

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 8, 2022 (Petaluma, CA)

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Finding Our Roots: Women of Petaluma Flourishing & Blooming Over the Years Exhibition features impacts of the Petaluma Woman's Club and the Petaluma Garden Club

EXHIBITION DATES: April 08–May 29, 2022

GRAND OPENING EVENT: Friday, April 8, 6:00-8:00 PM FREE

The Petaluma Woman's Club and the Petaluma Garden Club unveil decades of women's contributions to Petaluma in a joint exhibition, **Finding Our Roots: Women of Petaluma Flourishing & Blooming Over the Years**, opening April 8, 2022 – May 29, 2022 at Petaluma Historical Library and Museum, 20 Fourth Street, Petaluma, CA.

This exhibit tells the story of the women of Petaluma and their impact on our community over the last 126 years.

Grand Opening Event: Friday, April 8, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm, free to attend. Petalumans of Yesteryear will represent important personages such as Ida Belle McNear, first president of The Woman's Club of Petaluma (renamed The Petaluma Woman's Club), Clara Belle Ivancovich, Josie Hill, Nellie Denman and Addie Atwater president of the Ladies Improvement Club. The Opening night will feature music performed by Homer Johnstone and Pam Sommers with words written in the 1800's by PWC President Clara Belle Ivancovich.

Petaluma Garden Club (PGC) – While digging to find the club's roots for the exhibit, members discovered its original founding was in 1924, marking 2022 as the club's 98th anniversary. For almost 100 years, its steady relationship with Petaluma Woman's Club began with a shared interest in flower shows. Mrs. Martha Phillips, a former president of the Petaluma Woman's Club, played a pivotal role at two key moments in the Garden Club's history. The exhibit showcases many city beautification efforts and tells of the club's multi-generational members, and its ongoing contributions to education, environmental stewardship and community giving. During the course of the exhibit, Master Gardeners will offer special presentations on subjects ranging from butterflies to soil and companion planting, and Master Flower Show Judges will discuss floral arranging. Garden Club membership is open to all, and club meetings are held the second Monday of each month from September through June, 10 am – noon, at the Petaluma Veterans Building.

Petaluma Woman's Club (PWC) – was founded in 1896 during a time when local women's clubs flourished and influenced public policy. Through displays and costumes, learn about the Club's community involvement, notable events and activities, and remarkable clubhouse happenings. Costumes and displays showcase how the club helped shape Petaluma parks and society. Learn which families have multi-

generational members. PWC members enjoy monthly lunch and dinner meetings. Ask how you can join. Today's club offers its craftsman-style building for event rental. PetalumaWomansClub.com

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Hours at Petaluma Museum: Check website for current hours www.petalumamuseum.com

Admission Free / donations: Welcomed

For interviews with PWC Club leadership: Colleen Mahoney Co-President, PWC Phone: 415-517-0912 email: colleen@mahoneyarchitects.com -Sue Bunker Co-President, Phone: 707-776-7568 email: sue@somoliving.com;

For interview with PGC leadership: Suzanne Clarke, PGC President, Phone:707-364-6298 ; email: sjclarke232@gmail.com

Interview possibilities: Linda Karr, Phone: 707-495-4928, email: linkarr@comcast.net or Susan Coolidge, Phone: 707-781-9149, email: susancoolidge07@gmail.com

COVID - The PMA plans to present the exhibit to the public in person, if certain COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. If restrictions mandate that we keep our doors shut, the PMA will eventually offer a video of the exhibit on the PMA website. For updates on the exhibit and how long it will run, please visit www.petalumamuseum.com.

Additional information, this article is from Petaluma Historical Library and Museum (PMA), Spring 2022 newsletter (below):

Finding Our Roots: Women of Petaluma Flourishing & Blooming Over the Years

Toward the end of the Victorian era, women wanted a greater voice in their communities. Throughout the country, Women's Clubs began to form in the late 1800s. As early as 1895, some local teachers began the Ladies Literary Society, electing Ida Belle McNear president. The next year the Woman's Club of Petaluma was formed with Mrs. McNear as president and many groups were brought into the club, including the Literary and Choral Societies. These women were devoted to different areas of study for self-improvement education.

At about the same time, the 1893 Chicago World's Fair sparked city beautification movements across the nation. In 1896, Addie Atwater formed the Ladies Improvement Club of Petaluma, which was credited with work at both Walnut Park and what is now Penry Park. As Addie said in her letter to William Randolph Hearst of The San Francisco Examiner on March 8, 1899, "This club was organized in June 1896, because of the deplorable condition of the city's public squares and streets, and the inexcusable neglect of the men to put and keep them in decent condition."

The Petaluma Garden Club, formed in 1924 under the leadership of Ray Herman and with the assistance of two members of the Petaluma Woman's Club, initially began a campaign focused on city beautification and home gardening. The club suspended activities during WW II, and Martha Philips of the Woman's Club was credited with founding the Petaluma Victory Garden Club that reorganized again as the Petaluma Garden Club after the war ended.

Today, these vibrant organizations continue to promote community involvement. Their broadening sense of commitment welcomes new members. Visit the exhibit to see the depth of history, range of activities, diversity of projects and richness of programs enjoyed by both clubs. Connie Mahoney and May Tomasetti were presidents of both clubs, and third and fourth generations of their families are members today. Come

look for friends and neighbors at the exhibit! Private tours may be arranged. Watch for news on the museum website of events and activities offered throughout the exhibit.

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