

President's Message

Dr. Jim Carlson

Rocklin's departing city manager paid nice tribute to the Rocklin Historical Society (RHS) as one of the bedrocks of granite city.

It was from our group that the Tree Lighting event on historic Front Street was conceived. The event was at the site where our organization restored St. Mary's Church to the current Old St. Mary's Chapel. The tree lighting ceremony brought together many civic groups, Rediscover Rocklin, The Chamber, Kiwanis and other service clubs, law enforcement and fire department. The event will establish a wonderful tradition for our city and all community citizens and families. We can be proud of the role we, RHS, played in spear-heading the "tree-light." Our vision remains not just a "society" but a community.

RHS has three pillars --the Museum, the Chapel and Heritage Park.

The museum continues to serve the community in many ways. It has introduced thousands of Rocklin school children to our rich history. We have many out-of-state visitors as well as many from out of the country. Increased attractiveness and new exhibits in this past year have been appreciated by us all. The docent staffing and training have remained stable and reliable. Our docents deserve a special word of praise. The Quarry Quarterly continues to be a first-rate publication.

The Chapel has served as home for our general meetings, board meetings, and other special meetings. Through the promotion of several hardworking and diligent members, the Chapel has provided substantial income to support our non-profit organization from our "wedding business." This derives from those who choose this pristine and charming building and gracious surroundings for their nuptials. More bookings for weddings, memorials and other events will be scheduled in 2011.

Heritage Park has been enhanced with our eye-catching fountain with its floating,

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Know your docents

Gay Morgan

We all call her Marg. She brings an International flair to the Historical Society because she and her two sisters grew up on a farm outside of Moosejaw, Saskatchewan, Canada. Marg heard rumors that there were tunnels under that city that had been dug by the Chinese. The rumors were true and those tunnels have since been excavated and turned into a tourist attraction. People also said that Al Capone would sometimes hide out in those same tunnels

when things became too intense in Chicago. The barber's son said that sometimes his Dad would be called down to cut Al's hair.

A girlfriend from Calgary had moved to Sacramento and encouraged Marg to come down to work. She did and went to work for Radiological Associates. The first person she met from Rocklin was Sally Bottomley, the daughter of Mary and James Bottomley, long time owners of a grocery store in Rocklin.

Later she met Gene Johnson, also from Rocklin, when he moved into the apartment upstairs. They were married in 1964. Gene worked for United Aircraft, IBM and Varian Associates and they lived in Connecticut, New York and Sunnyvale, California.

When Gene retired they moved back to Rocklin to live in his family's beautifully restored old home, built for the Huff's in 1886.

They became actively involved with the Rocklin Historical Society as it acquired and renovated the Fletcher Moon House for a Museum.

Later they were part of the group that moved Rocklin's Old St. Mary's Church to its current site on Front Street. This building too needed extensive repair and loving renovation. They are hosts to the annual yard sale.

Marg volunteers as a docent at the History Museum at least once a month and is "on call" when needed. If there is a problem at the Museum, you call Marg and she will track Gene down to come solve it.

As busy as they are they still find time to travel. Just this year they went to England, Finland, Australia and Canada.

So by now you can probably guess why at Christmas time there are lighted Moose on the lawn at the lovely old house on Fifth St. and why Marg still sometimes ends a sentence with "eh?" And, by the way, my husband Fred and I spent our honeymoon in Moose Jaw over 50 years ago. Now you know the rest of the story.



Margaret Johnson

In the jaws of a "great white" while on vacation and at the Cairns Museum in Australia

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president

revolving ball, it's beautiful gardening and granite-faced restrooms, replacing the institutional appearance the building had previously. Our neighbors have been terrific partners in enhancing this historic area. Our leadership heralds a revival to this part of town as Rocklin has expanded to its borders and now seems to be returning home in central Rocklin.

We have experienced officers and a strong Board representing all segments and areas of our town. The input of Sierra College on our Board is so valuable to our city's relations to this venerable college.

Challenges lie ahead for us, particularly in the areas of publicity and membership. We need to expand our horizons with associations with Placer County historical and tourist agencies. Utilization of the data such as email addresses we collect from museum visitors and guests at our general meetings can use more follow-up. We need to communicate with potential members with new techniques. We already have a presence on the web and Facebook. We require an expanding pool of volunteers by offering specific times and duties to all our community's new (and old) talented, willing population. These folks, many recent arrivals, are seeking activities to "give back." Relief from paying a County tax assessment on our museum building is essential. As a non-profit we are providing cost-free services to the City. Finally, as a long-time member said as we squeezed together for our delightful Christmas party: "We need a bigger museum."

Chris "Skip" Gebel is elected RHS president for 2011

At its December meeting, the Rocklin Historical Society Board of Directors elected Skip Gebel president for calendar 2011. Skip said that his goals for this year will be to: "Cultivate new working relationships with other community service, business and non-profit groups while maintaining our relationships with local government and our existing community service partners" and "Research the requirements needed by a potential historical site to become qualified for and registered with State and/or Federal agencies. "

Garden chatter

Sally Huseby
Garden chair person

The rainy season has prevented some of the clean-up work to be done in the flowerbeds at the museum and chapel. After the start of the new year we will straighten things up. The diseased elm at the museum was taken down by the city recently. We had tried to save it, but a rather large branch had fallen, so we decided it would be taken down in the interest of safety. The landscaping at the chapel was draped with beautiful lighting by Gene Johnson. Our tree-lighting ceremony at the chapel was a wonderful event and the chapel grounds were gorgeous. The olive trees at the museum were trimmed this week by Capital Arborists and they did an excellent job with clean-up. We're looking forward to spring when the plants will have new growth and flowers to show off our beautiful property.

Docent news

Barbara Chapman

The January-February-March calendars are in the mail. Please note the vacancies and the days we are closed. If you can volunteer an additional day, please call me.

Our January re-training sessions are starting Tuesday, January 4th, at 11 AM to 1 PM. Please bring a notebook and a pencil. Our leaders are Gay Morgan, Susan Brooking and Jean Day this first session. And, let me know you will be attending. The time may change on future Tuesdays depending on how many of you let me know if another time is better. I do have two requests for 2-4 PM and 4-6 PM. General housekeeping and security measures will be reviewed. This is your time to ask questions. Do you know where to locate resources at the museum? Can you suggest methods of presenting information you've experienced? It's our time to exchange ideas and information. 415-0153

bchhapman1234@sbcglobal.net

Please submit your 2011 dues

If you received this newsletter in the mail, please look at the address label on the envelop. If the number after your name is not an 11 you can now pay your dues for 2011. Please send your \$20.00 renewal dues to:

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

Annual Installation Dinner is scheduled for January 19

Gary Day

The Rocklin Historical Society's annual Installation Dinner is scheduled for Wednesday January 19 at the Gables, the Springfield Community Clubhouse, at 2805 Springfield Drive.

Renamed Recognition Dinner this year because of the entertainment program format, the event will feature Italian cuisine catered by Granite Rock Grill.

The program will feature excerpts from Dani Loeb's production of *My Friends Call Me Parker* performed last May at the Sunset Whitney Country Club. The play starred Sierra College History Professor Dan Defoe as Joel Parker Whitney. Loeb's and Defoe will both be attending

Ken Morrow will pictorially highlight notable features of Whitney's Spring Valley Ranch, and he will be showing Ronna Davis' slides documenting RHS activities of 2010. Admission is \$30. Call Gay Morgan on 624-2355 for reservations.

You will need a code for the gate to enter Springfield. Be sure to ask Gay for that code as you make your reservations.

New library news

Gay Morgan

The Rocklin Branch of the Placer County Library at 4890 Granite Drive was dedicated on the 13th of December. On Saturday January 22nd the Friends of the Library are planning a celebration from 2-5 p.m. There will be music, both instrumental and choral, entertainment and activities for the children and refreshments. There will be a raffle and prizes. The Fire Department will have their historic truck there. The Rocklin Police Department will also participate in the festivities. There will be an opportunity to become part of the Rocklin Friends of the Library. Everyone is welcome. Hope to see you there.

Rocklin History Museum

The Rocklin History Museum is located at 3895 Rocklin Road at the corner of San Francisco Street. The museum is open from 1 to 4 pm on Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday. Docents are available to escort you and answer questions.

Group tours are available for 10 or more people by calling Gay Morgan on 624-2355.

The old wood-framed schoolhouse

John Kimbrough, 2010

My parents, Louis and Carrie Kimbrough moved our family from Ventura to Rocklin in 1948 when I was just three years old. They purchased the Granite Park Trailer Court on the pie shaped lot bordered by North Grove Street and Highway 40, and we lived there and operated the trailer court for many years. There was no kindergarten in the Rocklin School District at that time, so at age six I entered the first grade at the old grammar school on Pacific Street. My sister, Oralee, who is three years older than I, was attending school in the newer brick portion of the school, but I attended first grade in the older wood frame structure alongside it. The two rooms in this old structure housed the first and second grades.

I have a number of fond memories of attending first grade here, but the one that most easily comes to mind is that during the school year, if there was a thunder and lightning storm, school administrators would release the first and second grades to go home because they were afraid that the sound of the thunder would knock down the old wood structure. Never mind that we had to walk home in the rain and lightning on occasion. In any event, it was great to be out of school early.

Right beside the old school building were a couple of tall pinyon pines and at recess we used to bust open the pine nuts with rocks for a little snack. Pine nuts are very hard, and we expended more energy busting open the nuts than we got by eating them, but it was fun and made us feel so independent and self-sufficient.

In the mornings the school bell would ring, and all of the students, teachers and administrators would meet in the paved play yard behind the brick school building to line up in our assigned places, raise the American Flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance together. I always felt very good about that assembly and the ceremony. It started the day off just right. I really enjoyed attending first grade, but I suppose I was more talkative (especially to the

girls) in class than my first grade teacher, Mrs. Louise Harmon could stand. On more than one occasion, after numerous warnings, she would place a piece of Scotch Tape across my mouth to help me control my chatter, telling me not to remove it until next recess. Of course, the tape didn't stick very well, and my tongue kept getting it wet, and I would spend most of the rest of the class-time trying to keep it from falling off, terrified that I would get in more trouble if it did! Strangely enough, I was not traumatized by "mouth tap-

closed up for awhile I believe. Then another shop of some kind may have been opened – seems to me that it was a craft shop. Finally the building was turned into a pool hall. I remember spending more time than I should have as a teenager in the cool darkness playing pool, making small wagers or playing for a free game. It was all harmless fun – and we needed something to do to keep out of trouble.

I left Rocklin to pursue my education and career, but returned many times to visit my parents. Each time I passed that old school house, I was reminded of the wonderful times I had there during my school days and after. Finally, one sad day I returned to find that the old wooden school house had been demolished, only continuing to exist in the special memories of those who attended school there.



Rocklin's schoolhouse of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was at the corner of Oak and Pacific

ing" as children seem to be these days, and my parents didn't sue the teacher or the school. In fact, when my report card reflected my talking problem, my parents intervened on the teacher's behalf and corrected my behavior again. By the time I finished the first grade, the new, modern grammar school on Meyers Street was finished, and I began second grade there. The old school buildings on Pacific Street were eventually sold, but remained there for many years. For part of the time, the brick portion of the school housed an "army surplus" G.I. Joe store that we loved when I was growing up. It had all sorts of fascinating mechanical and electrical things as well as all of the gear we Boy Scouts needed to outfit ourselves and make our pack boards and such. The older frame portion of the school was

Note

Gary Day

Records of this building's history are remarkably scarce. Rocklin old timers say that it was located at the corner of Pacific and Oak and that the Rocklin School District abandoned it in 1952 when Rocklin School moved to its present location on Meyers Street. A subsequent owner demolished it in the 1960s. Placer County records show that it probably replaced Rocklin's original schoolhouse, built in the 1860s and located near the present day baseball fields in Johnson Springview Park. That building burned down in 1885.

Christmas Tree Lighting at St. Mary's Chapel

Gene Johnson

Rocklin's Old Town Community Christmas Tree lighting on December 4th in Rocklin's Front Street Historic District drew about 1,000 revelers.

Members of the historical society promoted the event to provide free holiday fun for the community and Dan Gayaldo and members of the Chamber of Commerce's Rediscover Rocklin Committee demonstrated how well Rocklin organizations can work together to make things happen, even with minimal funds during these recession times.

Superb coverage by the Placer Herald and by Wave Communications brought out Rocklin-ites, 100's more than expected, on a showery Saturday evening.

The City closed Front Street for the event.

Every business in the area opened their doors. Kiwanis of Rocklin and Rotary of Rocklin/Loomis Basin contributed time and funds.



Christy Barros and Bryan Badger visit Santa, with children George (left) and Gabriel, at the first annual Christmas Tree Lighting in the Front Street Historic District of Downtown Rocklin.

Rocklin Fire Department brought Santa Claus on a fire truck. Nationwide Insurance sponsored horse-drawn wagon rides. Crossroads and LIFEhouse Churches, Jerry Dizon and the historical society joined in contributing cookies, cider, cocoa and coffee.

Buck's Traeger BBQs cooked up chicken



Rocklin Historical Society Board of Directors

Skip Gebel, President
Sally Huseby, Vice President
Gene Johnson, Secretary
Kathy Nippert, Treasurer
Ronna Davis, Events
Gary Noy, Board member
Karen Lokey, Board member
Jean Sippola, Board member
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Carol Powell, Board member
Roger Lokey, Board Member
Roy Ruhkala, President Emeritus

Newsletter proofreading by **Allan and Marie Stone**

bits. Kids enjoyed a visit with Santa and Wagon rides, crafts and face painting. Kent and Anne Dazey, were Master of Ceremonies and Caroling Director respectively. Rocklin Community Theater arranged for caroling keyboard accompaniment. Rocklin Star Studios provided live contemporary music from the portico of the historic Barudoni building. Children rang the bell as about 500 people visited Old St. Mary's Chapel.

Ronna Davis's decorated the chapel beautifully.

Almost precisely at 6 pm (after a glitch with the switch) the tree lights came on and the beautiful noble fir showed brightly against a background of dark sky. The Old Town Community Tree Lighting was a success worth repeating.

Help fill the scrapbook!

Mary Etta Holland is keeping a scrapbook of published information about Rocklin's history and The Rocklin Historical Society. If you spot an item in your reading please clip it

Mark your calendar

January 10, 2011

RHS Board meeting

6 pm

Old Saint Mary's Chapel

Board meetings are scheduled for 6 pm on the second Monday of every Month at the Old Saint Mary's Chapel

January 19, 2011

Recognition Dinner

6 pm, dinner at 7 pm

The Gables at Springfield

See new President Skip Gebel installed and see a of review RHS accomplishments of 2010. (replaces RHS monthly meeting)

February 21

Monthly RHS general meeting

7 pm

Old Saint Mary's Chapel,

Arnold Kunst will talk about Abe Lincoln.

March 21

Monthly RHS general meeting

7 pm

Roy Ruhkala will talk about Rocklin's quarries.

April 18

Monthly RHS general meeting

7 pm

Old Saint Mary's Chapel,

Scott Lankford will do a Presentation on Lake Tahoe History called "Tahoe Beneath the Surface".

with the publication date showing and drop it off at the Rocklin History Museum tagged for Mary Etta or call Mary Etta at 435-9043.

A famous Rocklin hobo

Gary Day

Finnish immigrant Oskari Tokoi arrived, hobo-style, in Rocklin in 1896 and avoided detection by hiding in a hayloft. He found work in a granite quarry and later opened a quarry of his own. He married Rocklin's prettiest girl and returned with her to Finland and 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.