1.

A year after the bridge was closed, where are we?

It was in March of 2018 that the Eagle Prairie Bridge between Rio Dell and Scotia was closed for five months for painting. Businesses received scant notice, several steps typically undertaken by Caltrans to work with communities affected by road closures were skipped in this instance, and several new businesses had just opened only to face a main street that was described as deserted as tourist season loomed.



Caltrans speeded up its operation and brought in new and clearer signage to help tell motorists that downtown was open and access just an exit away. Still, the year was thin for those expecting a more robust season. More than a dozen businesses filed claims to receive damages from Cal-Trans in light of lost business from the closure; each of those was denied, and many went on to file individually in Small Claims Court, and are awaiting a decision on their claim.

Of the businesses that launched in early 2018, The Green Bean restaurant is for sale; Emerald's Edge Boutique has closed, and the two new massage businesses are no longer open. Only the Patron Kitchen restaurant in the Mingo's building at the south end of town is still open. Health issues were at least partly the cause in a couple instances of business closures, some others cite the lack of business in general.

Changes continue in the business community. Bigfoot New and Recycled Treasures, opened five years ago, closed last month, and the laundromat, managed for the past year by Earleen Finan, daughter of the late former owner Marlene O'Dell, is for sale. **(Continued on Page 4)**

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The effort was joined by other volunteers who shared her interest, and was covered by the media, so her work – largely online research – grew to take up hours each day, eventually returning an estimated 1,000 tags to the families of veterans, and spreading to include research into the location of remains of those missing in action so they can be brought home. The story is told on her web site, ww2tags.org, and continues to this day.

Cumero also enjoys art, nature and gardening, and she has brought these together to produce items sold at craft shows and in an online store at zazzle.com. She loves Rio Dell for its small-town life and sees her work at EPAD as an extension of the art interest and dog tag mission.

“I feel called upon to help,” she says. “I want to give back, become more integrated in the community.” She speaks of the role art plays in bringing life to a community, from an economic development perspective as well as from the view of those encountering a place that offers art, vs. one that doesn’t, for its appeal on an individual basis.

Chamber of Commerce welcomes new use of its space

The Rio Dell-Scotia Chamber of Commerce has shared its space at Wildwood and Columbus in Rio Dell with the Eagle Prairie Arts District (EPAD) which has operated a gallery hosting the work of up to 30 artists at various times as well as events. Starting in February the chamber is operating the space alone, as the art group is focusing its efforts on other activities (see separate story).

Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) is now holding its weekly meetings at the chamber. The group formerly met at the Rio Dell Baptist Church but needed to relocate, according to Sandy Dunker, church secretary, because the county was reviewing the requirements for a church to have tax-exempt status and one requirement was that no regular, non-religious events could be held there, necessitating existing groups to find meeting locations elsewhere.

President Nick Angeloff notes that he welcomes those wanting to rent part of the area – for an office, a studio to do art, or other purposes – and hopes people will continue to volunteer their

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Security Update

“From the sudden spread of ransomware, to the swift growth in coinminers, 2017 provided us with another reminder that digital security threats can come from new and unexpected sources. With each passing year, not only has the sheer volume of threats increased, but the threat landscape has become more diverse, with attackers working harder to discover new avenues of attack and cover their tracks while doing so.” – *From Symantec 2018 Internet Security Threat Report (ISTR), volume 23, clarifications by Billy Long.*

The Internet can be a dangerous and costly place. Network and computer security threats are a very real concern for businesses and home users alike. Symantec, the world’s leading cyber security company, reported an astounding 8,500 (yes, that’s correct, eight thousand five hundred) percent increase in detections of coinminers (that use the infected computer’s resources to mine digital currency such as Monero, Bitcoin, DarkCoin or Ethereum without user permission) on endpoint computers; a 92 percent increase in new downloader variants (malicious software programs that primarily download content) and an 80 percent increase in new malware on Macs.

Data and identity theft are a profitable sector, but that is not the only thing at risk in today’s Internet-connected world. Your network-connected device has processing power that has become a commodity to many “bad actors” who are diligently punching in to work each day.

These “attack teams” or “attack groups” are constantly developing methods for infecting devices and computers with malware for their own nefarious purposes. Malware can spread through what appear to be legitimate files, links or websites. What’s even worse is “attack toolkits,” which can be downloaded for free or purchased from the Internet making cybercrime accessible and inexpensive to commit and allowing these crimes to be perpetrated by relatively unsophisticated attackers.

It’s important for all Internet users to have a basic understanding of these threats and to learn how to protect themselves. This is the first in a series that will provide an overview of malware threats, suggestions for infection prevention and steps to take if you suspect your computer is infected.

What Is Malware? “Malware” is blended from “malicious” and “software.” It is a catchall term for computer-related threats such as viruses, spyware, adware, and other software installed without a user’s consent or knowledge. It can get into your system in a variety of ways including:

- Infected email attachments
- Infected removable storage devices such as portable “thumb-drives”
- Downloaded software
- Links in email, social media websites, or instant messages

For more information on methods of attack and attack terminology, check out the “Threat Glossary” being compiled at the PSA Computer Services support website: <https://psa-2.com/threat-glossary>.

Do You Need to Worry About Malware?

Yes! Not just large companies or government organizations need to protect themselves. Anybody can be a victim of cyber-crime.

If you are a business, your customers trust you with their information. If you’re a home-based user, you may have family pictures, important documents or business data stored on your computer. If you’re not taking appropriate steps to secure your network and data, your computer and information are not safe. Preliminary statistics indicate 1 in 3 people were hacked in 2018. Information security breaches can have major financial and legal consequences.

In the next article we will look at what network and computer protection is available to you and common-sense Internet usage to help reduce the probability of you or your business being compromised

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Call the Rio Dell-Scotia Chamber of Commerce at

506-5081 to advertise.

St. Joseph Health 

St. Joseph • Redwood Memorial

Ongoing Events

CalFresh/CalWorks:

Do you know if you are eligible for either CalFresh or CalWorks? Come to the Community Resource Center to find out how to qualify and apply for both programs. You can also apply for CalFresh, CalWorks and MediCal at www.cyourself.com.

Senior Brown Bag Program: Food boxes given the **2nd Thursday** of every month for local seniors. Boxes distributed from 11:30 a.m.- 1 p.m. at the Church of Christ, 325 2nd Ave. in Rio Dell. To sign up call Food for People at 445-3166.

Rio Dell Library: **Tuesday**-11 a.m.— 4 p.m., **Wednesday** 1-6 p.m., **Saturday**- 11 a.m.— 4 p.m. There is a First 5 Puppet Story Time every **Saturday** at 11 a.m. 715 Wildwood Ave., 764-3333.

Emergency Food: Running low on food this week? Get a bag for your family or just for yourself at:

- **The Community Resource Center:** 99 Wildwood Ave., Rio Dell, no income verification is needed.
- **The Journey Church:** 95 Bellevue Ave. Rio Dell, **Tuesday & Thursday** 9 a.m.- 11:30 a.m.
- **Bread for Life Food Pantry:** Journey Church, 95 Bellevue Ave., **3rd Thursday**, from 9 a.m. -2 p.m., For more info call 764-5239.

Clothing Closet: Ruth's Room: Rio Dell Baptist Church, 100 Butcher St., Rio Dell, **Tuesdays** 9 a.m.- 2 p.m. Call 764-3811 for more information.

Women's Health Project: Breast and Gynecology Eel River Valley Outreach Center: 707-726-7919 or 825-8345.

SAIL: Staying Active and Independent Living helps prevent falls and broken bones. This free program meets 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. **Mon., Wed., and Fri.** at the Rio Dell Baptist Church, 100 Butcher St. Call Susan at 407-8707. Join us!

Free Produce Available: Those whose households qualify based on income are reminded of the monthly Mobile Produce Pantry that comes to the Rio Dell Volunteer Fire Department on the **second Wednesday** of each month, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information, contact Food for People at 445-3166.

Weight-loss group meets at chamber office: Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS) meets at the Chamber of Commerce office at 406 Wildwood Avenue in Rio Dell **each Friday morning**. Weigh-in is from 8 to 9:30 a.m. to accommodate various schedules, and a program is held from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. All are invited. TOPS is part of a national organization and more can be found at the website tops.org. Other local chapters meet in Eureka and McKinleyville. New members are welcome.

(Bridge closure continued from Page 2)

Meanwhile, other businesses have opened on Wildwood, including Love Me Two Times, a thrift shop, which opened its door last August, and Cookies Are My Canvas, a formerly home-based bakery. A business is scheduled to move into the former Bigfoot store later this month (see the April newsletter for more).

(Chamber of Commerce continued from Page 3) time to keep the Visitor's Center open throughout the week, as several artists and some others have done, so travelers will be able to get information about the region, a draw which brings them off the freeway and into town.

Chamber secretary Tracy O'Connell staffs the center on Tuesdays; Rio Dell resident Barbara Vernot is there on Fridays and Natalya Burke, an artist living in Carlotta, will continue to staff it on Saturdays.

Persons interested in renting space, holding meetings and/or volunteering to staff the center for all or part of a day should contact the chamber by phone (506.5081) or email (rdschamber@gmail.com).