

President's Message:

A NEW YEAR....

Although 2008 has now faded into history, it was a very good year for the RHS and set high expectations for 2009. Here are a few closing thoughts as we say goodbye to 2008.

Much has been written about the St Mary's Restoration and Bride's Patio Projects which began in 2005 and will finally be finished by Valentines Day 2009. I hope.

Completion of this phase of the Heritage Park Project will allow RHS to begin a wedding marketing campaign designed to craft St Mary's as an attractive and popular wedding venue. This will assure a continuing revenue stream for coming RHS projects and stability for the organization as a whole.

RHS hosted 14 events at St Mary's in 2008 to include weddings, memorials, concerts, and civic meetings; a fresh new beginning for an old building.

The Christmas season is always a busy season for the RHS. We began with the traditional Christmas Open House at the museum. And now, with the completion of St Mary's, we seem to have added new traditions of a Christmas Concert and Community Sing-A-Long. The Christmas Concert has been held twice and the Community Sing-A-Long thrice.

Each of these events were brilliantly and beautifully decorated through the tireless efforts and amazing creative talents of Ronna Davis in conjunction with Susan Brooking and Jean Sippola. The Christmas season never looked more spectacular at RHS. Thank you ladies for giving us such a beautiful Christmas!

Now a few words about 2009 and what we can expect in the New Year.

The city of Rocklin is not immune to the financial pressures of our current and projected economy. As a result, the Jubilee Parade will not be held this year. However, the Rocklin Kiwanis club is sponsoring a St Patrick's Day Parade and Festival in March and RHS can participate in that event.

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A haven for hoboes

Gary Day

The Central Pacific Railroad Company built the eastbound leg of the Transcontinental Railroad from Sacramento through Rocklin in 1863 and 1864. Rocklin's quarries supplied granite blocks for tunnels and culverts, and riprap for rail beds, as the tracks rose toward Auburn and over the Sierra in the mid 1860s.

According to railroad historian Chris Graves, in 1867 the Central Pacific opened a roundhouse in Rocklin to service the extra engines that eastbound trains needed for the 90 mile strain to the Sierra summit. The facility supplied wood for fuel and water for steam for both eastbound and westbound trains and was a major hub of railroad activity until it closed in 1908 in favor of more spacious facilities in Roseville.

Rocklin's location at the terminus of the westbound trans-Sierra run made it a magnet for

freight train hoboes. Sensing that they were at the valley floor after a tortuous boxcar ride downhill from Norden, hoboes disembarked to rest, and possibly to wander in the area seeking better lives.

Of course then, as now, hobo-style train travel was illegal and Rocklin's residents probably thought of hoboes in their midst as blights on the community.

But not all of Rocklin's hoboes were derelicts. In his autobiography *Sisu, Even through a Stone Wall*, Finnish immigrant Oskari Tokoi tells that he and his friends travelled extensively as freight train stowaways in the western states between jobs as hard working miners and loggers in the late 19th century. Tokoi



In the early 1980s Ruben Ruhkala painted this picture of the Rocklin jailhouse as it appeared in the early 1920s.

arrived hobo-style in Rocklin in 1893 and avoided detection by hiding in the hayloft of a stable near today's Rocklin train station. He found work in a granite quarry and later opened a quarry of his own. He married a local Finnish girl and returned with her to Finland where he entered politics. He became the first premier of a free Finland when the Bolsheviks granted Finland its independence as they came to power in Russia in 1917.

According to research by Rocklin Historian Ruben Ruhkala, in the early 1880s Placer County purchased land at the corner of today's Pacific and Bush Streets and built an approximate 8' x 10' granite jailhouse. Ruhkala suggests, from his conversations with Rocklin old timers in the early 20th century, that the jailhouse was originally intended to house criminals but that it eventually was also a respite point for Rocklin's hoboes, a place to stay for the night out of the cold. "The only requirement was that they had to be locked up at night because they might steal the bedding" he said, "true, there were a lot of bars in town but Rocklin never was a

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Wild West town in need of a big jail.” As a schoolboy in the very early 20th century, Ernest Willard, who became Rocklin’s first police chief in 1946, unlocked the jailhouse door to free the hoboes each morning on his way to school. Willard’s father, George, was Rocklin’s town marshal then and was apparently too busy with his ox- cart drayage business to attend to the hoboes. Earnest Willard still had the jailhouse key in his possession when he served as honorary marshal of the Rocklin Jubilee parade in 1983.

In the early 1980s Ruhkala painted a picture of the jailhouse as he and other old timers remembered it from the early 1920s. The painting now hangs in the Rocklin History Museum.

Rocklin’s population declined after roundhouse operations moved to Roseville in 1908 and a quarry worker strike in 1915 closed most of Rocklin’s quarries. The Jailhouse fell into disuse and new owners dismantled it in the early 1920s to use the granite blocks for the foundation of their new home on Bush Street.

But Ruhkala remembers that, even though most freight trains no longer stopped here after the roundhouse closed, a few hoboes continued to disembark at Rocklin well into the 1920’s. Rocklin’s grade school abutted the tracks near the Rocklin train station then. When classes dismissed at 3:00 Ruhkala and his chums sometimes sauntered across the tracks to the area of the post office at the corner of today’s Front Street and Rocklin Road. From there they could see the 3:30 westbound freight train as it slowed to allow the mail car attendant to snatch Rocklin’s outgoing mailbag from a post beside the tracks. The boys watched as hoboes jumped from the moving train, sometimes misjudging the speed and sometimes injuring themselves as they stumbled and tumbled and sprawled on the gravelly rail bed.

Ruhkala’s mother had eleven children and often greeted hoboes at the door of the family home about one half mile from the jailhouse. “She always had something for them to eat” he said.



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2009 Membership

Jackie Bartolucci
Membership Chairman

We are excited to announce that your 2009 membership will include more social functions, activities, projects and volunteer opportunities than ever before. With a full calendar of events this year, our goal is to improve and grow our membership, while continuing to preserve and honor Rocklin’s history. Don’t forget to renew your membership for 2009 and if you know of someone who loves history and loves Rocklin, ask them to join today. The 2009 annual membership is \$25.00 and is tax deductible. Membership applications can be found on our website at www.rocklinhistory.org or can be requested by calling me at 782-8302.

Mail renewals and applications to :

Rocklin Historical Society,
P.O. Box 1,
Rocklin CA 95677.

One nice thing about egotists;
they don’t talk about other
people.

George Carlin

A CHRISTMAS STORY

Gene Johnson

Several Rocklin Historical Society members assisted in a Christmas shopping event for disadvantaged children sponsored by the Kiwanis Club of Rocklin – K-Kids at Kmart. RHS also helped with a See’s Candy sales project to help fund the event.

On the morning of Dec. 6th more than 260 people helped make it a memorable Christmas season for 130 lucky children. Rocklin Elementary Schools employees, parents, Rocklin Firefighters, shopper’s aides and Kmart employees participated. The store was open by 6:00 a.m. Jim Walsh’s band set up in the parents’ area. Starbucks provided coffee.

Shopper’s aides arrived in time for the 6:45 a.m. orientation and the 7:00 a.m. shopping spree. The aides came from throughout the community: colleges, high schools, Community Covenant Church, the Harley Owners Group and Kiwanians and their friends.

Rocklin Firefighters brought Santa in a red fire truck. With the help of two Elves, both named Cynthia, the show was off and running. While parents stayed in the waiting area, each child was accompanied by a personal shopper’s aide and had a shopping allowance of \$72 to purchase whatever he or she wanted.

Rocklin Firefighters Association and the Harley Owners Group provided generous monetary support, and Kmart provided a discount. To ensure that the K-Kids Project Budget would be met, the Kiwanis Club set up a See’s Candy fundraising sales point at the intersection of Park and Sunset. Walgreens donated the space and Tilton-Pacific paid for the lease of the sales building. RHS loaned lights and a ramp for handicapped access. Kiwanians and several RHS members manned the store that kept the K-Kids project in the black.

Plan to join in the K-Kid event next year for a rewarding Christmas experience.

RHS garage sale pending- Save your old stuff

The Rocklin Historical Society will be holding a garage sale in the spring of 2009, time and place to be announced. Please save your stuff so that you can donate it for the sale. Call Gene Johnson at 624-2378 for more information.

Your life story

Julie Parker

Past, present and future – a Neapolitan time weave – continuously creates new patterns in the fabric of Rocklin. Each of the town's residents have unique personal tales of glory and loss, sorrow and joy, misery and redemption, love and heartache, stagnation and growth, and unlimited vision. As a resident of Rocklin, your life experiences add additional layers to that texture.

Common experiences, such as education, careers, trips, relationships, military, parenthood, historical events and inventions, are necessarily unique to each individual, because of his or her emotional, mental, physical and spiritual state at that particular moment. In other words, you bring a unique perspective to a situation because of your personal life experiences up to that point.

In January 1946, employees of the Union Lumber Company in Fort Bragg, California began one of the longest work strikes in this country's history – about 27 months in length. My great-uncles were supervisors and managers, and so they crossed the picket lines. One of their crews had to ride shotgun as they drove up to the logging camps. My grandfather, however, honored the strike, and found work at a hardware store. He soon found himself embroiled in wild bar-room brawls, defending his brothers' actions. One story goes that in the midst of a fight, a good friend tapped him on the shoulder and said, "Take a rest, Len. I'll take over from here."

Each man carried those experiences throughout his lifetime. They influenced his choices, and altered his perspective on the world. What events in your life influenced or impacted decisions you made, such as jobs, moves, etc.?

My great-aunt Rena was an independent spirit. When cars were first introduced, and her brother brought one home, she wanted one, too. She taught herself how to drive. She wanted to add a room to the house, but she didn't want to wait around for a man to help, so she learned how to do that, also. Rena's wedding date was set for June 1906. At that time, society dictated that the "little woman" should blindly follow her husband's wishes. She called the wedding off two days before, saying, "I'm not going to have some man telling me what to do!" In some photographs, she's wearing a beautiful silk gown with a parasol, and in others, she's wearing dungarees and a painter's cap. She liked to get in her car and take off, without telling anyone where she was going. In the 1920s, she hitchhiked up the coast, sleeping on a bedroll on the side of the road, "just for the experience." In later years, she had an ongo-

ing crush on Clyde, a bartender in Eureka. At the end of her life, while in a coma, a nurse heard Rena suddenly shout out, "Set 'em up, Clyde! I'm coming!" She died two hours later.

The women in my family have always said that, because of Aunt Rena, they believed there was nothing they couldn't do. If you had the chance to ask your aunt, uncle, cousins, or grandparents questions about their lives, what would you ask?

What movies do you remember when you were younger? Movies have always affected lives, whether it be a simple movie star crush, or a film that altered the viewpoint of a nation. My mother's father told me that after his parents divorced, he had seen a silent movie where a mother had to go to the "poor house." He told his mom, "I will make sure you never go to the poor house." My father would stand transfixed every time Loretta Young came on the television, revisiting his teenage crush. Coincidentally, my mother also had big, blue eyes.

Life is in the details: jokes you've shared, music you danced to, tears you've shed, poetry, family meals, holidays, trips, and meaningful conversations. You are a prism, with multi-facets of perspectives and insights to offer your descendants.

What was the best advice you ever received, and from whom? What experiences influenced the raising of your children? What circumstances prevented you from pursuing your dreams? How did war affect your home life? What did marriage teach you? What did you want to be when you grew up, and how close did you get?

You don't have to be famous to have interesting stories. Share your life story. Someone in the future is listening.

Julie Parker is a biographer-personal historian, and is passionate about preserving life stories for future generations.

***She offers workshops and consultations.
//biographer4you.wordpress.com;
www.yourfamilybiography.com;
(916) 487-3837***

Julie will be the guest speaker at our General Meeting on January 19th.

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President*

Gene Johnson is forming a committee to lobby for an Interpretive Center on the old Big Gun Quarry site as part of the Rocklin Downtown Redevelopment effort. This is a project worthy of RHS attention and support as that quarry and its surviving equipment represent the last tangible vestiges of an industry that helped put Rocklin on the map and in which we can take justifiable pride.

In January the St Mary's building and grounds will be sold to the City of Rocklin and leased back by RHS in much the same manner as the museum. This is a good and reasonable fit for both RHS and the city.

We expect to begin work on building a replica of the original Rocklin Firehouse and Marshall's Office as a joint project with the Rocklin Fire Department sometime this year. It was originally located about where St Mary's is now sited.

Thank you all for your individual efforts in support of the RHS in 2008. Your dedication to preserving Rocklin history is admirable and the benefit to our community is precious and permanent.

Roger Lokey

Are your dues due?

If you received this newsletter in the mail, please look at the address label on the envelope. If the number after your name is not a 9 your dues are due.

Please send your renewal dues to:

**Rocklin Historical Society
P. O. box 1
Rocklin California, 95677**

Please send us your Email address

Christy Barros
Publicity Chairman

If you have access to Email, please send me an Email message and I will add your Email address to the roster.

**Christy Barros
christy@inetinc.net**

We are here to help

Do you have questions about Rocklin's history? Stop by the Rocklin History Museum on Wednesday, Saturday or Sunday afternoon between 1:00 and 4:00 and talk to a docent.

Mark Your Calendar

Hello Members,
Following is a list of the major RHS events scheduled for 2009. I would like you all to consider volunteering to help. If you would like more information on how to get involved in these or any of several other activities PLEASE contact me @ 276-5031.
I will connect you to the right person.
Christy Barros

January

8th RHS Board Meeting 3pm

19th General Meeting @ Rocklin Library 7pm (With guest speaker Julie Parker: Your Life Story, How to Write Personal & Business Biographies)

Every Tuesday afternoon @ 12:00pm there is a meeting @ Oracle in the cafeteria to discuss upcoming projects

February

5th RHS Board Meeting 3pm

16th General Meeting @ Rocklin Library 7pm (With guest speaker Steve Hubbard: Historic Powerhouses of the Sierras)

Every Tuesday afternoon @ 12:00pm there is a meeting @ Oracle in the cafeteria to discuss upcoming projects

March

5th RHS Board Meeting 3pm

12th – 15th Kiwanis St. Patrick's Festival @ Blue Oaks Town Center. 14th Parade @ 9am. (more information to follow)

16th General Meeting @ Rocklin Library 7pm (Speaker to be announced)

Every Tuesday afternoon @ 12:00pm there is a meeting @ Oracle in the cafeteria to discuss upcoming projects

April

2nd RHS Board Meeting 3pm

20st General Meeting @ Rocklin

Library 7pm (Speaker to be announced)

Every Tuesday afternoon @ 12:00pm there is a meeting @ Oracle in the cafeteria to discuss upcoming projects

May

7th RHS Board Meeting 3pm

2nd Legacy Dinner ' Fireman's Ball' (Volunteers Needed)

18th General Meeting @ Rocklin Library 7pm (Speaker to be announced)

Every Tuesday afternoon @ 12:00pm there is a meeting @ Oracle in the cafeteria to discuss upcoming projects

June

4th RHS Board Meeting 3pm

27th Rocklin Jubilee (Volunteers Needed)

NO General Meeting

Every Tuesday afternoon @ 12:00pm there is a meeting @ Oracle in the cafeteria to discuss upcoming projects

July

2nd RHS Board Meeting 3pm

NO General Meeting

Every Tuesday afternoon @ 12:00pm there is a meeting @ Oracle in the cafeteria to discuss upcoming projects

August

6th RHS Board Meeting 3pm

No General Meeting

Every Tuesday afternoon @ 12:00pm there is a meeting @ Oracle in the cafeteria to discuss upcoming projects

September

3th RHS Board Meeting 3pm

19th Hot Chili & Cool Car & Old Saint Mary's Chapel' Chapel Open House (Volunteers Needed)

21th Welcome Back RHS to General

Meetings 'Picnic' (Volunteers Needed)

Every Tuesday afternoon @ 12:00pm there is a meeting @ Oracle in the cafeteria to discuss upcoming projects

October

1st RHS Board Meeting 3pm

19th General Meeting @ Rocklin Library 7pm (Speaker to be announced)

Every Tuesday afternoon @ 12:00pm there is a meeting @ Oracle in the cafeteria to discuss upcoming projects

November

5th RHS Board Meeting 3pm

16th General Meeting @ Rocklin Library 7pm (Speaker to be announced)

Every Tuesday afternoon @ 12:00pm there is a meeting @ Oracle in the cafeteria to discuss upcoming projects

December

3rd RHS Board Meeting 3pm

6th Christmas Concert @ 'Old Saint Mary's Chapel'

14th Christmas Party @ Museum 'Potluck' 7pm (Volunteers Needed)

23rd Christmas Carols @ 'Old Saint Mary's Chapel' 7pm (Volunteers Needed)

Every Tuesday afternoon @ 12:00pm there is a meeting @ Oracle in the cafeteria to discuss upcoming projects