

President's Message

*The time has come,' the Walrus said,
'To speak of many things:*

*Of shoes and ships and sealing-
wax....and cabbages and kings.
And why the sea is boiling hot -- And
whether pigs have wings.'*

The Walrus and the Carpenter – Lewis Carroll

I have always found the first two lines of this little poem to be thought provoking and useful in focusing the mind on important matters for consideration. The last line is not necessarily essential but is included in deference to "Mambo" the pig, star of our fall BBQ. The Rocklin Historical Society has definitely gained recognition in the community this year. The on-going restoration of historic St Mary's, participation in civic events, and fund-raising programs have all contributed to raising RHS visibility in the public consciousness. Recognition was a primary RHS goal for 2006 and we achieved that.

However, progress is composed of gains and losses. Ron Petersen, Museum Curator and Sally Huseby, Corresponding Secretary and Landscape Chairman are stepping down. Ron Petersen brought to RHS a great background in Rocklin and Placer County history and a deep interest in all facets of railroading. Ron was always available to advise and assist in RHS activities and a pleasant volunteer companion. He is also leaving the Board of Directors. His counsel will be missed.

Sally Huseby's first RHS contribution is obvious to all who pass by the museum. Maintaining the museum landscaping is a demanding task, but with husband Roger Huseby's assistance, Sally provided year-round beauty at a special corner of Rocklin!

As the RHS has grown, so has the importance of communication with the

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Saint Mary's Restoration Status

You Can Help

Gene Johnson

Seasonal rains have been sparse and have not hampered the restoration process. John Peterson installed the electrical wiring. Energy Solutions Inc. installed foam insulation at a fraction of normal cost. Wall sheathing and house-wrap were completed in time to protect the building from inevitable winter soakings.



Volunteer Leon Vicencio saws firewood to warm the workers on winter mornings

The Community Covenant Church on Topaz loaned to us the 1885 bell which hung in their bell tower when they were located on Third Street. Dave Ruhkala and professional carpenters completed the base that will support the bell and a new steeple.

We discovered that the structural framing was originally designed for arched windows, but conventional rectangular windows had been installed.

We will install all windows in their original intended form, with arched tops. We estimate the cost at about \$3,000 per window. The windows will be our largest single expense to date. John and Carol Peterson have joined Scott Yuill Insurance as window sponsors.

Just in time for Christmas, engineering drawings for the steeple and the annex, were received from William Merkel who is donating his services. Donations of funds, materials and labor are needed to complete the steeple and the 15 x 25 foot annex which will house a work room, restroom, utilities, and heating and air conditioning equipment - needs are estimated at \$10,000 and \$40,000 respectively.

Funds to complete the restoration are still about \$125,000 short. Historic St. Mary's will be the centerpiece of Heritage Park and a valuable resource for the entire community. If you have not contributed, please consider doing so to help make history with history.



Building the bell tower and steeple

RHS Installation Dinner Scheduled

Mark your calendar for the January 22, 2007 RHS Board of Directors Installation Dinner at Venita Rhea's. Festivities start with no host cocktails at 6:15. Dinner is at 7:00. Venita Rhea's promises a scrumptious



Christy Barros is the new RHS Publicity Chairman. She will be installed on the RHS Board of Directors at the January 22, 2007 Installation Dinner

meal with a great dessert. New to the RHS Board this year is Publicity Chairman Christy Barros. "I am very excited to be apart of this historical adventure", said Barros. Look for more installation dinner details in a separate mailing this week or call Gay Morgan at 624-2355 or Karen Lokey on 435-9966 to reserve a spot.

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Group to View Ansel Adams Photos of Spring Valley Ranch

Gary Day

Western Rocklin covers 12,000 acres of Joel Parker Whitney's famous Spring Valley Ranch. In 1960, Sunset International Petroleum Corporation purchased this property to develop a self contained metropolis called Sunset City. In 1962 Sunset commissioned naturalist Ansel Adams to produce 22 monochrome prints of the property to promote Sunset City home sales. In 1963 Sunset donated the prints to the Crocker Art Museum for safe keeping and permanent display. Crocker immediately misplaced the prints and they languished in storage until RHS inquired about them in 2002. Rocklin City Councilperson Kathy Lund recently convinced Crocker, through negotiations with Sacramento Mayor Heather Fargo, to put the prints on display for Rocklin's citizens. Crocker plans to display the prints from February 3 until May 6, 2007. RHS docent Chair Barbara Chapman is organizing a group to travel to Crocker on Thursday, February 8, at 11 am to see the prints on display. If you would like to join the group, please call Barbara on 415-0153.

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President (Cont)

community. Sally rose to that challenge as Corresponding Secretary and her dedicated service to this office is greatly appreciated. She will continue on the RHS board.

The museum curator duties will now be assumed by Bill and Laura Woods who bring a love of Rocklin history to the museum.

Carol Peterson will assume the position as Corresponding Secretary. We are fortunate to have Carol in this position as RHS correspondence will be increasing in 2007.

Christy Barros has been elected to the Board of Directors replacing Ron Petersen. She also serves as Publicity Chairperson. Christy brings a new demographic (youth!) to RHS leadership. This new year of 2007 will showcase the Rocklin Historical Society as a leading influence in the Rocklin community like never before. Historic St. Mary's will be completed and open to the public. We will be hosting weddings at St Mary's starting in September if not earlier. The build-out of Heritage Park will continue. RHS will play a large part in that effort. Heritage Park and historic St Mary's will become the first jewels in the Rocklin Redevelopment Plan. The new Rocklin downtown will begin again where it left off so long ago....on historic Front Street at Rocklin (Granite) Road!

Roger Lokey, President

Docent Doings

Barbara Chapman

Our new year is beginning and the Docent calendars for 2007 are almost complete for the first quarter of the year. There are a few openings – are you interested? Let me know.

Most of you volunteered to remain on your current schedule --- Hooray! Hooray!

Great News: A new docent - Sherri Thacker --- has trained with us for the past two months and will begin her docent duties in January. She will be working on Wednesdays but has indicated her willingness to fill in when needed. Welcome, Sherri!



There are a few of you who have continuously volunteered twice each month – Sally Huseby, Dorothy Labudde, Fran Perkins and Laverne Splan. What a commitment!!

Our school program is in full swing thanks to Gay Morgan and her crew, but don't forget to call her to train so you can help out. We need docents on various Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays each month. Will you please volunteer an additional day every once in a while? Karen Lokey will be off the schedule the first four months of this year and Joyce Sherman will be temporarily out also.

As for me, I would welcome any one of you stepping into the docent chair position. Please call me to discuss. I am looking forward to this brand new year and I am planning visits to other historical society sites to see what and how they present their "histories." We can always learn more about Placer County so we can then tell better stories to our visitors! Please let me know if you have any specific suggestions.

Take a 20 Minute Tour of Rocklin's History

Gary Day

The Rocklin History Museum is open from 1 pm until 4 pm on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday afternoons. If you are in the mood for Rocklin's history at other times, try this 20 minute tour of two sites which were important to Rocklin's role as the Sacramento Valley's major producer of granite products in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Downtown Rocklin is astride high quality and easily accessible granite in a 100+ square mile eroded granite belt that extends from Folsom to Lincoln. The Rocklin area's landscape includes 61 abandoned quarries. Many of these were opened in the 19th century to provide culvert stone and riprap for railroad construction and building blocks for California's monumental buildings such as the State Capitol Building in Sacramento.

Start your tour by driving to the parking lot at the northwest corner of Rocklin Road and Granite Drive. The lake that you see there fills a quarry operated in the early 20th century by the Union Granite Company under the management of Finnish immigrant Matt Ruhkala. Business at Rocklin's granite operations flourished in the

1890s and very early 20th century, but competition from cement-based concrete attenuated the industry's growth after 1905. Nevertheless the Ruhkala quarry continued to produce granite curbing and stone for monuments until at least 1915. Later, Ruhkala operated two other quarries, one of which is now under the westbound lanes of Highway 80.

Next, look from the Ruhkala quarry to the south side of Rocklin Road. Ira Delano's Rocklin Granite Company quarry was located there. Delano's quarry was Rocklin's largest and most financially successful 19th century quarry.

Delano was possibly Rocklin's wealthiest citizen. It was mostly his money that built Rocklin's racetrack in the mid 1890s. In 1915 quarrymen struck the Rocklin quarries for a raise from \$3.25 to \$3.75 per day and closed most of Rocklin's quarries permanently. Delano gave up his business and retired a year later.

Delano's quarry pit served as Rocklin's garbage dump during the mid 20th century and that dump now underpins the parking lot and motel in back of the

granite industry's early 20th century downturn, but financial problems set in after Pernu died in a Yosemite quarry accident in 1929. Four of Ruhkala's sons acquired the quarry in 1933 (Ruhkala had eleven children). They gave it the Ruhkala family's Union Granite Company name, repaired the aging equipment, and produced monument stone, monuments, and crushed stone products here until 1978.

In 1968 Congressman "Bizz" Johnson commended three of the Ruhkala brothers, Ben, Ruben and Abner, for producing 32 granite benches for the United States Capital grounds in Washington D.C. In the early 1970s the Ruhkals imported quartz and crushed it to reinforce the concrete walls of the Transamerica building in San Francisco.

Recent owners gave the quarry the Big Gun name in the early 1990s but they did not extract significant amounts of stone. For countertops and monuments the light grey color of Rocklin's granite cannot compete with the more colorful shades of granite available from elsewhere in California and from overseas. Granite processing operations ceased here in 2005.



Matt Ruhkala's Union Granite Company Quarry now holds the lake that decorates an office building at Rocklin Road and Granite Drive. This quarry produced curbstone and monument stone in the very early 20th century.

Taco Bell.

Next, go to the east side of the Rocklin City Office Building at 3970 Rocklin Road and climb to the second floor landing of the exterior stairwell. The stairwell is to the left of the building's entrance. Look south and you will see the sheer granite walls of the Big Gun quarry pit, a spectacular site.

The California Granite company, under the leadership of Finnish immigrant Adolf Pernu, acquired this quarry in the 1890's and modernized its operations with pneumatic, steam and electric equipment in the early 20th century. Quarrying operations here survived the

Today, in 2006, the latest owner has optioned the quarry to a downtown Rocklin re-development company that is proposing to the city to preserve it as the centerpiece of a commercial venture.

Most of the information in this article is from State Geologic Survey records and from Ruben and Roy Ruhkala

To join the Rocklin Historical Society go to rocklinhistory.org

A Dangerous Place for Kids

Gary Day

In the early 20th century Rocklin's K through 8th grade school, Rocklin's only school, was sandwiched between a transcontinental railroad to the west and a transcontinental highway to the east.

Children from Rocklin's west side scurried to and from school across Union Pacific tracks while east siders dodged vehicles on highway 40, sometimes riding their bikes or skating to and from school on the smooth surface.

In 1952 the Rocklin School District relocated the school to today's safer location on Meyers Avenue. You can still see the steps to one of the old, now demolished, school buildings near the corner of Oak and Pacific.

Rocklin's Chinese Fled in 1876

Gary Day

The Central Pacific completed major construction on the eastbound leg of the transcontinental railroad by 1869, and by 1876 a few of the railroad's 14,000 Chinese construction workers had settled in Rocklin. Some grew for-sale vegetables in the area southeast of town known as "China Garden". Many worked at Rocklin's roundhouse. About 1,000 Chinese laborers lived and worked at the Whitney Ranch building water courses and stone fences. Rocklin's Chinatown consisted of about 25 homes located immediately northwest of the roundhouse. On Friday September 15, 1876 the Placer County sheriff investigated a homicide near Loomis and accused a Chinese cook, named Ah Sam, of murdering three people in a mining claim dispute. Many Rocklin citizens were enraged by the crime and on the following Monday they organized themselves to expel all Chinese people from town. The Rocklin area's entire Chinese population soon fled. Rocklin's 1880, 1890 and 1900 censuses show not one Chinese person in Rocklin or at the Whitney Ranch.



Rocklin Historical Society Board of Directors

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Newsletter proofreading by Allan and Marie Stone

Museum Tours Were Hits in 2006

Gay Morgan

Last year (2006), 613 Rocklin Third Graders toured the Rocklin History Museum with docents Ruben and Roy Ruhkala, Ruth Williams, Susan Brookings and Gay Morgan. Museum tours are part of the School District's third grade History curriculum.

The Boys are fascinated by the tools in the basement. They think it's funny that kids were usually not allowed in the parlor. When the kids bring their families back, they give the same tour as I do--almost word for word. Sometimes you think they are not listening, but they are.

The Ford Car Club, Rocklin Chamber of Commerce, Retired Rocklin Teachers, and several Cub Scout and Girl Scout troops also toured the museum last year.

Ron Petersen and Joyce Sherman filled orders in the gift shop.

Mark Your Calendar

RHS General Meetings, 7 pm at the Rocklin Library:

January 15, 2007

Cobblestone School film of historic Rocklin

February 19, 2007

Speaker to be announced

March 19, 2007

Speaker to be announced

April 16, 2007

Speaker to be announced

January 22, 2007

Rocklin Historical Society Board of Directors' Installation Dinner at Venita Rhea's, Cocktails at 6:15, Dinner at 7:00

February 8, 2007

Trip to Crocker Art Museum to view Ansel Adam's prints of the Spring Valley Ranch

Heritage Park Committee -

Meets every Wednesday at 7 am in Oracle's cafeteria.

Rocklin History Museum

Open Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, 1 to 4

Are Your Dues Due?

Carol Peterson

Thank you for Heritage Angel donations and thank you for renewing your dues.

If there is a (7) after your name on the newsletter mailing label you paid your dues for 2007 for 2007.

Dues for 2007 are \$25 and may be sent to Rocklin Historical Society, P.O. Box 752, Rocklin CA 95677. Please invite your friends and neighbors to join in supporting the preservation and sharing of Rocklin's history.