

## President's Message To Be or Not To Be....

Shakespeare's famous line is at once both a suggestive question and a question of perspective. That is, what is the value of life and if it is found wanting should it be ended?

Applied to the RHS we can ask; "What is our value?" and "Should we persevere?"

On a more local level this boils down to what does RHS bring to the community and is it worth continued effort?

The RHS is now some 21 years old. Twenty-one years of preserving the unique historical story of Rocklin. Has it been worth the effort? Consider the following.

Our 21<sup>st</sup> century society appears to operate at an ever-increasing pace and like a bull in a china shop; much debris is left in its wake. There seems little time to notice, smell and enjoy the roses of life. The result is an ever-increasing movement toward homogeneous communities across the nation. All communities tend to look and feel the same.

The young have little interest in how their community has evolved. Those of middle age have little or no time to invest in the preservation of community culture. Only the retired seem to have a stability and consistency of life that allows for reflection, introspection and action. However, the young, the middle-aged, and the retired all share the same community and contribute to its atmosphere, character and quality of life.

If this movement of American society toward homogeneity continues, is this a community characteristic we want to support? I suggest the answer is an emphatic NO!

Successful communities come into being, grow and mature, and are desirable places to live for good reasons. A major ingredient in such durability is citizen knowledge and pride in the historical efforts of others to cultivate and develop the community. This history is replete with interesting persons, places and deeds. Always of special interest are the exceptional people who lived their lives in a way that added to the

*(Continued on page 2)*

## KNOW YOUR DOCENTS

*Gay Morgan*

The Rocklin Historical Society has been extremely fortunate because we have attracted a wonderful group of talented and dedicated volunteers. When a specific task is identified there is always someone in this group who knows how to do it.

For example, when the Museum garden needed someone to plant and supervise it, Sally Huseby stepped up.

More recently, in spite of the heat, she has been planting the garden which enhances the St. Mary's Chapel on Front Street.



**Sally Huseby**

Sally grew up in Los Angeles, the eldest of six. She planted her first garden around her playhouse. But gardening is only one of her talents. Her mother wrote in her Baby Book that she was always singing around the house and later in church. Now she performs with the Sacramento Valley Concert Choir. She played violin from fourth grade on through her school years.

A school friend introduced her cousin Roger to Sally. Roger and Sally married in 1961 and lived in West Hills. They are parents of two sons and a daughter. The family enjoyed traveling across the western states and Canada in a trailer. They now have four grandchildren who live in Texas. Roger and Sally moved to Rocklin to be closer to their daughter who lives in Elk Grove. Besides gardening and music, Sally loves to read and is very interested in photography. The Rocklin Historical Society is honored to

count this talented lady among its docents. Please take the time to stop by and see these beautiful gardens.

### In Memory of Benjamin Peter Ruhkala 8/4/1910 - 6/28/2009

and

### Ruben John Ruhkala 8/5/1912 - 7/10/2009

Benjamin and Ruben and their brothers operated Rocklin's Union Granite Company from the early 1930s until 1977. One of their quarries was the spectacular sheer-walled pit a few yards southwest of today's Rocklin City Hall., recently known as the Big Gun Quarry.

Benjamin's family and friends remember his love of life and his sense of humor. Ben often said "the secret to a long and happy life is vinegar and honey in the morning and a martini with your loved ones in the evening".

Ruben was a founding member of the Sierra View Country Club and was a hit with third grade school children as he led tours of the Rocklin History Museum's granite mining display room.

depth and breadth of growth of the community. These actions and accomplishments are examples and goals for community citizens new and old. Such actions and accomplishments are the spice in the recipe that gives each town and city its interest and excitement and significance. But if this fact is not recognized and preserved to be shared with succeeding generations, then all our unique experiences will eventually combine and merge together into an amorphous whole covered by houses, strip malls and asphalt in the name of progress, or evolution or just plain growth. No unique memories or memorabilia of people, places or deeds will survive this obscuration of the past.

If this obscure anonymity is to be avoided, then Historical Societies like ours are not only a necessity but remain the only way for us to see and enjoy the vision, labor and treasure that brought our communities to the present moment.

Rome wasn't built in a day nor enjoyed for only a brief time. Efforts to preserve the history of a town or a nation are important and are appreciated by the community at large in incremental bits over the long haul.

Local history provides the spice and flavor of every town and city. To ignore it, misplace it, or lose it is to find ourselves in a dull, dreary uninteresting place that because it has no past to claim it has no future to enjoy.

Roger Lokey

### **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**

**GUIDED MUSEUM GROUP  
TOURS AVAILABLE  
BY APPOINTMENT  
CALL GAY MORGAN  
624-2355**

## **GARDEN TALK**

Sally Huseby  
Garden Chairperson

Hello fellow gardeners. At long last, we are approaching the final chapter of the St. Mary's Chapel, planting of the gardens. We have an 'extra' plot of ground at the rear of the chapel that we are going to call CHAPEL DONATION GARDEN. For those of you who are going to be redoing flowerbeds and need to do some cleaning out, we will be the willing recipients of your cast-offs or purchased plants. With the existing shade trees and the ones being added to this area, it will be the perfect backdrop for donated plants. Take a walk around your yard and give me a call at 315-8401 if you have something you wish to donate.

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! Placer County Museums Tour AUGUST 8 & 9, 2009**

Again this year 18 museums from Roseville to Tahoe are showcasing their history. The theme is *A-Tisket A-Tasket, Bring Your Picnic Basket*.

If you want to tour the museums by bus or van you should call 530-889-6500 to reserve your seat for \$10.00. Arrival at Rocklin will be at 10:00 A.M. Roy Ruhkala will be demonstrating in the granite area at 10:30 A.M. each day.

We need docents and other volunteers to be available at the Rocklin Museum to set up at 9:00 a.m. and to greet visitors from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day. Please contact me to commit to a 2-3 hour shift either day.

Please call me as soon as you can so I can prepare a work sheet. Assignments will follow when we know how many volunteers are available. Looking forward to hearing from you.

**Barbara Chapman 415-0153**  
**[Bchapman1234@sbcglobal.net](mailto:Bchapman1234@sbcglobal.net)**

## **Fallen Leaf Tree Service will care for museum's trees**

Arborist Roger Poulson of Fallen Leaf Tree Service has donated about \$800 worth of his company's resources to care for the Museum's olive trees for the next two years. Thank you Roger.

Roger is available at

Fallen Leaf Tree Service, Inc  
9510 Jackson Road  
Sacramento, CA 95827  
916.447.TREE  
[www.fallenleaftree.com](http://www.fallenleaftree.com)

### **RHS is recruiting for officers for 2010**

At its November general meeting the Rocklin Historical Society will be electing several new board members to serve during 2010.

In December the board will elect the following five officers from among the its members.

- President
- Vice President
- Treasurer
- Secretary

Corresponding Secretary

Some current officers have served the maximum number of consecutive years allowed by the society's bylaws. Vice President Sippola has formed a nominating committee to seek new board members who might accept nomination to one of the five offices.

If you would like to serve in one of these offices, or want to recommend someone who might consider serving, please call gay Morgan at 624-2355 or send an Email to [gfmorgan@jps.net](mailto:gfmorgan@jps.net)

The nominating committee will submit a slate of board candidates for vote at the RHS general meeting on November 16,

### **Third grader donations top \$4,000**

Gary Day

Rocklin School District third graders raised \$600.00 during the 2008/09 school year to benefit the Rocklin Historical Society's Heritage Park Project. The project is a joint effort by RHS and the City of Rocklin to rejuvenate Rocklin's Front Street Historic District and beautify Rocklin's downtown railroad corridor.

Total third grader donations to the project since 2004 exceed \$4,000.

"Local history is part of third grade state standards, so supporting projects for the Rocklin Historical Society seems like a natural." said Valley View School third grade teacher and Rocklin School District Local History Curriculum Coordinator Nancy Lohse.

"Who would have thought that the project would have generated such a great response from Rocklin's school children?" said RHS President Roger Lokey.

# Who was Parker Whitney?

Gary Day

Western Rocklin covers the southern 12,000 acres of Joel Parker Whitney's 20,000+ acre Spring Valley Ranch of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is property which Rocklin annexed while the city's population grew during the past 45 years.

Joel Parker Whitney arrived in San Francisco from Massachusetts in 1852 at age 17 and identified the beauty and agricultural potential of the Rocklin area as he walked to Auburn to find work mining gold. In 1857 his father, George Whitney, started the ranch to raise sheep with the purchase of 320 acres in today's Stanford Ranch area.

Joel Parker Whitney left his hunt for Auburn area gold early and prospered as a merchant, often importing mining equipment from the East Coast to San Francisco for sale to Northern California miners. In the 1860's and throughout the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century he made his financial fortune dealing in Colorado gold and silver mines, California real estate and New Mexico ranches. In the early 1870's he took control of the Spring Valley ranch from his father, diverted mining ditches for water and diversified into a wide variety of agricultural production. He founded the Placer County Citrus Colony in 1888. Joel Parker Whitney was a prolific writer whose books and newsprint bylines show "J. P. Whitney" or "J. Parker Whitney". Apparently he eschewed his given name "Joel". His biographer, Richard A. Miller, called him "Parker Whitney".

Joel Parker Whitney traveled to and from Europe often, once famously to the 1867 Paris Universal Worlds Fair and Exhibition as an ambassador from the Colorado territory promoting investments in Colorado mines. He developed a close relationship with Lucy Chadwick in England in the late 1870's and fathered a son by her in London in 1878. The boy's name was J Parker Whitney. The J stands for nothing a la the S in

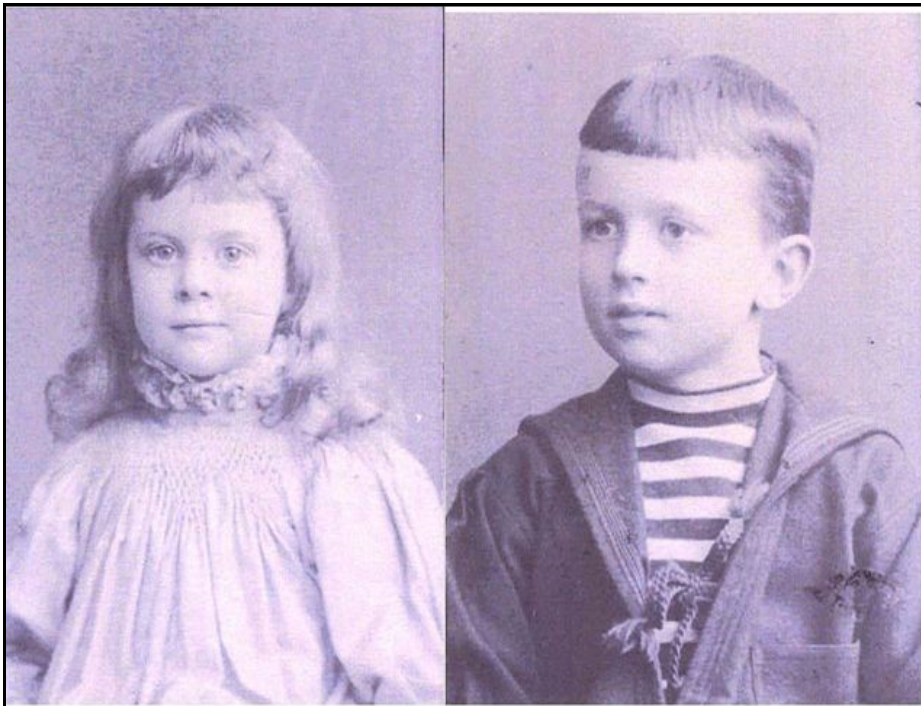
Harry S Truman. During his lifetime J Parker Whitney went by "Parker Whitney".

A second son, Vincent Whitney, arrived while Joel Parker Whitney and Lucy were in New York in 1880. Joel Parker Whitney and Lucy Chadwick married in Sacramento in 1882, two years before the birth of their third child Helen Beryl in 1884. According to a Whitney family genealogist, it was Joel Parker Whitney's third marriage. His first two marriages were childless.

In the early 1880s, with three small children, Joel Parker Whitney curtailed his travels and centered his family's life at the Spring Valley Ranch. He converted parts of the ranch into a baronial estate, resurfacing roads,

While married to the first of his three wives, eastern socialite Daisy Parrot, he paid a girl friend \$2,500 to drop white slavery charges that she had brought against him after he had jilted her for another girlfriend.

Ranch records show that he was a regular at Porter's Saloon in downtown Rocklin, charging large bar bills to the ranch. His father's business partner, W. J. Downing, sometimes scolded him for poor ranch management and inaccurate record keeping. Before her death in 2004, Catherine Whitney, the wife of one of J Parker Whitney's sons, credited J Parker Whitney's poor management skills and irresponsible lifestyle with the start of the decline of the Whitney empire.



**Helen Beryl Whitney (1884-1935) and J Parker Whitney (1878-1924) in 1889. Both grew up in affluence and married first into East Coast high society. Both married three times and died in middle age leaving their brother Vincent in control of the Whitney Estate which he sold off to the benefit of himself and his heirs during the mid 20th century.**

Joel Parker Whitney died in 1913, leaving control of the Whitney Estate to Vincent and curtailing J Parker Whitney's extravagant lifestyle with a bequest of only \$300 per month. A court invalidated parts of the will in 1917 yielding J Parker Whitney one sixth of the estate which then was variously reported in the press to be worth between \$800,000 and \$10 million. . J Parker Whitney died at the Front Street home of his third wife, Katherine Gorby, in 1924, at age 46. Vincent Whitney continued to control Whitney Estate assets throughout the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, selling them off to benefit himself and his heirs. Vincent died in 1965.

The cremated remains of the two Parker Whitneys, J Parker Whitney and his father Joel Parker Whitney, are sealed in the Whitney family's pyramid-shaped mausoleum near the eleventh green of the Whitney Oaks Golf Course.

adding twelve granite bridges and building his mansion, called The Oaks, on a knoll in middle of the ranch about three miles west of Downtown Rocklin.

Young J Parker Whitney grew up in the opulence of his father's estate and assumed ranch management in his early twenties.

But according to Rocklin old timers and *San Francisco Chronicle* scandal sheets of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, J Parker Whitney was an irresponsible bon vivant and a scoundrel.

## Mark Your Calendar

August 8 and 9

**Heritage Trail Tour** through museums in Placer County. The tour will visit the Rocklin History Museum at 10 am on both days. Call 530-889-6500 for reservations

September 21

**Welcome Back Pot Luck** at 7 pm at the Community Center in Springview Park. Call Gay Morgan at 624-2355 for more information.

## Help Wanted

Are you interested in Rocklin's History? The Rocklin History Museum needs a history enthusiast to spend a few hours per week coordinating maintenance and cleaning projects, organizing museum artifacts, and generally overseeing the museum-related projects of the society.

Call Gay Morgan at 624-2355 for more information.



### Rocklin

#### Historical Society Board of Directors

**Roger Lokey**, President  
**Jean Sippola**, Vice President  
**Carol Powell**, Secretary  
**Karen Lokey**, Treasurer  
**Gene Johnson**, Heritage Park  
**Joyce Sherman**, Museum  
**Ronna Davis**, Events  
**Roy Ruhkala**, Past President  
**Christi Barros**, Publicity  
**Jackie Bartalucci**, Membership  
**Laura Woods**, Corr. Secretary  
**Bill Woods**, Board Member

Newsletter proofreading by **Allan and Marie Stone**

## Museum News

Ronna Davis

The Placer County Museum Organizational Committee, which meets quarterly, elected to have their meeting at Old Saint Mary's Chapel, Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>.

They were hosted by Barbara Chapman and Ronna Davis. The group enjoyed a continental breakfast before their meeting, while hearing the history of our chapel. They were very interested in the work that had been done, both inside and out. They were most impressed by all that had been done in the two years between the moving of the chapel and our first wedding there, and complimented the volunteer spirit of the people of Rocklin. Following their morning meeting, the group was given a tour of the museum by Gay Morgan and Roy Ruhkala. Melanie Barton, Museums Administrator for Placer County, wrote to express appreciation for their day in Rocklin.

**To join the Rocklin Historical Society Call Gay Morgan at 624-2355**

## A unique look at a Rocklin landmark

Gary Day

Stanley Prosser Neeley recently donated this 1908 post card picture of Rocklin's granite Barudoni Building to the Rocklin History Museum. The building is at 5250 Front Street across the street from the newly restored Old Saint Mary's Chapel. Stanley's father George Neeley is on the buckboard to the right.

Swiss immigrant meat dealer, Joe Barudoni, constructed the building in 1905 and leased out the first floor to a meat merchant. Notice the steer's head in the left window and the butcher's apron-clad gentleman in the doorway.

Originally a shingle on the right (north) side of the building marked exterior stairs that led to the second floor medical offices of Dr. Bradford Woodbridge. However, Dr. Woodbridge died in 1905 and the shingle does not show.

Post-Barudoni owners operated a variety of businesses in this building and Rocklin old timers remember that it was once a feed store and later an antique shop.

According to Rocklin Historian Ruben Ruhkala, the owner in 1954

started to dismantle the building, moving granite blocks to Ophir for construction of a gas station and leaving gaps in the walls. Recent owners covered the gaps with wooden framing creating residential apartments upstairs and commercial space on the first floor.

The site of the gas station is now vacant but the granite blocks are nearby, strewn about the Ophir landscape.

The building gapped to the right of the Barudoni Building by Dr. Woodbridge's staircase is the Placer County Market. Farther to the right is a taller building which might be Porter's Hall, a famous turn of the century dance house and watering hole. A 1914 fire destroyed the market, Porter's Hall and other buildings north on Front Street, including the five saloons that operated in the 100 yards between the Barudoni Building and today's Cross Roads Church.

