

Wellington Tribute Draws Appreciative Crowd



Authors Gary Krist and Martin Burwash present their perspectives about the tragedy. Sisters Laura Mulcahey & Susan Planas, who attended from California, are interviewed for Channel 13 News.





Rings of Time

Skykomish Historical Society Newsletter

Summer 2010 www.skykomishhistoricalsociety.org

Skykomish Hotel on Most Endangered List

Washington Trust for Historic Preservation has placed the Skykomish Hotel on its most endangered properties list.

WTHP uses publicity, connections, and prestige to help preserve and restore important historical properties in WA through advocacy, education, collaboration and stewardship. The listing will significantly improve opportunities to find grant funding and other support to preserve and restore this Sky landmark.

WTHP does not "find" properties to list, but relies on recommendations

Waylon Robert reads his justification for listing the Sky Hotel as endangered at a press conference in Sammamish, attended by Sky Mayor Fred Black and several SHS members. Waylon is now also a new member of SHS.

from advocates, then does follow-up research to determine if the property is truly historically significant. The person who recommended the hotel be listed is Waylon Robert, a 13-yr-old student from Ballard who is excited by local history.



Interested persons from near and far came to Skykomish 27 February to be part of the SHS Wellington Avalanche Commemorative Event.

Some were relatives of those who perished, but many just wanted to know more about a disaster they had heard of all their lives without fully understanding what all had happened in early 1910 at Wellington.

By the end of the day most participants had a genuine sense of how a freak late winter storm overwhelmed the best efforts of the Great Northern Railway and brought death to 96 souls when a massive snow slide crushed two stranded trains and tumbled them down the mountainside.

Among the crowd estimated at well over 300 were many direct descendants of those who died. Robert Walters Jr. of Portland, OR, spoke of his grandfather Sidney Jones who had been a railroad employee only a few months when he left his widow with three small children. Jones was the only Sky resident to perish.

Sisters Laura Mulcahey and Susan Planas came from California to take part. In researching family history, Laura learned

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Museum Temporarily Moved to Old USFS Compound

For the time being the SHS Museum may be found in the old Forest Ranger's house across the tracks while our original "temporary" home, the old Fire Hall, is being lifted and moved in order that the earth under it can be removed and cleaned as part of the major oil-spill clean-up going on in town. When the clean-up is completed the museum will relocate to a permanent home, still to be determined.

In the meantime we remain open for business, despite the reduced display space of our new location. Our binders of photos and information about all aspects of valley history are available for research and study and a number of displays are in view.

The March Historical Society meeting was held in the "living room" at the new location and went just fine, in addition to being well attended.



Attendees at the March SHS meeting: Bob Kelly, Adam Phillips, Mike Pierce, Lorna Goebel, Warren Carlson, David Phillips, Pat Gallagher-Carlson, Dorothy Beck, Teddy Jo Ryder, Skip Mackner, Henry Sladek, Bob Hull, Fred Black, Bianne Hull, Rose Marie Williams. ...a Michael Moore photo

The Spirit of Youth Comes to SHS

For his 10th birthday, Adam Phillips was cross-country skiing near Stevens Pass with birthday money in his pocket. At the Nordic Center he saw a Buddie Williams book about towns along Stevens Pass Highway and spent his birthday money to buy it. The rest, as is often said, is history.

After his purchase his family stopped in Sky and visited the SHS Museum on the drive home. A few months later he attended the Sky Centennial celebration where he met Bob Kelly who promised him a guided tour of Wellington. It was after this tour he was reviewing the papers he had collected, and when he came across the SHS membership brochure decided to send his \$15 and become a member.

Now, at age 11, he has matured into a committed history buff focusing at the moment on the history of Skykomish Valley as SHS's youngest member.

Adam's interest in trains began at age four, so Sky Valley is a natural extension. For school he has written a 16-page account of the history of the valley, and his school newspaper recently published his article about the Wellington disaster.



Adam Phillips and Bob Kelly pose for a photo after the Historical Society March meeting.

The desk in his room has a file drawer filled with information about the valley organized in a way that would shame many adults, and most books he owns about the valley have been signed by the authors.

Adam believes it is likely his future will be spent making a career of understanding the past. Perhaps through his young eyes old things will be seen in new light.

Save the Date August 28th Museum Lawn Party

Please join Skykomish Historical Society at the Museum for a Lawn Party in late August.

**There will be History,
Prizes, Food, and Fun**

Catch up on what SHS has been doing in past years and view videos of Skykomish History, The Oil Cleanup, etc. Look at our many books of historical pictures and learn to use our web site to find pictures of the Sky Valley, your relatives, businesses in town, etc.

1 pm to 4 pm

Iron Goat Trail Collection Project

Nearly forty boxes of Iron Goat Trail records and photos were sorted, organized, inventoried, and repackaged during the week of 5-8 April at the Masonic Hall, SHS Collection Manager Bob Kelly reports.

This was Phase 1 of "Preserving the Story of The Iron Goat Trail," a project largely funded by a grant from 4Culture, to organize and preserve the collection donated to SHS by Ruth Ittner, considered to be godmother of the IGT. Ruth passed away in June knowing her records were being preserved.

SHS engaged the services of heritage preservation consultant Erica Varga to inspect the materials, create a management plan for the collection, and provide a prioritized approach for its preservation.

Under the supervision of Erica and Bob, Rose Marie Williams, Beanne Hull, Adam and David Phillips, Robert DeFreest and Joe Manzanares all worked on the project. Robert and Joe received modest compensation for hauling the collection to and from the Masonic Hall.

Phase 2 of the project will include cataloging the collection at a high level, posting the results on our web site, and publicizing that the materials are ready for others to research and enjoy.

Top: Adam Phillips, Joe Manzanares, David Phillips, & Robert DeFreest organize collection items. Lower left: Ruth Ittner's yearly "Trail Log" Journals. Lower right: Erica Varga sorts and evaluates records.



Skykomish Calendar of Events

Old Timers Picnic 17 July

Remember Cascadia Inn and Sky River Inn are closed due to the Oil Clean-up. A list of cabins & B&B's in the upper valley may be requested from debbie@skyvalleyvic.net

Great Northern Day 14 August

Museum Lawn Party 28 August

Historical Society
General Meeting 25 September

Open Air Markets:

July 10
August 14
Sept. 4

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her great-grandparents, Edgar and Ada Lemmon were among those who died. They had been on their way to Seattle for a medical treatment for Ada, having left behind their only daughter Ruth. Had Ruth been with her parents, Laura, Susan, and 28 other family members would never have been born.

SHS Collection Manager Bob Kelly, considered by many to be "the" expert on Wellington moderated the program.

Gary Krist, author of the best selling non-fiction book about the avalanche, *The White Cascade*, told a rapt audience of the events leading up to and during the tragedy.

Folk song stylists Mike Fleckenstein and Galena Reiter performing as *Blue-ize*, came from Utah for the event and performed *Wellington*, a song written by Mike one evening in the Cascadia Hotel.

Maritin Burwash, author of *Vis Major*, a carefully researched historical fiction account told from the viewpoint of railroad workers, regaled the crowd by reading the tale of Baitlet's Turkey.

Pastor Tom Craig offered words of remembrance and faith, followed by a minute of

Great Northern Day

The SHS annual "Great Northern Day in Skykomish" seminar will be held August 14. The event will be at Skykomish Masonic Hall starting at 9:30 am. During the morning session there will be Great Northern related informational topics and a presentation about the Wellington Avalanche.

After lunch in Sky, people attending will car pool to Wellington, near Stevens Pass. A guided tour of the old town site and avalanche area will be available for anyone interested. The field trip will be "rain or shine" so dress for the weather. The event is free, a sandwich style lunch with chips, drink, and cookies will be provided for under \$10.

silence in honor of those who died.

The program concluded with a respectful reading of the names of the victims by Bob, Gary and Martin.

Attendees were then encouraged to enjoy the refreshments and visit the displays set up around the gym.

SHS Receives Terrific Donations

Two railroad lanterns were donated by Merle and Dorothy Smith of Sultan. These lanterns were given to Mr. Smith by Bud Bishop during the time he delivered fuel oil in the Skykomish area.

Mike Bartenstein, from Wenatchee, donated a bundle of GN blueprints dealing with several types of locomotives. Some of the prints are very large rolling out over 12 feet long.

Don and Niva Pavia, of Bellingham, have donated the expense to have all our Skykomish railroad blueprints digitized and placed on a CD for easy access.

Tim Ratzeloff donated a nice HO scale model of GN Electric locomotive 5003.

Jim Vyverberg, from Kalamazoo MI,

has sent numerous items to the museum including photos, blueprints and clipings relating to his research for modeling the Great Northern in this area.

Kevin Weiderstrom donated a large level for adjusting railroad tracks, several photos and a set of bridge blueprints.

Thanks to Gene Tubbs and others for allowing us to make copies of their family photos about life in Skykomish. These electronic copies are a great way to keep your photos and share them, too, while giving SHS the chance to expand our growing collection of valley history.

And a special SHS thanks to Jerry and Andrea Dinsmore for keeping our storage container at their Baring estate.

Join Skykomish Historical Society

Membership is easy and rewarding. You get newsletters, an annual historical calendar, and the satisfaction of supporting our valuable work of preserving upper valley history. Dues are \$20 (\$15 for seniors & students) or \$35 for a family.

Skykomish Historical Society
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Historical Society Membership

Susan Aker
David Anderson
Mary Ann Anderson
Pat & Robert Anderson
Michael & Donna Armstrong
Bill Atkinson
Tom & Linda Averill
Rick Aydelotte
Robert Balliet
Gary Bansemmer
Christie Barber
Hank Barber
Mike Bartenstein
Ron Beal
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Eddie Peter
Bob & Nena Pierce
Michael Pierce
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Adam, David & Judy Phillips
Ken Phillips
Mike Pownall
Jack Porzig
Babs Pratt

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