



Happy Valley Improvement Association

visit us: [hvia.org](http://hvia.org)

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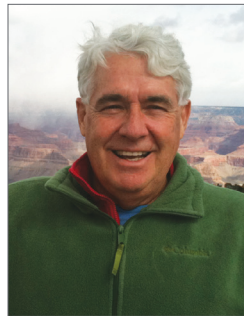
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## A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello, HVIA members:

This quick note is, basically, the annual *State of our Neighborhood Association*, as provided by your Board. At some point, Covid issues waning, we hope to be able to

return to an in-person annual meeting where the give and take is more personal.

Our annual dues remain \$15.00 per household and there is payment information and a return envelope included in this mailer. Thanks in advance for your dues and, as always, we greatly appreciate the extra contribution from so many of you who send a little more.

We have a crackerjack Board that has returned to in-person (*though properly distanced*) meetings and our neighborhood enhancement activities reflect their enthusiasm. **Our projects are as follows:**

- We recently implemented a “Welcome Basket” program to say “*glad you’re here*” to our newest neighbors. We have received extraordinary support from many of our local businesses via gift cards & coupons and we are extremely grateful for their generosity. The HVIA has joined the Chamber of Commerce in order to support all our city’s businesses and to say thank you.

- We are in the process of adopting a traffic island to beautify the corner of Acalanes Rd. and El Nido Ranch Rd. and to complement the island we already maintain & beautify at Upper Happy Valley and El Nido Ranch intersection. Of course, we continue to work with the City of Lafayette on caring for the walking path on Happy Valley and U.H.V. Roads, as well.

- We continue to WOW Lafayette via our daffodil planting program and this year added 23,000 (nope, that isn’t a typo) new bulbs.

The beauty provided by the daffodil swaths that welcome everyone to our neighborhood is incomparable and we encourage you, as HVIA members, to drop by the daffodil-give-away in front of Happy Valley School each October and add to the bloom on your own properties!

- Our birdhouse-in-chief, Greg Moeller, has been officially recognized by the City of Lafayette for his community contributions, and they have agreed to accept these whimsical homes as public art gifts to the city - a newish arrangement that guarantees more Lafayette residents will be treated to the birdy delights that pop up in the most unexpected places.

- Finally, the Board has added an Annual Birdhouse Hunt for the neighborhood kids. In our inaugural attempt, we had dozens of participants - eager to spot every hidden house and to try and win a birdhouse of their very own. My grandson was thrilled to receive his unexpected Happy Valley Patch even though he came up one short on the required list. Everyone’s a winner!!

There are always additional ideas floated about various projects and we welcome you, the Association members, to let us know what is important to YOU. The oft-promised website is finally a reality and that will facilitate communication. Please let us hear from you at [HVIA.org](http://HVIA.org).

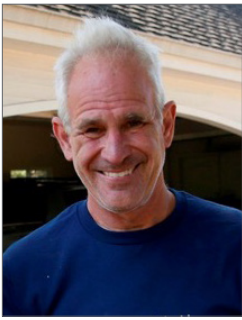
All the members of our HVIA Board are committed to furthering the community of our neighborhood. We are lucky to call this small area of Lafayette “home,” and we encourage you to foster the idea of “neighbors.” Get to know yours over the back fence, say hello to folks walking towards you on the Path, shop your local merchants and thank them for their generous contributions to our Welcome Baskets...in short, be a good neighbor.

Thanks to all of you who participate in supporting the HVIA. It is my great pleasure to serve as its President.

Best regards,  
Mark Dunaway  
(404) 229-6962 or [mark@hvia.org](mailto:mark@hvia.org)



**GREG'S CORNER**



Our community boasts over 1,000 birdhouses which, just this past year, have been declared gifts of public art to the city of Lafayette. Local artist and HVIA treasurer, Greg Moeller, is himself a walking gift of public art to our community. *Here are some updates on projects Greg is heading up for the HVIA and the beautification of our neighborhood:*

**New Plantings Planned for the Island Exits**

HVIA is working with Caltrans to adopt the two off-ramp portions of Highway 24 on the north side of the Acalanes/Upper Happy Valley Road exit. The Orinda Garden Club has done this with their central exit heading east on Highway 24 and it looks terrific.

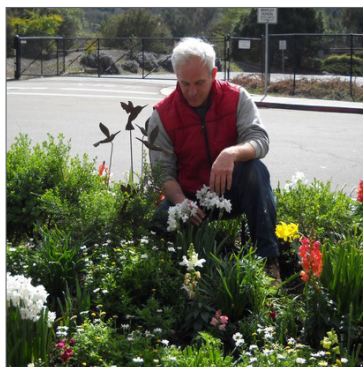


*Center triangle bloom with Cosmos*

The Acalanes Road exit, which serves as a gateway to our neighborhood, looks rather arid and bland. The plan is to plant Deodara cedar trees, live oaks and native drought tolerant plants that can thrive in the heat. We would also like to add moss rocks, wildflowers, and daffodils, providing some character and beauty to the area.

**Beautification in the Neighborhood**

Even with the limited rainfall, the daffodils managed to provide a nice display of yellow blossoms this year, although drought conditions make it very difficult for the bulbs to naturalize and rebloom in subsequent years. So, I will be back out and about digging and replanting bulbs throughout the neighborhood and hoping for normal and early rainfall this year.



Last year we were able to keep the island at Upper Happy Valley Road and El Nido Ranch Road beautiful throughout the summer. This was due to HVIA and the work of volunteer Jeff Kowalski coordinating with Bentley School to get the sprinkler

system functioning with an underground pipe so we can irrigate throughout the Summer.

For those that decorated and hung birdhouses, I hope you had success attracting nesting birds. I will build more birdhouses this year with some ready to decorate and paint for the kids and some completed and ready to hang.



*Public Art birdhouses*

**2021 Daffodil Neighborhood Distribution**

Since 2006, HVIA has been distributing daffodil bulbs to neighbors in Happy Valley in a Daffodil Bulb Giveaway Program, subsidized by Orchard Nursery and available to anyone in our community. Greg, Will Thorn, Greg's nephew, Benjamin Moeller and a host of HVIA volunteers will be on hand at Happy Valley school in October to distribute 1,000's of daffodil bulbs and answer any questions you have about planting.

Reserve your free bulbs now! *Mail in the form below, email Greg at [greg@hvia.org](mailto:greg@hvia.org)* or just come on by to Happy Valley School on either the first or second weekend of October (exact date to be determined weather depending; signs will be posted along Upper Happy Valley and Happy Valley announcing distribution weekend).

**DAFFODIL ORDER FORM**

**YES!** We would love to participate in the Neighborhood Daffodil Planting Program. Please reserve 12-18 **FREE** bulbs for us to plant this fall.

**Name:** .....

**Address:** .....

**Phone:** .....

**Email:** .....

**MAIL THIS FORM TO: HVIA**  
**Attn: Beautification**  
**P.O. Box 744, Lafayette, CA 94549**  
**or email Greg at [greg@hvia.org](mailto:greg@hvia.org)**

**COMMUNITY EVENTS**



*Peggy Lucchesi passes out clues*

**Happy Valley's for the Birds**

The inaugural Happy Valley Birdhouse Hunt in June was an opportunity for Happy Valley kids and families to celebrate the start of summer, to reconnect or meet with other families along the route, to explore the neighborhood in a new way, and to recognize the public art contributions of Happy Valley's birdhouse builder extraordinaire, Greg Moeller.

HVIA Board members welcomed the young detectives at the starting line outside Happy Valley School and furnished clues and sugary sustenance – Johnny's doughnuts, lemonade and gummy worms ("The early bird catches the worm!") – to start the adventure.

Rita Charles, Erin and Paul Kennedy and Adrienne Rogers hosted shady lemonade pit-stops along Upper Happy Valley road where many bonded together after refueling and joined in the search together. Along the way, there were the unexpected rewards of reunions, reminiscing, and introductions of new and long-time neighbors. Even "adopted" Happy Valley neighbors– those who regularly stroll or bike through Happy Valley – were invited to join in!



*Families collect prizes*

At the end of the day, more than sixty children finished the hunt and circled back to receive a merit patch and delicious cookies baked by Happy Valley's own boutique baker, Jen Selfridge. The timing of the event was perfect. It was the first weekend we were allowed to see all the smiles that had been hidden behind masks!



*Merit patch prize for the kids*

*If you are interested in helping out with this community event next year, contact Tracy Brog at [events@hvia.org](mailto:events@hvia.org).*

**Welcome Baskets for Our New Neighbors**

While most of us have been holed up in our homes during the pandemic, our neighborhood has changed! From December 2020 to May 2021, over 25 new residents moved into Happy Valley. Since May, another 30 (and counting) have signed contracts and hired moving vans. Since our community comprises close to 1100 homes, we have a relatively big percentage (5%) of new faces and families to meet and welcome.



*Gift baskets all ready for delivery!*

To this end, HVIA (in coordination with local wineries and merchants) is reviving a personal and traditional welcome for new residents as a way to highlight the uniqueness and diversity of our community. This June, we distributed 25 baskets filled with gift cards to local restaurants, bottles of wine from grapes grown in Happy Valley, nuts, chocolates, a free guest pass to Oakwood, a tour of the Lafayette Community Garden and much more.

Included in the baskets is a "A Guide to Your New Neighborhood" pamphlet which highlights the personal stories of some of the private merchants that make our town unique and special. You can read those stories on our website ([HVIA.org](http://HVIA.org)) if you would like to know more about how the Stokes family founded Diablo Foods, how Tom Courtwright remembers the state building a highway through Orchard Nursery, or the ways the Round Up has changed and/or stayed the same over the years.



*Some of Happy Valley's newest neighbors*

*If you are interested in helping with the Welcome Baskets, contact Jenny at [welcomebaskets@hvia.org](mailto:welcomebaskets@hvia.org).*

## WHAT IS THE HAPPY VALLEY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION?

Throughout Lafayette, there are a number of Homeowner’s Associations (HOAs). By virtue of simply living in your home, you might unknowingly be a part of Oak Hills, Valley View Estates, or Acalanes Valley HOA. If you are getting this newsletter, you are part of the Happy Valley Improvement Association HOA. But don’t worry, we have no intention of ever telling you what color you can paint your house or how to design your garden; instead we are dedicated to “provide leadership, create consensus, and generate action on issues important to our community that result in a continuing improvement in the quality of life in Happy Valley.” Most of our activities, spearheaded by a volunteer board of residents, include programs to preserve the semi-rural beauty of our neighborhood and to promote a community spirit of unity and friendship. **HERE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS WE DO:**

### OUR BEAUTIFUL NEIGHBORHOOD PATH AND ENTRYWAYS

Parts of the 4.5-mile trail loop that gently meanders from Happy Valley Road at Mt. Diablo Blvd to Upper Happy Valley down to El Nido Ranch Road and through the EBMUD property across from the reservoir were built by HVIA in 1960 and are now maintained either through our advocating with the city for improvements or our getting out there and cleaning the path ourselves.



*Daffodils along Upper Happy Valley*

Along this path, you will see daffodils planted, wildflowers blooming, birdhouses dotting the landscape and, occasionally, debris being removed. Additionally, at the three entrances to our neighborhood, (Happy Valley Rd. at Deerhill Rd, Upper Happy Valley Rd. at

El Nido Ranch Rd., and Glen Rd at N. Thompson Rd), you will see decorative rocks and native plantings to welcome you home. That’s all us! If you have a green thumb or some ideas for making our neighborhood more beautiful, contact Greg at [greg@hvia.org](mailto:greg@hvia.org).

Thank you to all the neighbors who tend to the plantings and trees surrounding the path on your property. You do a great job making it beautiful for all of us to use. If you need help pruning trees so that walkers and bikers don’t hit their heads or otherwise tidying up your area around the path, contact Mark at [mark@hvia.org](mailto:mark@hvia.org) and we can try and help you.

### COMMUNITY EVENTS

In years past, we have hosted an annual Octoberfest celebration. We hope to organize another big event as soon as big events are again prudent. This year, our birdhouse scavenger hunt was a fun outside activity with much community participation. The Welcome Baskets also provided a way for us to get to know one another more. A Happy Valley vineyards wine tasting event for small groups is coming in October of 2021. See page 8 for details.



*Jeff Kowalski welcomes new neighbors*

### COMMUNITY SAFETY

Over the years, the HVIA has worked closely with the Lafayette Police Station to advocate for safety in our community on a multitude of fronts. We explored ideas for traffic calming solutions on streets with too much congestion. We are also investigating putting security cameras at the three ingress/egress points within our neighborhood.



*If you have any ideas or would like to help out with safety programs, email Jeff Kowalski at [jeff@hvia.org](mailto:jeff@hvia.org).*

**HAPPY VALLEY NET**

The HVIA is in the very early stages of developing a “Happy Valley Neighborhood Emergency Team” or “HV NET” that would seek to connect and coordinate Happy Valley residents regarding issues of safety & security, emergency response and imminent concern, such as:

- Natural disasters: fires, earthquakes and floods
- Emergencies: water main breaks, unplanned power outages, water or gas shut-offs
- Security issues: imminent threat to property or person
- Major road closures (planned or unintended) and accidents

*If you are interested in getting involved with this project, you'd like to be an HV NET Leader, or you have special emergency training (eg. CERT, CPR, etc.) please contact Tracy at: [tracy@HVIA.org](mailto:tracy@HVIA.org).*

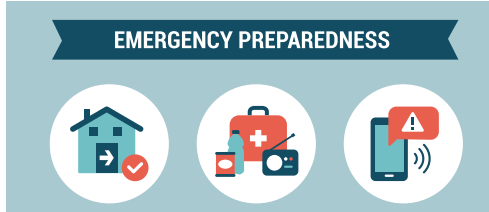
**OUR NEW WEBSITE: [hvia.org](http://hvia.org)**

If you are interested in knowing more about your HOA, please visit us at our newly renovated website – HVIA.org. Special thanks to HVIA director James Kelly for using his technical know-how to move us into the 21st century.

*If you are technically minded and would like to be involved in expanding and maintaining this website, contact James at [James@hvia.org](mailto:James@hvia.org).*

**JOIN US OR DONATE TO THE CAUSE**

We ask for annual dues of \$15 from each household, but more than that, we are interested in getting to know you and having you participate in our programs or on the leadership team. We want to know your thoughts about improving and beautifying our community. We would love your help planting daffodils, delivering welcome baskets, cleaning the path or even joining our volunteer board. We desire to invite you to community events! Our main method of communication, besides this yearly newsletter, is through email, so please fill out the information card on the attached envelope so that we may know your name and collect your contact information. If you prefer to donate online, go to [HVIA.org/join\\_us](http://HVIA.org/join_us)

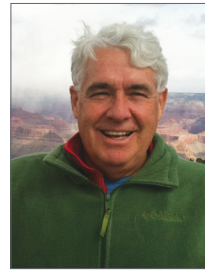


**AN ANNUAL MEETING**

Although we have not been able to meet recently (or in the foreseeable future) because of the pandemic, HVIA normally holds an annual meeting in the Fall for all residents in the Happy Valley School library. Past speakers gave presentations on public safety, the history of Happy Valley, Crime Prevention and what to grow in Happy Valley. The purpose of these meetings is “to inform residents on community issues and be a catalyst for “community activism” within Happy Valley.” We will keep you abreast of any future meetings. *If you have future topic ideas, contact Mark Dunaway at [mark@hvia.org](mailto:mark@hvia.org).*



**2021- 2022 HVIA BOARD OF DIRECTORS**



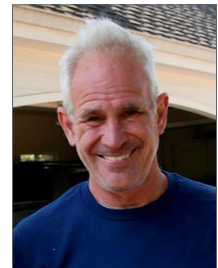
MARK DUNAWAY, PRESIDENT



JEFF KOWALSKI, VICE PRESIDENT



PEGGY LUCCHESI, SECRETARY



GREG MOELLER, TREASURER

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 Jeff Kowalski ~ [jeff@hvia.org](mailto:jeff@hvia.org)  
 Peggy Lucchesi ~ [peggy@hvia.org](mailto:peggy@hvia.org)  
 Greg Moeller ~ [greg@hvia.org](mailto:greg@hvia.org)

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 Colby Powell ~ [colby@hvia.org](mailto:colby@hvia.org)  
 Angie Zener ~ [angie@hvia.org](mailto:angie@hvia.org)

## AN INSIDE LOOK AT FIRE STATION 16!

After seven long years of construction and redesign, Happy Valley Fire Station 16 opened its doors again in September 2019 with fanfare. Today, according to the Contra Costa Fire District, there are three operating fire stations in Lafayette, serving its population of approximately 25,792 people in an area of 16 square miles.



*The 3-man crew of Fire Station 16 stand at the ready*

Our neighborhood is a “wildland urban interface,” as the fire-fighters explained, and highly vulnerable to fire damage because of its narrow streets and hilly terrain that slows response time. We are also in close proximity to an open space, have dense residential construction and enjoy heavy vegetation. These good things increase our fire danger.

HVIA recently had the opportunity to tour the station and learn more about day to day operations. There are three 48-hour shifts of three fire fighters, all of whom are EMTs (including one trained paramedic) that rotate every week. The features of the station include a single bay for one standard fire engine (which holds 500 gallons of water) as well as dormitories, a kitchen, exercise equipment and other support facilities for the crew. The centerpiece of the station is a detailed map of our community that gives the fire fighters precise details of terrain and elevation.



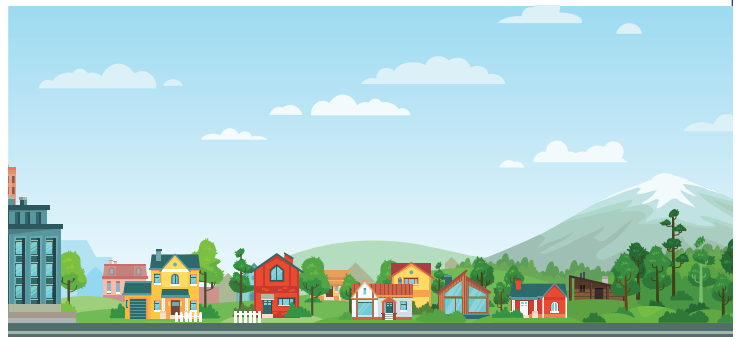
*Paramedic Herb Cheng points out the detail on the station's map of the Happy Valley community.*

## CAPTAIN CASEY LYONS SHARES SOME FIRE SAFETY TIPS:

- **Clear a defensible space of at least 100 feet around your property - this means no leaves, weeds or dead trees.**
- **Don't pile firewood against your house.**
- **Clear your roofs and gutters of debris.**
- **Cut down tall grass.**
- **Don't dispose of greasy rags in your garbage containers (they will combust in the heat).**
- **Install smoke detectors in your kitchen, each bedroom, the garage and the attic;**
- **Have a working fire extinguisher in both your kitchen and garage.**

As protocol in the event of a large neighborhood-wide fire, the fire-fighters practice “structure-triage,” which means that they evaluate which houses have the best chance of being saved and begin their work there. Make sure your house is easy to save by removing flammable elements and accommodating access.

When we asked how we could show appreciation for the station, Engineer Keld Laustsen humbly replied that their budget is amply supplied by our property taxes, and they are well-fed and in top shape to go on emergency calls and fight fires. He did say someone left some balloons and a basket of fruit on the doorstep once and “that was nice.” Maybe just a wave or a honk of appreciation when you see the fire truck drive by!



TO REACH THE FIRE DISPATCH IN LAFAYETTE, CALL 911 IN THE CASE OF EMERGENCY OR (925) 933-1313 NON-EMERGENCY

**HAPPY VALLEY WINE MAKERS**

**Bill and Alissa Scanlin**  
**DEER HILL VINEYARDS**  
 6 Lois Lane  
 (925) 200-7676

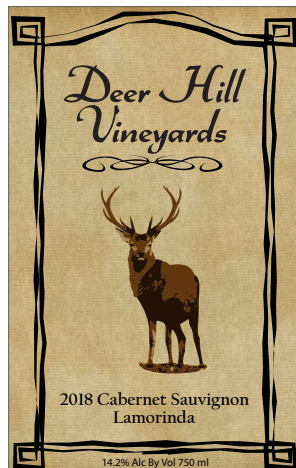


When Bill Scanlin bought his home in Happy Valley in 1997, his friend looked at the sunny and sloping landscape on the side of the house and said, “You ought to plant a vineyard.” One year later, the vines were in and soon thereafter – with the addition of tanks and crush pads and bottling equipment – a home

wine-making business was born.

Bill now has over 600 vines, mostly Cabernet, Cab Franc and Malbec. From these vines and others in the neighborhood he produces 350 cases of the Deer Hill private label each year, including the 2017 Sangiovese that won “Best of Class” from the prestigious San Francisco Chronicle’s Wine Competition in 2021. All this work is literally done in his “garage.” “From the vine to the bottle, the grapes haven’t moved more than 100 feet in their whole lives,” he says as I partake in an unexpected tasting at 2:00 in the afternoon! As part of the Lamorinda Winegrowers Association, Bill also helps local garden vineyards produce blends and bottle wine from their own harvests.

His wife, Alissa, shares his passion, and they have turned the lower floor of their home into an inviting collaborative space, including a private tasting room and barrel storage. Their two grown sons can often be found lending a hand, crushing grapes on the weekends and making sure the fermentation process is just the right temperature. Bill has kept his day job running technology for a company that educates day traders in Massachusetts, but his hobby is now our gain as a community. “The biggest thrill for me,” says our neighbor, “is the people you meet when you talk about wine.”



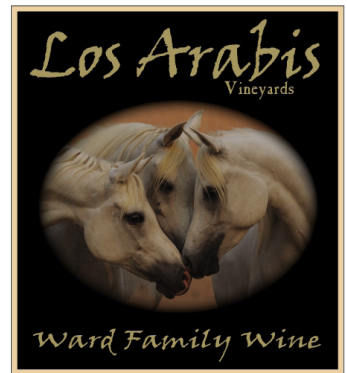
**Jim and Leslie Ward**  
**LOS ARABIS VINEYARDS**  
 3890 Los Arabis Drive  
 (510) 406-5680



Prior to 1990, when the Wards bought their property in Happy Valley, the downward sloping field adjacent to their home was a barn and a horse ranch for Arabian horses. Those same horses now adorn the label of their Pinot Noir after 1500 vines were planted in the perfect conditions of our Lafayette climate: hot days, cool nights

and fog. “The delicate skins of the Pinot Noir grape don’t break in this microclimate,” says Leslie as she shows me row after row of perfectly tended, mature vines.

She and her husband Jim, a former Navy commander, manage a construction company that builds schools, fire stations and even the new Lafayette police station, but they have still been known to drive an ATV, put in irrigation lines, and dig ditches throughout their vineyard. They also have a beautiful “tasting room” that looks out over rolling hills, hidden from the road, but a verdant part of our Happy Valley landscape.



The grapes are handpicked and transported to Urban Legends Winery on the former Naval Air Station in Alameda where they are crushed and bottled under the careful guidance of Allison Schneider, the Wine Maker. Jim and Leslie and several other early Lamorinda wine growers founded the Lamorinda Winegrowers Association in 2005.



Happy Valley Improvement Association

**hvia.org**

**P.O. BOX 744  
LAFAYETTE, CALIFORNIA  
94549**

**SPOTLIGHT: LOCAL ARTIST**

*Bryne Mathisen captures the golden hill behind her Happy Valley home on canvas.*



**JOIN US FOR A TASTE OF HAPPY VALLEY VINEYARDS**

While it is true that we live a mere 45 minutes away from the epicenter of wine making in America and our Sonoma and Napa Valley varietals offer us much to celebrate, did you know that Happy Valley is home to two vineyards of its own!

Join HVIA for tastings at either Deer Hill Vineyards (with owner Bill Scanlin) or Los Arabis Vineyards (with owner Leslie Ward.) Our evening together will include light appetizers and a tasting. This event is a great way to meet people in the neighborhood. Los Arabis Vineyards has an outdoor tasting room with a spectacular view of the vines. Deer Hill boasts an intimate, indoor, and barrel-lined tasting room abutting wine making machinery, vats and presses. Reservations are limited (*16 people per vineyard per day*) and the cost is \$20 per person. You can sign up for both days if you wish to sample at each!

**YES! I WOULD LOVE TO JOIN IN THE HAPPY VALLEY WINE TASTING WITH HVIA**

**CHOOSE YOUR PREFERRED DATE AND VINEYARD:**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21ST FROM 7:00 - 8:30 PM

LOS ARABIS VINEYARD (\$20)

DEER HILL VINEYARD (\$20)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 22ND FROM 7:00 - 8:30 PM

LOS ARABIS VINEYARD (\$20)

DEER HILL VINEYARD (\$20)

Name(s):

Address:

Phone:

Email:

*Make your reservation today and we will send you all the details. If we fill all the spaces, we will hold you on a waitlist or refund your reservation. Contact Jenny at [jenny@hvia.org](mailto:jenny@hvia.org) for more info or questions.*

**MAIL THIS FORM ALONG WITH PAYMENT TO: HVIA P.O. Box 744, Lafayette, CA 94549**