

President's Message

State of the Rocklin Historical Society – 2007

Well, believe it or not, it has been a year since the last “State of the Historical Society” report. Much transpired and much changed in 2006. My purpose here is to bring you the details.

To our great benefit the RHS enjoys a depth and breadth of experience, a resolve, and a love of Rocklin history intrinsic in its membership. In the course of my responsibilities as president, I have come to know many of you much better. I want to tell you how deeply impressed and grateful I am with your generosity of time, talent and treasure. You are a tried and seasoned organization....a formidable force for accomplishment. As a result, the HS is a recognized success and a force in the Rocklin community.

Last year I reported the HS was growing in scope and responsibilities. Consider the following information.

In 2005 the HS operating budget was \$29,805.00. Of that amount, \$11,296.00 was donated for the Heritage Park Project. In 2006 the HS operating budget was \$71,148.00. Of that amount, \$55,560.00 was donated for the Heritage Park Project. The gross operating budget grew by 239% Heritage Park Project funding grew by 490%.

This year Heritage Park Project funding will approximately double to \$175,000.00 in order to complete the restoration of the historic church building itself in time for our first wedding commitment September 22. This does not include landscaping areas adjacent to the building. The Board is seeking ways and means to generate the required funding.

At the same time, planning for Heritage Park itself is moving forward. Parks and Recreation will have a landscaping proposal (based on the proposal submitted by HS last year) for our review sometime in the next 45 days. With joint approvals from RHS, the Front Street Historic Committee, the Parks and Recreation depart-

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Saint Mary's Restoration Status

You Can Help

Gene Johnson

The weatherman was kind all winter and we are on schedule for a September 2007 opening. The city installed water and electric service in March. We built the annex foundation with help from Dave Ruhkala Construction and Livingston Concrete. Stone mason Jerry Messner faced that foundation with genuine Rocklin granite. Tilton Pacific Builders of Rocklin is helping us plan annex framing and finishing.

We rebuilt the church's front entrance tower and it is ready for siding.

Mike Clark's Roofing Company installed a new concrete shingle roof with a well weathered look to match the buildings probable appearance in the early 20th century.

Latter Day Saints Missionaries helped us remove old flooring. We could use help in resurfacing and finishing that floor.

Leon Vicencio and Keith Huseby completed repairs to the interior shell and they are ready to paint the ceiling and walls.

We built a housing for the bell that Community Covenant Church loaned us to replace the Saint Mary's bell stolen in the 1980's. Eight third-grade “Why I love Rocklin” essay contest winners and dozens of other children and adults tolled the bell for three hours on March 24 as we celebrated hoisting of the bell to its new home under Saint Mary's steeple.

In spite of generous contributions to the restoration project we are still short of our funding goal. If you can contribute labor, materials or funds please call me on 624-2378



Parker Whitney third-grade teacher Diana Wallin helps students toll the 600-pound Community Covenant Church bell.

Photo Courtesy of Nancy Lohse

RHS to Honor the San Francisco 49ers

RHS will fete the San Francisco 49ers at the annual Heritage Dinner fund raiser on May 30, 2007 at the Sunset Center. The 49ers had winning seasons in 16 of the 17 years, 1981 through 1997, when they trained in Rocklin. During their years here they won 11 National Football Conference championships and 5 Super Bowls. Don't miss Rocklin's tribute to the 49ers on the 25th anniversary of their first Super Bowl win in 1982. See a replay of that game's third quarter goal line stand and talk with Dan Bunz who played a key role with his third down “Stop”. Call gay Morgan on 624-2355 for ticket information.

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ment, a public forum and the City Council, work will commence on city development of the park property.

Concurrently, RHS will develop a program to manage the St Mary's building for use by the community....be those weddings, public meetings, etc. We don't need to have every possible building utilization opportunity accounted for this year. With proper management of weddings we will have addressed most of the challenges inherent in overall building use. You will hear much more about how this will be accomplished as we approach the third quarter this year. So don't miss our general meetings as ideas are solicited from all members.

St Mary's should become the primary revenue resource for the RHS by the end of 2007. And that resource will grow over time thru word of mouth and advertising. However, traditional RHS fundraising efforts should continue throughout the year even after St Mary's is brought on-line, as these fundraisers provide practical and enjoyable ways to meet and interest Rocklin citizens and maintain our profile in the community.

During this effort to restore historic St Mary's, let's not lose sight of the value, purpose and position of the Rocklin History Museum itself. It continues as the mother ship for our organization; and is recognized by the community as the active face of Rocklin History. It should always remain the heart and headquarters of RHS. As the city of Rocklin develops the new "downtown" or "civic center," the museum location places it in the mainstream of downtown activities. We will, by fortunate default, become a highly visible point of interest in the heart of the redevelopment district..

Although the goal of restoring the church continues to move forward, our equally important goal of increasing membership remains an elusive target.

According to City Manager Carlos Uruttia, Rocklin will meet its build-out projection of 72,000 residents by 2012. Currently, our membership represents less than 1/2 of 1 percent of Rocklin's population of 52,000. I propose to target a minimum active membership of 1000 by 2012 with a median demographic of 55 years. That figure can

represent individuals, families and/or businesses. Implementing such an effort will require planning, dedication and consistency over the 5 year interval. Like any other project, defining the issue and creating a game plan are the first steps to achieving this goal.

So I challenge each of you to develop ideas

and concepts, bold or not so bold, to launch RHS toward a 1000 member goal. We have tackled other daunting issues and achieved more than a little success. Surely we can do the same with membership....because the citizens of Rocklin are just like you and me; and given the right incentives many will join us and enjoy the pursuit, study and preservation of Rocklin history.

Let's review some 2007 goals as we move thru the year. Some goals will be feasible for 2007, others will move into 2008 depending upon City park development efforts and RHS funds available. However, Heritage Park should be completed by the end of 2008.

Of course, the primary 2007 goal is to complete the church building itself complete with annex, ready for use. We can then move our General Meetings to the church!

As soon as Parks and Recreation has graded and prepared the property elevation, the Brides Patio area complete with the Children's Fountain can be implemented as can all landscaping pertinent to the church area.

Upon completion of the St Mary's restoration, consider these further HS and/or City projects to complete the build-out of Heritage Park.

The Quarry Plaza can be started and RHS can sell pavers to cover it.

The Firehouse planning/build-out can commence with the Rocklin F.D.

A Quarry Fountain can be designed and built.

The park entry gates, (the Railroad Gate and the Quarry Gate) both focal points for the Park, can be initiated.

A locomotive secured for the park.

A period home moved onto the west end of the Park property.

The park property can be extended beyond B Street.

As Heritage Park is completed we can look forward to enjoying the various facilities of the park for a variety of activities including but not limited to:

Utilization of the Quarry Plaza for outdoor gatherings.

Summer evening entertainment

RHS Barbeques

Civic Group Activities

Use as a focal point for RHS Jubilee activities

Utilization of Front Street itself for Historic Activities.

Potential staging area for Rocklin Jubilee Parade.

Potential site (Front Street) for Hot Chili-Cool Cars event.

These activities and others will bring an exciting future to Rocklin's "Old-Town"

Historic District.

Earlier I mentioned the generosity of time, talent, and treasure from our membership. Each of you brings a special talent to the RHS. Your contribution is valuable, unique, and greatly appreciated. The Rocklin community is a profoundly better place to live because of your individual dedication to Rocklin history. And a vibrant historical perspective brings a savor for the community to enjoy.

Rocklin children come to understand they are growing up a part of an interesting and unique section of California. Our friends and neighbors are watching HS progress. They see the fruits of your participation and dedication at the Museum, the church restoration site, and our influence as we participate in the community life of Rocklin.

RHS provides a background against which the Rocklin of today can measure the quality of its progress against achievements in Rocklin's past. This historical perspective can and should help shape Rocklin's visions for the future.

I thank each and every one of you for your dedication and participation at the Historical Society in 2006. It is my privilege to work with you.

Many HS efforts will pay off in a grand way in 2007. This could be the most exciting year in HS history. So stick around, tell your friends about the RHS, and let them watch us put Heritage Park, historic St Mary's and "Old Downtown" center front on the Rocklin stage!

Roger Lokey
President

Shorty Says

From his days as a marine:
*He who consumes a fifth on the Fourth
might not be able to come forth on the
fifth.*

Oskari's Journey

Gary Day

Eighteen-year-old Oskari left Russian-ruled Finland and came to New York in 1891. He was one of 350,000 Finns who came to America escaping Finland's harsh political and economic conditions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

In the early 1890s most immigrating Finns found mining and farming jobs in the Great Lakes States, but Oskari headed for Carbon, Wyoming, a coal mining town on the route of the Transcontinental Railroad.

Some Finns fleeing Finland's Great Hunger of the 1860s had built the rails westward from Omaha and remained in Carbon when rail-laying work ended there in 1869. Oskari joined the Finnish Colony in Carbon to be a coal miner, like his uncle and his father before him.

Carbon's Finns worked hard in the dangerous and dirty mines by day, and about half drank and brawled in the town's saloons at night. Oskari joined the temperance half, rising to a leadership position in the Carbon Temperance Society and speaking and publishing articles on the evils of alcohol.

But mine work in Carbon soon slowed, and in 1892 Oskari moved on to Almy, Wyoming and from there to a dozen other mining and lumber-jacking jobs in the western states. Sometimes he walked to new jobs, but mostly he traveled by train, hobo style, on railcar couplings or sitting on railcar brake-booms with his armpits over two bracing rods. He consorted with other hobos and at each new spot he was active with the temperance movement.

By 1896 Oskari was working the gold mines in Leadville, Colorado. When labor unions stuck the mines there he headed for the San Francisco Bay area, a congregating point for 19th century Finns on their way to California mining jobs, or to fishing jobs on California's north coast, or to farm labor jobs in California's valleys.

On the final leg of his trip he jumped a well guarded train at the Sierra summit and hid himself inside an empty refrigerator car, wedged under the drain grate of an ice bin. As the train braked and lurched downhill toward Sacramento, Oskari tossed

and bounced about and was on his hands and knees, sick and in pain from the shaking, when the train pulled to a stop at the valley floor. He was short of his destination but he needed time to recover, so he slid the railcar door open, jumped to the ground, and saw that the depot sign read "Rocklin".

From his travels Oskari knew that Rocklin was a quarry town and home to a colony of Finns. He decided to

don his Rocklin quarry investment and head back to New York. In 1900 the couple returned to Finland.

Oskari went into the grocery business in his boyhood hometown, but the depressed state of Finland's economy and Finland's subservient status under the rule of Russia's Tsarist government drew him to politics.

He ran successfully for Finland's Diet in 1907 and by March 1917 he had become Deputy Speaker of Finland's Cabinet and Finland's Premier.

As the lead up to Russia's Bolshevik Revolution was causing chaos in the Russian government in 1917, Oskari led Finland's fight for independence. Pioneer Temperance Society leader, Western American hobo and Rocklin quarryman Oskari Tokoi saw Russia officially recognize Finland's independence on December 6, 1917.

Tokoi chose the losing side in the ensuing Finnish Civil War (1918) and escaped to Canada. Later the Finnish Diet pardoned him because of his leadership in freeing Finland from Russian rule. He died in Massachusetts

in 1963 and still carries the title of the first Premier of a free Finland. (Note 5) This article is based on *Rocklin, an Early Finnish Community*, by Susan W. Hardwick and *Sisu, Even Through a Stone Wall*, an autobiography by Oskari Tokoi.

Notes:

1. This might have been Blackwell's Stable which was close to the Rocklin rail station and was the scene of the Holmes/Renaldi shootout in 1914. Google "Holmes/Renaldi shootout"
2. Probably Ophir
3. Possibly John Mantyla, John owned at least one Rocklin granite quarry and other Rocklin property in the late 19th century.
4. The dance could have been at Porter's Hall, a popular 1890's dance hall near the corner of today's Rocklin Road and Front Street. It could also have been at the now demolished Finnish hall near today's Rocklin History Museum at Rocklin Road and San Francisco Street. The Finn Hall that we see today on Rocklin Road was the scene of Saturday night dances but it dates only to 1905.
5. History does not record that Tokoi ever returned to Rocklin



This is the Rocklin Rail Station that Oskari saw as he bounded from an empty refrigerator car in the winter of 1896/97.

investigate. So he climbed to the hay-loft of a nearby stable (Note 1) to sleep until morning.

He awoke to men chattering in Finnish as they walked by his perch. He caught up with them and soon realized that he was not a stranger in Rocklin. The Finns knew him from his temperance activities as reported in Finnish-American newspapers. He decided to stay in Rocklin for a few days to look for work.

He got a mining job in Offer (Note 2), but he almost died of malaria there. When he recovered he returned to Rocklin to work in Juho Mantyla's (Note 3) granite quarry.

Oskari worked hard for Mantyla and within 18 months he joined with 3 other Finns to lease his own quarry. Oskari had found a permanent home in Rocklin.

But then Oskari met pretty Finnish housemaid Hanna Tyokko. They connected at a dance in 1897 (Note 4) and by Christmas that year they had married. Quarry work was slow that winter in Rocklin and Hanna was homesick for her siblings in Finland, so she helped Oskari decide to aban-

Gift Shop Sales

Joyce Sherman

If you have not visited the museum gift shop recently, please come in and look around. Gift shop sales generate funds for museum projects.

In February, Valley View School's 3rd grade classes toured the museum and spent \$120.00, mostly on \$1.00 to \$5.00 items.

Valley View kids also donated \$40.00 in cash. Thank you Valley View School.

Your suggestions regarding the gift shop are welcome. Please contact me at the museum with your ideas

Sale

Rocklin Pull T-shirts

100% cotton
youth and all adult sizes

Regular \$ 15.00

Now \$7.50

Important Matters for the Rocklin City Council

Gary Day

From the Placer Herald of April 5, 2007

In June, 1915, Rocklin's quarrymen went on strike against the quarry owners for a raise from \$3.25 to \$3.50 per day. Half of Rocklin's quarries then closed and never reopened. On November 29, that year the Rocklin City Council met to direct the town Marshal to visit Mrs. Hurley and instruct her to quit dumping her dish water into the street. On December 27 the city council reconvened to hear from the Marshal that Mrs. Hurley was still dumping her dishwater and was now dumping her wash water also. Rocklin's economy didn't recover significantly until the early 1960s.

*To join the Rocklin
Historical Society go
to rocklinhistory.org.
or call Gay Morgan
on 624-2355*



Rocklin

Historical Society Board of Directors

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Newsletter proofreading by **Allan and
Marie Stone**

Sally's Plot

Sally Huseby

The city recently manicured the museum's 100-year-old, front- yard shade tree, removing diseased limbs and otherwise strengthening it to live on for another 100 years.

Roots of the three Japanese Pagoda trees on the museum's San Francisco Street side were invading the museum's foundation and killing nearby flora, so Glenn Twitchell replaced them with four trees of a more docile variety Keith Huseby planted a Chinese Fringe tree nearby to replace a Redbud tree that didn't survive the winter. My thanks to the gang of volunteers who spread weed-suppression bark in the museum's flower beds on March 25.

The museum's landscape is ready for the summer and it is as beautiful and inviting as it has ever been.

We Need an Update

Christy Barros

The Rocklin Historical Society is updating its member roster and adding email addresses. Please email Christy Barros at cbarros@finsvcs.com with your current street address and phone number

Highway 40 Bus Tour

Mark Your Calendar

April 16:

RHS General Meeting:

7 pm at the Rocklin Library

Ken Yeo of the Placer Sierra Railroad Heritage Society will show slides of the old Rocklin Roundhouse

Jim Woods will tell stories of the glory days of railroading

May 21:

RHS General Meeting:

7 pm at the Rocklin Library

Sierra College Professor of Earth Science, **Frank deCourten**- B.S., M.S.

is a field geologist & researcher with numerous awards & publications.

Stay for the Ice Cream Social after the meeting.

May 27:

Traditional Memorial Weekend Homecoming Reunion

Finn Hall , 11:00 a.m. to 2:00. p.m.
Light lunch available. (Donation requested.) Everyone welcome. The Rocklin Historical Society; and the City of Rocklin sponsor the event. R.S.V.P. Gay Morgan at 624-2355.

May 30:

Annual Heritage Dinner :

6:00 pm at the Sunset Center. Come to pledge your support of the Saint Mary's Restoration Project and see a RHS tribute to the Super Bowl champion 1981 San Francisco 49ers.

Heritage Park Committee -
Meets every Wednesday at 7 am in Oracle's cafeteria.

Rocklin History Museum

Open Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, 1 to 4

RHS Vice President Jean Sippola is organizing an 8 hour, Rocklin-to-Truckee-and-back historic Highway 40 bus tour for sometime in May.

To indicate your interest contact Jean at (916) 652-1034.