

President's Message

Dan DeFoe

Someone once wrote that history never looks like history when you're living through it. If you had told me a year ago that I'd be writing the president's letter in the Quarry Quarterly I'd have thought you delusional. Trick's on me.



President, Professor Dan DeFoe

What I've learned in the year past is that the work the RHS does in this community is truly a work of love. I have enjoyed more than words can express getting to know the dedicated people who give their time, energy and expertise to the preservation of our community's heritage. This Society of ours is a very special family, a growing family with important work to do.

I want to thank all the many volunteers who make the RHS an ever expanding repository of our past as well as a positive force helping to shape our community's future.

For example, The bells are ringing at St Mary's as never before thanks to a chapel team including Ronna Davis, Nancy Lohse and Skip Gebel. They have done three bridal shows in three months and have booked weddings well into 2014.

(Continued on page 8)

Gene Johnson works to protect history of his hometown

Gloria Beverage

Contrary to the old adage, "You can never go home," Gene Johnson has not only returned home, but he's also working to protect the rich heritage of his hometown.

When he retired after a career as a mechanical engineer working at Aerojet, IBM in New York and Varian in Palo Alto, Gene found Rocklin calling to him.

"Where else to retire but an empty house with Prop 13 tax advantages", he explained



Gene Johnson, who received the Placer County Volunteer Service Award last month, holds one of the centerpieces which his wife, Margaret, won.

Photo by Tom McClelland

about the 1996 decision to move back to Rocklin. His parents, Raymond and Florence Johnson, then 100 and 96, had left the Victorian-era home at the edge of Johnson-Springview Park and settled into a retirement complex in Auburn.

Not only did Gene want to be close to his aging parents, but he also wanted to preserve the historic 1886 residence that had belonged to his grandparents. So, the couple purchased the landmark residence from his mother in December 1996 – just one month after his father died.

Since Gene, now 76, admits to workaholic tendencies, he wasn't deterred by the amount of work needed to bring his childhood home back to life. Leon "Shorty" Vicencio, who now lives on the property and helps maintain the grounds, and stonemason Jerry Messner worked alongside him throughout the restoration effort.

"The house was not in great shape," Gene said. "There was a distinct three-inch slope" in the foundation. In fact, Margaret added, if anything was dropped on the kitchen floor, it would roll clear across the room.

While the project was sizeable, it was not the first time Gene had undertaken the restoration of a residence. "When we bought a house in New York, the intent was to have somebody restore it. We couldn't get anybody to work on it. That's what got him going – that

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**Save the date for an event on the patio of the Old Saint Mary's Chapel on Front Street
Wine and Jazz**

An evening with songstress Karen DeFoe and her ensemble of talented musicians

See page 2

Don't miss this one!

Jazz singer **Karin DeFoe** and her ensemble on the patio at Old Saint Mary's, 5251 Front Street in Historic Downtown Rocklin



Jazz singer Karen DeFoe entertains on the patio at The Old Saint Mary's Chapel on Front Street in Historic Downtown Rocklin on May 11.

In a **Wine and Jazz** concert
Saturday May 11, 2013
At 7:30 pm

Admission \$25

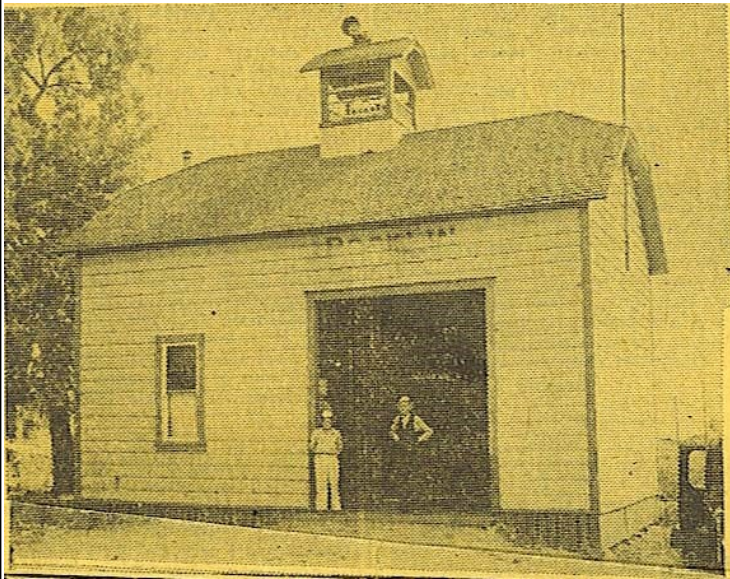
Includes 2 glasses of California wine.

For Reservations call Gay Morgan at
624-2355

Seating is limited to the first 75

Someday soon

Gay Morgan



Rocklin's first Firehouse was on the railroad side of Front Street, on the west side of the tracks, near the train station. Houses on the east side of town sometimes burned to the ground while firemen waited for trains to pass

Someday soon the Rocklin Historical Society will be building a replica of the old City Hall/Fire House that once stood opposite the train depot. As its name suggests it was a dual-purpose building, serving as a meeting place for the City Council and a gathering place for Rocklin's Volunteer Firefighters. It also housed a hose-cart which had to be transported to the fires by a team of horses, or later by a volunteer's car.

The volunteer Fire Department desperately wanted a motorized Fire Engine so they launched a series of Fund-Raisers, dances, spaghetti dinners etc. They reached their goal sometime in the mid 30's,

The Mayor at that time was Arvo Minkkinen and the Volunteer Fire Chief was Fred Stuckert (my Dad). The two men accompanied by their wives and the two Minkkinen girls, Norine and Barbara, drove to Oakdale to pick up the sparkling new truck, a 1936 Dodge Van Pelt (I was not happy, being left to stay with Grandma.)

When they arrived back in Rocklin they found that the space provided for the hose-cart didn't adequately protect the beloved new engine. Subsequently the volunteers built a new Fire house on Rocklin Road complete with a metal tower for the new fire alarm siren. They also installed wooden hose drying racks on the hillside. This building served the community for many years as a meeting place and polling place. And I remember lining up there to get rabies shots for my dog. In time the building was expanded and now serves as the Rocklin Body Shop.

The truck too was retired and forgotten until volunteers led by Vincent Lopez decided to restore it to its original condition. It now proudly serves at ceremonial occasions.



Nancy Lohse, Skip Gebel, and Ronna Davis market Rocklin's Old Saint Mary's Chapel as a wedding venue at bridal shows. They have worked three shows in the last three months and booked a record 28 weddings for 2013 and 2014. Chapel Committee member Nancy Ustaszewski (not in the picture) recently joined the team.

Funds from chapel rentals support chapel maintenance, and activities at the Rocklin History Museum at the 3895 Rocklin Road. ...Photo by Ronna Davis

Love history? Help us with the third graders' field trips to the Rocklin History Museum.

Nancy Lohse

Do you love the enthusiasm that kids have for history? Become a docent helping with the third graders' field trips to the museum! Work with a fun group, that includes lots of retired teachers, to



share Rocklin history with small groups of children as they tour the museum.

The more help we have, the more the students can experience!

Contact Gay Morgan at 624-2355 if you are interested and we will get you all set to have fun with the kids while you share knowledge of Rocklin's history with them.

Garden View

Sally Huseby

Our garden volunteers have been working to spruce up the flowerbeds at the museum and chapel for upcoming events this year. March 17 was the Aunt Tilly's Tea at the museum. Our hard-working crew took out the large bushes on the



sunny side of museum that had become over-grown. We

replaced them with ever-green medium junipers that will bal-

ance the look of our crepe myrtle trees and the red roses. We will also bark the flowerbeds before the Heritage Trail event in the summer. The rose bushes were all pruned by Bob Mart. At the chapel we will have a workday to put in some bedding plants to add more color to the bridal garden for the upcoming weddings and spring concert. Many thanks go to our workers for keeping our gardens looking great throughout the variable weather of our seasons.

Help preserve Rocklin's history and support history-related arts projects.



The Rocklin Heritage Fund at the Placer Community Foundation supports the Rocklin Historical Society

Now it is possible to make tax-deductible gifts and perpetual endowments that will support Rocklin Historical Society programs including both visual and performing arts related to Rocklin's heritage. Please contact Veronica Blake at 530-885-4920 to learn how you can contribute, or go to www.placercf.org.



Please send me you email address!

Kathy Nippert

The Rocklin Historical Society uses email extensively for notifying members of upcoming events. If we don't have your correct email address you are not being so notified.

We use email addresses only for RHS purposes. We do not sell them or otherwise disclose them to anyone. So if you want to ensure that we have a correct email address for you please send a message to me at:

krippert@sbcglobal.net.

Also, RHS is expanding the email address file to include non-members who have an interest in Rocklin's history. If you know of such people please send their email addresses to me or ask them to send me a message and I'll add them to the list.

Please add the Rocklin Historical Society to your shopping list

Gloria Beverage

Help stretch the Rocklin Historical Society's budget by donating items used at the museum and at Old St. Mary's Chapel.

Our ongoing needs include: paper towels, toilet paper, printer paper, Kleenex, garbage bags (large and small), window cleaner, coffee filters, hand soap, paper plates and plastic knives, forks and spoons.

We also need a ladder and a vacuum cleaner.

We appreciate your support of the historical society. Donations can be dropped off at the museum during open hours, 1 pm to 4 pm on Wednesday, Saturday or Sunday, or call Gay Morgan at 624-2355.

Russ McNeill is the new Museum Administrator.

The search for new blood to head up Rocklin History Museum operations is over. Rocklin Historical Society Treasurer Russ McNeill has accepted the responsibility. Congratulate and thank him at :

rbm_90067@yahoo.com

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nobody was interested," Margaret said. "He did all the plumbing and electricity." A picture of that stone cottage is prominently displayed in the living room of the couple's Rocklin home.

Once the repairs on his childhood home were completed, Gene turned his focus



on his hometown..

My family was active in the community and encouraged us to join the historical society. ("Mother had been on the Board of Trustees; father and grandfather

(Anders Wickman) both had served on

the City Council and as mayors", he said). "I had always been interested in Rocklin's history. My first high school

essay was Rocklin, Death of a Town. While in a college art class I did sketches of Big Gun Quarry."

Gene's parents encouraged them to join the historical society. Gene also found it hard to say "no" to Roy Ruhkala, a lifelong Rocklin resident and the primary force behind the Rocklin Historical Society's efforts to create and maintain a museum as well as the restoration and preservation of Old St. Mary's Chapel on Front Street.

"He asked Gene to look around for a site for the museum," Margaret explained.

"I just can't get away from that man," Gene added with a laugh. As a teenager, Gene had worked at a gas station in downtown Rocklin. "Roy would come in and tell me his car needed to be greased. I was the grease monkey, so I'd service his car. When Roy came back he'd tell

me that when he had it done in Sacramento, they would also clean the inside of the car. So, I'd have to sweep his car. It's been like that ever since."

Gene's proud of how the community, the society, and the City of Rocklin partnered to create the museum and save the historic church. "On the other hand the effort to establish a dialog related to the Big Gun Quarry property and historic structures has been difficult," he said. "It has taken a lot out of me." However, he says he remains hopeful that the community can again work together and find the best solution for the quarry, artifacts and adjacent properties.

Gene is an active volunteer with the Rocklin Kiwanis Service Club – working at the annual See's Candy sale, the holiday shopping spree for kids at Kmart and the annual Community Festival. As co-chairman of the Old Town Rocklin Tree Lighting he says it is particularly rewarding

to see how the Rocklin churches, service clubs, chamber of commerce and the City work together to create a great family event.

While Gene said he needs to slow down, his focus remains squarely on protecting Rocklin's history. "Rocklin needs a 'sense of place'," he said. "What better than our unique and interesting heritage of - - rock, rails and ranches.



Johnson often expresses his advocacy for historic preservation

Photo by Tom McClelland

From the Mayor of Old Town Rocklin

Gene Johnson



The Old St. Mary's Chapel and our Rocklin History Museum remain in jeopardy of being seized and sold under a



state law directing that properties funded under the state's now defunct

redevelopment law be sold to fund certain local taxing agencies.

We asked legislators, Senator Ted Gaines, Senator Jim Nielsen and Assemblywoman Beth Gaines for assistance in preventing the sale in order that the buildings could be transferred to the City of Rocklin where they would remain under the control of the Rocklin Historical Society.

We met with staff of Assemblywoman Gaines and Senator Nielsen's and they in turn, contacted the State Department of Finance where they found that the state might reconsider the mandated sales

since the chapel and the museum are both historic properties. This is very encouraging news for the historical society. Recently we sent letters to DOF to emphasize



that the two buildings are historic and that they are significant public assets, especially to the educational community.

Kudos for Herald History Column

Quote from Placer Herald:

"I just had to comment on the truly wonderful series on Rocklin history by Gary Day ('Rocks, Rails and Ranches') Last week we walked over to the Indian springs and there were lots of people there just because of his article. I truly enjoyed the one [article] on the beautiful and oldest church, as well as the one on

the old remodeled Victorian houses. We applaud Gary and your paper.

Thank you.

Peggy Morgan, Rocklin"

Good, Better, Best described the quality levels of the Montgomery Ward catalog but now that phrase describes the past, present and future of our town. City manager Rick Horst proclaimed in his state of the city address: "We must innovate, create and, yes, even risk-take. We must exercise a new kind of redevelopment and work to reuse and renew elements of our community that might be on the decline. And let this process begin in Old Town Rocklin, ...enhanced community events, static and performing art venuesmaintaining our sense of place and community heritage as a family friendly community."

And its not just talk, landscaping at Heritage Park, a new parking area at the train depot, city and private properties on Pacific Street cleaned up, unattractive chain link fencing removed from the lot at Pacific Street and Rocklin Road. Sidewalks broken by tree roots replaced on Pacific St. and Rocklin Road ...and on and on.

Our city's new leadership backs up talk with actions.

Recently, Rocklin, Auburn and Sacramento newspapers



included images of The Old Saint Mary's Chapel. Even our garbage company, Recology, highlights Old St. Mary's on a brochure cover. Photography classes meet for photos at Old St. Mary's.

Skip Gebel's pronouncement that Old St. Mary's is South Placer's most photographed building may be "right on."

Front Street archeological find

Gene Johnson

Y OF ROCKLIN



Mike Clark is unearthing the contents of nineteenth privies on his Front Street property and developing a trove of archeological material, possibly the most interesting finds in the history of our city. Right under our noses and without fanfare Mike has moved an estimated 5000 tons of material, while accumulating a small trainload of bottles and rusty artifacts. Recently, Mike made an exceptional find at the site of the circa 1900 Locomotive Firemen's Union Hall. It is the seal stamper used to apply embossed gold seals to documents of the Granite Div. 415 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

The Firemen's Hall burned in 1906. It was not rebuilt because the railroad had announced the move of their roundhouse and related facilities to Roseville that year. Rocklin's Firemen's Hall is the large building in the middle of the picture above.

Aunt Tillie's Tea

Gay Morgan
Photo by Bob Phillippi



The Rocklin Historical Society hosted a highly successful Tea on Sunday, March 17 at the Rocklin History Museum.

The purpose of this event was to increase awareness of the Museum, to document some history, generate new members and to raise funds to build a replica of the old City Hall/Firehouse.

Aunt Tillie was a real person. Her name was Otilia Maki and she came to Rocklin from Finland in 1901. She went to work for the A.O. Wickman family and their Boarding House. Her duties consisted of milking the cow, cooking and tending the new baby, Florence.

While working there she met Victor Wickman and they married in 1903. Tillie became an excellent cook and was always happy to serve her guests strong Finnish coffee and Finnish coffee-bread called Nisua.

When Tillie and Victor bought their big house on High Street they also bought the wood burning stove that is now housed at the Museum. The stove was donated to the Museum by Mr. and Mrs. Pete Osella.

Many years later the baby Florence grew up and married a man from Michigan, Ray Johnson. They were the owners of the Springview Dairy and the parents of Gene Johnson, a very active member of the Rocklin Historical Society.

Aunt Tillie's Tea was served at tables set with beautiful linens, china, and silver.

The menu consisted of Roasted Celery Soup, two kinds of scones with Devonshire Cream, Lemon Curd and Caramelized Onion Crème. This was followed by three kinds of tea sandwiches and three Sweets. Three kinds of tea were offered.

Kathie Nippert chaired the hardworking committee. Her helpers were: Elizabeth Nippert, Louise Cullen, Susan Brooking, Joan Schuman, Carol Peterson, Marg Johnson, and Gay Morgan. Gary Day and Hank Lohse did all the transporting of chairs, tables and other necessary items. Bob Phillippi served as photographer.

Ten descendants, (grandchildren, spouses and great grandchildren) of Tillie and Oscar Wickman were present.

Treasurer's Report for Period ending March 31, 2013

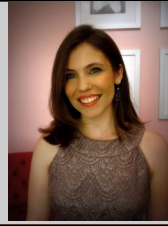
Russ McNeill

Balance forward December 31, 2012	\$ 36,069.61
Total Income	\$12,197.41
Total Expenses	(\$7,267.21)
BALANCE ON HAND March 31, 2013	\$ 40,999.81

Mechanics 11 month CD (.45%) (2/13/13)	\$ 30,683.19
Mechanics Bank Chapel Checking	\$ 8,116.32
Mechanics Bank RHS Checking (Uncommitted)	\$ 19,958.42
Committed Funds:	
3rd Grade Transportation Account	\$ 900.00
Children's Firehouse Fund	\$13,577.35
Rocklin Homecoming Reunion	\$2,564.04
Heritage Park Kiosk	\$4,000.00
TOTAL BALANCE IN ALL ACCTS	\$79,170.47
Rocklin Heritage Endowment Fund	\$27,154.93

Dani's Journal

Danielle Loebis



Place and the Power of Storytelling

As an audience, our attentions are divided. We have more devices and entertainment options than ever before and many of us (myself included) have grown accustomed to multi-tasking our way through life. Rare is the time when we are captivated, which is why those moments are so memorable.

We crave the moments when we have the ability to transcend our daily lives and experience something more. They inspire a feeling of youthfulness and a sense of childlike wonder that squeezes its tiny fingers around our hearts to keep us utterly transfixed. While few things in this world can cast such a spell upon us, one is the power of an exceptionally-told story.

We connect with stories because they're very human. When we tell the story of a place, listeners have a chance to lend their voice to the narrative by visiting that place and creating their own experiences. If a place wishes to flourish, to be known and to be loved, it must have individuals committed to telling its story and telling it well.

Rocklin is very lucky to have the Historical Society to protect and preserve its story. We are luckier still that many of the Historical Society members are exceptional storytellers. However we all must do our part to listen to and learn Rocklin's history so that we may tell it with our own voices. Only when we've learned that story can it spark our imaginations to build upon it. That way, when we pass by the local landmarks we cherish, we can spread their importance by becoming storytellers ourselves.

Dani Loebis is the Digital Marketing Strategist at AugustinIdeas. In 2010 she wrote and directed "My Friends Call Me Parker," a Rocklin Historical Society play about the extraordinary life of Joel Parker Whitney.

Good luck to the new Rocklin Historical Society officers!

Photo by Ronna Davis



Outgoing Rocklin Historical Society President Skip Gebel (right) welcomes officers for 2013 at the society's annual Installation Dinner at Whitney Oaks Golf Club. From left: Secretary Patrice Cardott, Treasurer Russ McNeill, Vice President Kathy Nippert and President, Professor Dan DeFoe.

Old Saint Mary's Chapel is available for your event.

Ronna Davis

Old Saint Mary's Chapel is Rocklin's oldest public building. It is at 5251 Front Street, near the corner of Rocklin Road. It is the centerpiece of Heritage Park and



Old Saint Mary's Chapel at Christmas, 2012

a key landmark in the restoration of the Front Street Historic District in downtown Rocklin.

The chapel originated as Saint Mary's of the Assumption Catholic Church at 5420 Front Street, dedicated there by San Francisco Bishop Joseph Alemany in 1883.

The Catholic parish vacated the building in 1983 in favor of larger and more modern facilities on Granite Drive. The Rocklin Historical Society moved Saint Mary's to the present location and restored it so that it is available for your event.

The Old Saint Mary's restoration is probably the most photographed building in Rocklin. For more information contact:

Nancy Lohse

At 916 415-5510

or

E-mail: oldstmaryschapel@gmail.com

Please save your stuff

The Rocklin Historical Society is will probably be conducting a fund-raiser garage sale this summer, probably in June and probably at the Johnson residence as in years past. Please save your unwanted items so you can donate them at the time. We will advise you of the details soon.



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Newsletter Proofreading by Marie Stone Nippert

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president

We're looking forward to a wine and jazz event on May 11 this year, the fundraiser to be held on the beautiful patio at St Mary's on Front Street. We are also working in concert with the Rocklin Fire Department in hopes of bringing back the historic Fireman's Ball, an event that will help fund the restoration of Rocklin's first firehouse in Heritage Park.

We will continue to work with the city and other community groups to preserve Rocklin's rich heritage and we will play a dynamic role in the planning of the proposed Quarry Village on the Big Gun quarry site on Pacific Street.

Yes, we sometimes may not notice the history we're living, but I assure you these are historic times for our Society and the town of Rocklin.

Mark your calendar

April 15, 2013, 7 pm
Rocklin Historical Society Monthly Meeting
at Old Saint Mary's Chapel at 5251 Front Street.
The Hidden Wonder of the World ,The Transcontinental Railroad from Sacramento to Donner Summit

May 11, 2013, 7:30 pm
Wine and Jazz
Starring Rocklin Jazz singer Karin DeFoe with her ensemble of talented musicians on the patio at Old Saint Mary's Chapel 5251 Front Street.
Admission—\$25.00 includes two glasses of California wine
Call Gay Morgan on 624-2355 to reserve.

May 20, 2013, 7 pm
Rocklin Historical Society Monthly Meeting
at Old Saint Mary's Chapel at 5251 Front Street.
Untangled shadows, Little Known Tales of the Sierra Nevada with history professors Gary Noy and Dan DeFoe.

May 26, 2013, Rocklin Old Timers at Finn Hall
Call Gay Morgan on 624-2355 for details and reservations

Also:
Rocklin Historical Society planning meetings are held every Tuesday at 7:30 am in the cafeteria at Oracle, corner of West Stanford Ranch Road and Sunset.

Dues for 2013 are due.

If the label on this newsletter's envelop shows 2012, your dues for 2013 are now due. Your dues support the Rocklin History museum and programs to entertain and educate Rocklin's citizens about Rocklin's history.

Please mail your \$20.00 dues for 2013 to:

Rocklin Historical Society
P.O. Box 1
Rocklin California 95677

A new membership in the historical society would add to the reach of this newsletter and make a great gift. Google the society's website for a membership application.

Letter to RHS

Dear Society Members;
I just want to tell you what a wonderful time I had at the (Aunt Tillie's) Tea. It was so elegant and beautiful and the food was delicious I particularly like the table decorations , the cups and saucers and the tea pots. It was a truly lovely event. The women who put this on really knew what they were doing.

Janet Currieri