

President's Message

Roger Lokey

If you have watched or attended the Kentucky Derby you've heard the track announcer say, "They are rounding the Clubhouse Turn and starting down the stretch to the finish line!" The RHS is now rounding the Clubhouse Turn and looking down the stretch to the finish line in the restoration of St. Mary's.

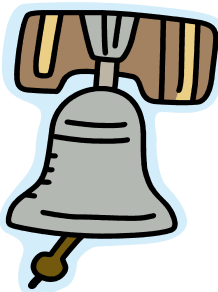
That stretch to the finish line tests the competitor's mettle and our mettle is under fire. We are committed to a September 22 wedding as the first use of our restored historic building. Invitations have been mailed, plans drawn, commitments made, a

(Continued on page 2)

Bell Ringing Donations Needed

Carol Peterson

As the Saint Mary's crew installs St. Mary's steeple we need funds to complete the restoration. You can donate by adding your name, or the name of a person whom you would like to honor, to the bell enclosed with this newsletter and mailing it to:



**Rocklin Historical Society
P.O. Box 752
Rocklin CA 95677**

The bells will be on display in the museum. Donations will be cumulative for recognition purposes at Heritage Park. Indicate on the enclosed slip for a card to be sent to the person being honored.

Saint Mary's Restoration Status

Gene Johnson

The heat is on in the blast-furnace days of early July as we sprint toward completion of the restoration in time to host a September 22, 2007 wedding. We recently completed annex framing and are installing a heating and air conditioning system.

Volunteers Eric Lokey of Lennar Homes and Josh Union of J.C. Union Electric installed the annex wiring system.

The Ruhkala Monument Company is donating the granite front porch and steps.

Volunteer Neil Davis is crafting intricate woodwork for the steeple and we hope to have the steeple in place by early August.



Volunteer Eric Lokey of Lennar Homes cuts an access portal for Saint Mary's annex wiring. He and volunteer Josh Union of J.C. Union Electric finished the electrical services for the annex.

We need your help in order to meet our commitment to hold the September wedding! Here are four ways for you to participate in finishing the restoration:

1. You can help clean, sand and finish the sanctuary floor.
2. You can help vacuum the sanctuary and otherwise tidy-up the church and grounds periodically.
3. You can perform general gofer work in support of the other volunteers.
4. You can perform finish carpentry in the sanctuary and on the front porch and stair railings.

If you would like to volunteer for any of these jobs or if you would like to participate in other ways, or provide funds, please call me at 624-2378.

(Continued from page 1)

President's Message

bride holds her breath and puts her faith in us. The finish line is in sight and we are still in front! But the race is yet to be won. The church building itself has reinforced walls with new roof trusses designed to support both a tile roof and a steeple with a 700 pound bell. The steeple frame is complete and Neil Davis will install the wood-work and shingles on the frame. We plan to raise the steeple into place by the first of August. The exterior siding has been restored and replaced on the building. Nine beautiful windows are now installed and working well! Plans for the interior design are being made. Front steps will be built as soon as the City completes the concrete interface between the street and the building front.

An annex room is going up at the rear of the building and should be complete by the end of August. It contains a bathroom, a larger room with a counter and sink, and a small storeroom. The annex is the disabled entry/exit point to St Mary's and includes a covered porch and access ramp.

The restoration of St Mary's has proven to be a much larger task than was originally anticipated. Hopefully, the impact of this project on Rocklin and the South Placer area will outweigh the effort and cost of the restoration.

All of this progress has been made possible through the great efforts of Gene Johnson and a very small company of volunteers. I invite all members of the RHS to come down and physically help us finish the race. Whether your input is large or small it will be greatly appreciated and you can enjoy the pride and pleasure of saying you had a hand in this magnificent effort. As a result, the RHS can truthfully state that the restoration effort was a project of the RHS as a whole rather than the persistent efforts of one man. This would speak volumes to the integrity of the RHS in the community and subtract nothing from the dedication of that one man. We are in the history business. And the RHS is making history in a big way by restoring this old icon of Rocklin's past. But the race continues; the finish line still before us. Your personal efforts can decide whether we win or lose. I'm betting on you.

Roger Lokey
President

DOCENTS NEEDED

Barbara Chapman
Docent Chairman

Challenge yourself or a friend to become a volunteer docent at our Rocklin History Museum. You know that volunteering is a good thing!

- It gets you out of the house.
- It allows you to interact with people who have a common interest in Rocklin's history,
- It supports our community.
- It provides a sense of purpose.
- It requires a commitment of only three hours, one day each month.

Please call me at 916-415-0153 and I will tell you about being a docent.

Another Successful School Year

Gay Morgan

The Rocklin Unified School District's third grade curriculum includes the study of Rocklin's history. During the past school year more than 700 third graders, accompanied by teachers and parents, toured the Rocklin History museum to have fun and meet class work requirements.

The kids are enthralled when Rubin and Roy Ruhkala demonstrate the use of the ancient quarrying tools in the basement's granite quarry exhibit.

City of Rocklin Honored for Respect of Finn Hall

Gary Day

They dragged hay bales across the floor to make it slick, and then they danced to the music of Rocklin's Echo Band until midnight. They adjourned upstairs for supper, rested awhile with the quarry-worker band members and then danced until 3 am. This was a typical Saturday night for the early 20th century Finns of Rocklin. And this was Finn Hall, then and now the most visible reminder of Rocklin's once dominant Finnish culture. On June 21, 2007, at San Francisco's Old Presidio Golf Club, the California Heritage Council presented one of its seven annual awards to Rocklin's Vice Mayor Brett Storey for the City of Rocklin's work in preserving and restoring this important icon of Rocklin's Finnish roots.

Motivation for construction of Finn Hall grew out of the temperance movement of the late 19th century. The United Finnish Brothers and Sisters Lodge #5 built Rocklin's original Finnish meeting Hall in 1889 as an alternative to Rocklin's numerous Front Street and Railroad Avenue saloons. They replaced it with today's larger building in 1905 as Finns flocked to Rocklin to work in the granite quarries at the turn of the century.

Details on the construction of Finn Hall are sketchy. In her 1967 memoirs, Helen Kesti, daughter of Rocklin blacksmith and quarry owner Sam Kesti, remembers that Finnish quarry owners donated granite blocks for the steps and foundation. Kesti's father and his friends could name the source of every block and whose team of horses delivered it. Kesti remembered that early 20th century Finn Hall was busy with the daytime social activities of Temperance Society women, mainly quilting parties and sewing bees. Husbands and sweethearts would sometimes join the women after work for band practice and parties. The powder room was often jammed with frolicking children playing among the baby buggies.

At Christmas, Santa Claus climbed down a ladder from an upstairs trap door to deliver candy and Whitney Ranch oranges.

The City of Rocklin owns and maintains Finn Hall and rents it out for meetings and social functions. The building occupies a prominent spot near the corner of Rocklin Road and South Grove Street, in the midst of Rocklin's municipal building development area.

Rocklin Historical Society President Roger Lokey and several RHS members have been concerned that city staff might propose to clear land for new city buildings by moving Finn Hall to a less prominent nearby location. Lokey recently expressed these concerns in a presentation to the Rocklin City Council.

"The historic legacy of Finn Hall is its Rocklin identity," said Lokey. "I appeal to you individually and collectively to honor this old building and the history represented both in its presence and location. It is such a beautiful Rocklin symbol". He ended his remarks with an emphatic "Leave it be". Rocklin historian and former Rocklin mayor Roy Ruhkala consulted with the Heritage Council in preparing for the award and accompanied Storey to the presentation. "We restored the building in 1989 and obtained official California landmark status for it in 1991," he said. "This award will help to ensure that it remains in its present location and continues as an important historical feature of the downtown landscape for many more years"

From Whence the Altar Stone?

Gary Day

The Rocklin Historical Society is restoring a 124 year old church on Front Street in downtown Rocklin. When RHS completes the restoration in September 2007, the church will be primarily a non-denominational wedding chapel.

Gold Rush era Bishop Joseph Alemany of the San Francisco Catholic Archdiocese dedicated the church as Saint Mary's of the Assumption in 1883. The Catholics abandoned the building in 1983 because it was too small and it was fraying with age.

In November 2006, Gerry Lyons and Robb McLean of Wave Broadband were in the church interviewing Gene Johnson, the restoration's project manager. While Johnson talked Lyons reached into the construction litter on a nearby table and picked up an 8" x 10" rectangular piece of gray marble which Johnson had found when demolition for the restoration started in September 2005.

Lyons noticed the barely visible words "Sacret (sic) Heart Church" scribbled across one side. He turned the stone over and noticed a compartment plugged with a matchbox-size piece of marble and sealed with resin. From his days as an altar boy in Brooklyn, New York Lyons realized that he had picked up an altar stone.

According to the historical archivist for the Sacramento Diocese, Jesuit William Breault, in the Catholic tradition altar stones were sacred blocks of stone, usually marble, embedded in the top of every Catholic Church altar. Each

stone included a reliquary that contained the relic of a saint, usually a piece of bone or other body part, sometimes wrapped in lead foil.

In the 1960s Catholic Church law changed the configuration of church altars and eliminated the need for altar stones. Workmen remodeling Saint Mary's altar to conform to the new law in the 1960's or 1970's possibly set the Sacred Heart Church altar stone aside in a remote nook where it rested until Johnson started the restoration. It

must have remained well out of sight because it went unnoticed by two Protestant congregations that occupied the church from the mid-1980s until the late 1990s. But how did a Sacred Heart Church altar stone find its way into a church named Saint Mary's of the Assumption.

One plausible explanation goes back to the waning of the California Gold Rush in the 1860's.

According to San Francisco Archdiocese records, the altar stone could have originated in a little known Sacred Heart Church which was located in the Ione valley in the 1850's and early 1860s.(note 1.) That church closed in 1864 as the Gold Rush waned and Ione Valley Argonauts abandoned their sluice boxes in favor of employment on higher ground.

Catholic priest Patrick Walsh was active in the Ione area then, relocating Catholic

Diocese records contain no mention of a Sacred Heart Church and there is no mention of Walsh in the Salt Lake City area before his connection with the Saint Mary Magdelene Church.

But where was Walsh from 1869 until 1871? Possibly he had built the Sacred Heart Church in Utah as Alemany directed in 1869 but failed to establish a viable parish in the midst of predominantly Mormon territory. If so, he would have lifted the Sacred Heart Church altar stone from the altar of his ill fated church and kept it, possibly expecting to use it later in another church building.

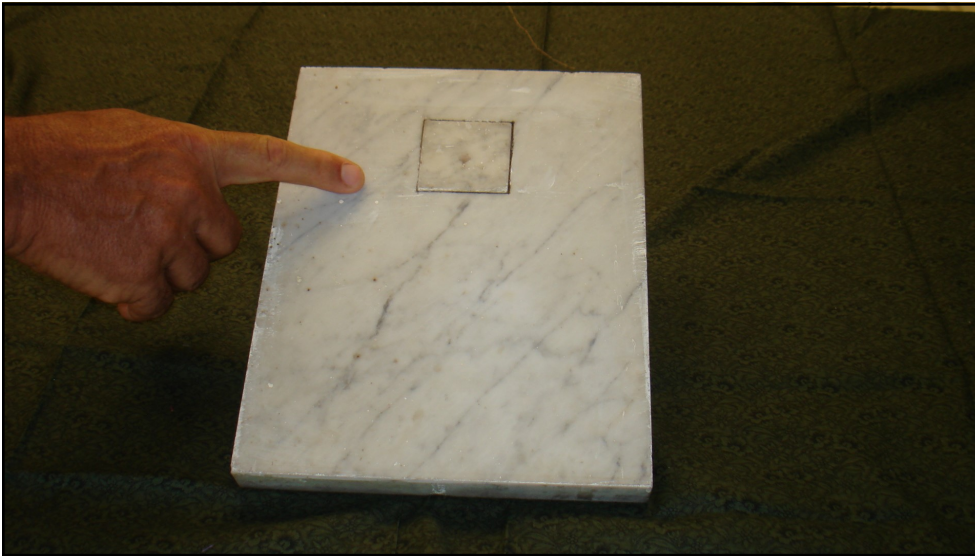
Walsh next appears in the historical record back in California in 1873 as pastor of Immaculate Conception parish near Jackson, and later, in 1877, as an assistant to Alemany in San Francisco.

In 1882 Alemany directed Fr. John Leahy of Folsom to establish the Saint Mary's of the Assumption church in Rocklin. And as construction on the new building was underway in 1883 Alemany's assistant, Walsh, might have presented his much traveled altar stone to Leahy for the altar of his new church.

We may never know for sure the origin of Lyons' find. But it could be a remnant of the Gold Rush era and the initial and now forgotten efforts to establish a Catholic church in Utah. Meanwhile the reliquary of the Saint Mary's altar stone remains sealed and Johnson is preparing for an altar stone display on an interior wall of the remodeled Saint Mary's church.

Notes:

1. Amador County historians say that the Sacred Heart Church now in Ione was unknown before 1867.
2. *Hallowed Were the Gold Dust Trails*, 1946, by Jesuit Henry Walsh,



Gerry Lyons of Wave Broadband identified this object as an altar stone. The obverse is inscribed with "Sacret(sic) Heart Church". This altar stone might have originated with a now-demolished California Gold Rush era Sacred Heart Catholic Church in the Ione Valley. It might have made its way to Rocklin with Fr. Patrick Walsh after he failed to establish a Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Utah in 1869.

schools and parishes as populations shifted. According to a Jesuit Historian (note 2), Alemany dispatched Walsh to Utah in 1869 to establish a Sacred Heart Church in Salt Lake City. Walsh might have taken the Ione Valley Sacred Heart Church altar stone to Salt Lake City with the intention of using it in his new church.

According to records of the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City, Walsh established Salt Lake City's first Catholic Church in 1871 and named it Saint Mary Magdalene.

RHS Cemetery Kiosk Vandalized

Vandals recently smashed the Plexiglas door frame and stole an American flag from the Rocklin Historical Society's Cemetery Tour kiosk at the Rocklin cemetery. The kiosk is near the cemetery's entrance and is a guide to the gravesites of 21 people who were important to Rocklin's development in the late 19th and early 20th centuries

From 1867 until 1908 Rocklin was the site of a roundhouse and engine repair facility that serviced the extra engines that trains needed to surmount the Sierra. Rocklin's quarries produced building blocks, curbing and monument stone from the late 1850's until the late 1970's.

Included in the tour are the gravesites of:

- **Marshal Sam Renaldi**, who killed saloon owner U.S. Holmes in a February 18, 1914 gunfight. Renaldi died in hospital the next day from a Holmes-inflicted gunshot wound.
- **Joseph Barudoni**, who built a granite meat market on Front Street near Rocklin Road in 1905. The building is across the street from the Saint Mary's Church restoration project in Heritage Park and houses an internet development company.
- **Matt Ruhkala**, an Apostolic Lutheran minister and stone cutter who founded the Union Granite Company in 1904. Ruhkala's progeny maintained the company name and quarried granite from the spectacularly large pit, in back of the city office building near Pacific Street and Rocklin Road, until the late 1970s.
- **Ira Delano**, owner of Rocklin's largest and most financially successful 19th century granite quarry. The Delano quarry became Rocklin's city dump in the mid 20th century. Today it underpins a motel and parking lot south of the corner of Granite Drive and Rocklin road. Troop 29 Eagle Scout Tony Evans built the kiosk from granite blocks in 1998 as a memorial to his grandfather. To contribute labor, material or funds to fix the kiosk and toughen it against vandalism call Gay Morgan at 624-2355



Rocklin Historical Society Board of Directors

Roger Lokey, President
Jean Sippola, Vice President
Carol Powell, Secretary
Karen Lokey, Treasurer
Carol Peterson, Corr. Secretary
Gene Johnson, Heritage Park
Bill and Laura Woods, Museum
Jean Day, Information Systems
Roy Ruhkala, Past President
Christi Barros, Publicity

Newsletter proofreading by **Allan and Marie Stone**

Mark Your Calendar

September 17:

RHS General Meeting and Annual Barbeque:

Time and Place to be announced:

October 15:

RHS General Meeting:

7 pm at the Rocklin Library—

Speaker to be announced

Heritage Park Committee -

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

Rocklin History Museum

Open Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, 1 to 4

Gift Shop Manager Needed

Bill and Laura Woods
Museum Curators

Your Rocklin History Museum needs a Gift Shop Manager. If you are interested in volunteering for this position, please call Roger Lokey on 435-1632.

Please Send Us Your Email Address

Christy Barros
Publicity Chairman

Sometimes it is convenient for us to communicate with Rocklin Historical Society members via Email. But we have only a few Email addresses on our roster. If you have access to Email, please send us an email message with your name and address and we will add your email address to the roster.

Christy Barros
cbarros@finsvcs.com

Membership Chairman Needed

Christy Barros
Publicity Chairman

The Rocklin Historical Society needs a Membership Chairman to maintain the membership roster and recruit new members.

The Membership Chairman is a voting member of the Rocklin Historical Society Board of Directors.

If you are interested in volunteering for this position, please call Roger Lokey at 435-1632.

Gift Shop Bargains

Please patronize your Rocklin History Museum gift shop. Prices on several items, including hats and tee shirts, have been significantly reduced.

Shorty Says:

Last night as I lay on my pillow
Last night as I lay on my bed
I stuck my big feet out the window
Next morning my neighbors were dead

Give Us Your Ideas

Jean Sippola

What programs and speakers would you like to see at our monthly meetings? Please contact me at 652-1034 with suggestions.

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