

Silverton Country Historical Society

Established in 1974

Over Forty Years of History in the Making



*Museum and Office
428 South Water Street*

The Silverton Recreation Center

Part 2

By Fred A. Parkinson

The Recreation Center had a perceived dual reputation. Two dozen long-time Silverton residents have weighed in with their memories of the center. For some, it holds fond memories of time spent socializing with friends after school while sitting in booths piled high with hamburgers, French fries, and 25¢ milkshakes. For others, and especially their parents, the perception was that the Rec Center held a negative influence or, in the words of a former patron: “It turned into a rough place.”

During the early years, the Rec was a great refuge for kids. One resident remembers the Rec was so crowded that it was often hard to get up to the counter to order food. Kids would often go there before, and sometimes after, viewing a movie at the Palace Theater.



Kids gather in front of “The Rec”

Over time, the perception of the Rec Center as a place to enjoy “good, clean, fun” seemed for some to morph into a less than desirable place for young people to hang out. Many parents forbade their children to go to the Rec because of its poor reputation. Some kids would get around this restriction by merely standing outside (while sometimes taking a furtive peek inside) with their friends on the sidewalk without actually going inside. But, for others, the restriction seemed to apply to the front sidewalk as well. One young lady, who was talking with friends outside, was observed there by one of her mother’s friends. Needless to say, the girl was soon “in dutch” with her parents.

Other former patrons have a more favorable recollection of the Rec. One resident, who graduated high school in 1952, spent a lot of time there with her friends during the early years. She said they were there primarily after school during daylight hours. She remarked that it was a time where, if the Rec had gained a negative reputation, her parent’s would have certainly never let her go there.

Several people remember a somewhat older person than the typical Rec Center clientele driving a black Cadillac convertible that he would sometimes park in front of the Rec. Kids would join him while playing their guitars and singing. At night, Cadillac Jack as he was known, would sometimes park next door in front of Silverton Drug to take advantage of the bright fluorescent lights outside the store.

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Curator's Corner

Last month I was contacted by Carolyn Boersma Ladd who wanted to visit the museum with her sister to see the model of the Gallon House Bridge that her father, Robert, made several years ago. The morning of August 23rd she and her sister Lorraine stopped by and we had a wonder-



ful visit and I got a short history about their father. They took pictures of the bridge and many 'selfies' and I made a copy of the written history about the bridge that is part of the display. They are very grateful that we are still displaying the model and that it has found a permanent home. When we have our school tours the 'bridge' is a real hit.



Some of you may know George Pappani who recently passed away. George and his family moved to Silverton in the 1970's. I enjoyed spending time with him and listening to his many stories of growing up in Gilroy California and especially his time during World War II as a Marine in a tank division. I brought his dress jacket and the notebook/diary that he kept to the museum last November to put it on display during our November salute to the local veterans. After his death his son called me and wanted to know if we had a place for his things here at the museum and I told him that I would find a home for them. The notebook is an amazing piece of work since it has many pictures of Okinawa and the bomb sites in Japan along with a very detailed narrative of his tour of duty. After picking up the articles, that also included his sea bag and blankets, I searched the web site for Gilroy California. Finding the Gilroy Historical Museum I called them to ask if they would be interested in adding these articles to their museum. The result was an overwhelming YES!



With that I got a wonderful history of the Pappani family in that area. The gentleman that I talked to is the volunteer who does basically the same job that I try so hard to keep up with and sharing that with him, he totally understood.

Making sure that all accessions are properly cared for 'takes a village' and his museum, like ours, is so grateful for all of the volunteers who give of their time and energy to keep our doors open. During our conversation I learned so much about the history of the town and the Pappani family whose influence was huge. They had orchards and a fairly large farm like most of the families in Gilroy which was basically a farming community. Gilroy is known as the garlic capital of the world. However, the Pappani family farm was known for their fruit trees. The connection that the phone call made for me was two-fold. The first was that so many of our WWII veterans are passing away and keeping that history alive is so important. The second connection is what he shared with me, keep the history of your area alive and get the word out, especially to the young people of your community. The Gilroy Museum works with the local schools to host tours and also to aid in local research that several of the students do in connection with some of their middle and high school classes. I am so pleased that we are 'keeping our history alive' with the many school tours that keep us busy in the spring.

Judy Lowery

(Continued from Page 1)

Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Taylor took over the Rec Center in December 1954. A couple of months later they introduced a major addition to the activities available at the Rec. The Taylors announced in the February 4, 1955 *Silverton Appeal-Tribune* that on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays the floor at the center would be cleared for dancing to jukebox music. The article reported: "The Taylors, who have three teen-agers of their own, said they wish to provide some further entertainment for the young people than games that are there." Additionally, according to the paper, the Rec Center kitchen was enlarged and improved.

In those days, a city police officer patrolled downtown on foot, rattling doors at closed businesses to make sure they were locked. A red light bulb hung from a wire in the middle of a prominent intersection in downtown. When activated by the dispatcher, the police officer on his rounds would see it lit up and would contact dispatch to see who needed police assistance. The police were called several times to the center to break up altercations among the young people.

Also, rumor has it that one evening, while on his rounds, a local police officer beamed his flashlight into the windows of the Rec Center and observed something in the back that could have added to the Center's perceived poor reputation.

It appears that the Rec's reputation as a fun place to hang out extended beyond the limits of Silverton. Boys from other towns would come to the Rec not only to play pool but also in the hope that they would meet girls. On one occasion a current resident remembers loaning his cousin some money to use as a wager in an arm wrestling match against a guy who had come to the center from Woodburn. The boy had the money to loan because, in addition to being a regular patron of the Rec, he also worked there after hours to help Mrs. Taylor clean up. Unfortunately, the cousin lost his match against the guy from Woodburn but ultimately paid back the money he lost.



Kids meet in one of the large booths at "The Rec"

Despite their best efforts to run the business, the Taylors ultimately decided to cease operations at the Rec during the first week of August 1956, resulting in a two-month closure while a replacement tenant was sought. Reber and Lora Allen, owners of the Rec Center building, took the closure as an opportunity to brighten up the premises with new paint inside and out.

The Rec Center opened again on October 1, 1956. The fifth owners, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Bjelde, had recently moved from Salem to Silverton to operate the Bus Café in the Palace Theater building. They relinquished that business to run the Rec. The Bjelde's would retain the Center for the shortest length of time of any of the seven owners. After operating the business for only four months, Arthur Bjelde sold the Center to take a job in Portland as building custodian for a realty company.

The Rec's poor reputation was evident at school. At least one coach at the high school prohibited the athletes on his team from frequenting the Rec because of the perceived negative influence. Also, in a pointed play on words, one teacher used to refer to the Recreation Center as "The Wreck."

The sixth new owner was Paul Cooper, who took over the Silverton Recreation Center from the Bjelde's during the first week of January 1957. For those still keeping score, as of January 1957, the Rec had been in operation for eight years and had been operated by five different owners during that time.

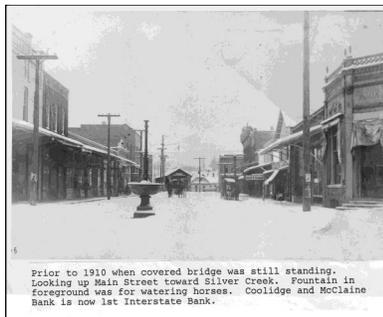
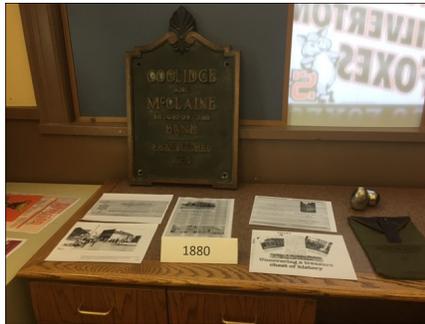
To be continued - Part 3 in the next newsletter....

Citizen Bank Company Celebrates 60 Years

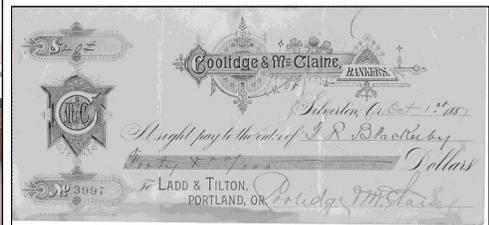
Established in Corvallis on October 5, 1957, Citizen Bank has steadily expanded over the years and now serves 13 Willamette Valley communities. One of their goals is to become a vital, contributing part of the area they serve. Located in Silverton since 2009, their home is in the historic Coolidge & McClaine Bank building. The bank has been a member of the Historical Society since their first day in town and help sponsor many local events. We were pleased to help them celebrate their anniversary by working with them to provide a history of the Coolidge & McClaine building. Be sure to stop in and wish them a Happy Anniversary!



Coolidge & McClaine's New Bank Home



Prior to 1910 when covered bridge was still standing. Looking up Main Street toward Silver Creek. Fountain in foreground was for watering horses. Coolidge and McClaine Bank is now 1st Interstate Bank.



Brian Mitchell, Branch Manager with part of the display.

Bobbie Movie in the Works!!

I recently received a call from Steve Lundquist who is ready to make a full length movie about Bobbie the Wonder Dog. He has the backing and is certain that it will be made. He wants to



use Silverton as a backdrop and is interested in any folks who might be willing to help out with the production volunteers or who may know of someone who can help fill in background information. I have given him a few names but he would like as many as possible to help bring the movie to life. He left his information for us to spread the word! His phone number is: 253-988-5038 and his email:

61lundquist@gmail.com

Judy Lowery

November News

The Museum's last open day for 2017 will be Sunday, November 12. We will end the season with one of our most special displays—our collection of military related items and uniforms. We have selections from every branch of the service and from most of the country's wars. We will be setting up in the next week or two, so please try to take the opportunity to help us salute our veterans.



SCHS Picnic September 9th at Coolidge-McClaine Park



Early photos—we ended up with about 20 people. I got too busy eating and visiting to take more pics! See you at the next one!

Silverton History Basket for Judy's Party



This year we prepared an offering of Silverton history items to be auctioned off as a fundraiser for Judy's Party that was held Saturday, October 14. Nestled in a replica strawberry carrier (Made by Jack Hande, with a handle made from one of the old Broom Factory handles), a copy of "Cartoons" by Gus Frederick, "The Country Boy," by Homer Davenport, "When Silverton Was Young," by Flora Hoblitt, a 1954 Centennial plate, a Museum 15th anniversary commemorative plate, the Sesquicentennial issue of 1859 Magazine, and a framed copy of the Gallon House Bridge print, by Rod Frederick. Also included were the six new "Power Women" informational cards. All of these items are available at the Museum.



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SPROUSE-REITZ

First place to run for Hallowe'en is Sprouse-Reitz, where you find everything for the spirit of the occasion. Here are some ideas:

BLACK & ORANGE HALLOWE'EN CANDIES

FRESH AND GOOD
Unlimited Assortments
Candy Novelties
Gum Drops
Golden Corn
Pumpkins—Cats
Tricks for Treats

JACK-O-LANTERNS
Electric and Candle Types

"FRIGHTFUL" MASKS
Clever, real-looking
Latex masks—
25¢ 39¢ 49¢ 69¢
Funny cloth masks—
5¢ 10¢ 15¢ 25¢ 29¢

CAREFREE PARTY SUPPLIES
Colorful paper napkins, tablecloths, cups, bonbons, hats, candles, noise makers, crepe papers and centerpieces.

SPROUSE - REITZ VARIETY STORES

Thank you to our new and renewing members and generous donors and to anyone who has given anonymously to the Museum or any of its projects—

Bob and Susan McGowan
Vern and Pat Wolfard
Ed and Julie Bowles
Ricky and Kelli Burbage
Jim and Erika Toler
Tom Dill and AnnMarie Neil
Patricia Moser Mullen
Diane Hill
Molly Murphy
Betty Layne

And a special thank you to Nancy Havens Rose!

We truly appreciate your support!!

Silverton Appeal Tribune, October 21, 1955

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If you received an overdue notice with your newsletter, we appreciate your prompt response. Thank you!