

The Friendly Face at Skykomish Historical Society Museum



Over the past seven years, Karen Molesky has become the face of the SHS Museum. In 2013 SHS contracted with her to keep the Museum open noon to four on weekends May through October, little realizing how many skills she would bring to the task.

It is important to Karen that everyone who comes in to the Museum is made to feel welcome, and if they have roots or connections in Sky, Karen makes sure if we have information about those roots, the patrons will know what we know by the time they leave.

"I particularly like visiting with people," she says, "and listening to their stories. Just about everyone has a story to tell, and a remarkable number of people who come in have stories that relate to Sky in some way. It is really exciting when I can track down that connection. Sometimes I can find photos of their people they have never seen. That's really special."

The museum has scores of 3-ring binders of photos and data about most aspects of Sky history, and Karen sees a key part of her job as helping visitors find where their history and Sky's intersect.

She grew up in Anaheim which is where she became a graphic designer, having started as a typesetter/production artist in pre-digital days. Like so many other aspects of modern life, the printing business perpetually changed as computers took over more tasks,

so she saw graphic design as where she needed to go.

During the 70s and 80s, she worked with various California graphic design firms, until starting her own boutique design firm in the mid 90's.

A long-term relationship with a fellow graphic designer came and went in those years, then rekindled in 2004. Her now husband Federico Seco de Lucena came to Sky in 2006 and asked her to join him. Much of her design work being remote already, the move seemed a good idea.

When the 2008/9 recession arrived things changed financially for her, but by then Skykomish was home, and with Federico's support she has been able to dedicate more time to community betterment.

She is one of three volunteers who drives the Community Van to Monroe weekly so local citizens can make doctor appointments and do shopping. Recently, she has joined the board of the Skykomish Harvest Food Bank as PR/IT person. She serves on the Tunnel Days Committee as Secretary and does public relations. She is a member of the Sky Tech Committee which is dedicated to bringing high speed internet to the area. She designs posters and does other graphic work for Sky's Open Air Markets. And she has recently taken over from Shelly Johnson as organizer of We Dig Sky Valley! Garden Club.

As a member of Skykomish Chamber of Commerce she is webmaster, updates the events calendar, and does other graphic design work.

Working with Maurisa Descheemaeker on the Music in the Park festival, held

(cont. as **Karen** page 3)



Spring 2020, www.skyhistory.org

Marilyn Martin's Account of:

Snowmageddon, January 11-17, 2020

I woke Saturday morning to no power. OK, no big deal, I have a generator. Wrong! The generator I bought last winter wouldn't start! Power came on at 11pm. Immediately I took a shower and ran the dishwasher, fearing it would go out again—and it did at 4am. A lot of snow had fallen that night; maybe a foot and it turned to rain, so shoveling was so hard. The snow was what I call Cascade cement.

Sunday morning: The highway was open still, so I took the generator back to Costco to exchange, but as the weather got worse, I had a bad feeling the road could close at any time, so back home I went, without a generator. I have propane for heat and cooking.

The weather gets worse and I notice a lot of cars in town; the highway is closed one direction or the other. I learned later about 100 people were trapped in town overnight! Many ended up sleeping in their cars. I felt so bad, that maybe had I known I could have brought a few into my home, but also might have been afraid to let anyone in, I don't know.

Monday morning, I shovel snow while my phone charges in the car, then on to the Masonic Lodge to hang out where volunteers prepared meals, breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Every day was much the same: wondering when the power would come back, wondering when the highway would open. The fire department would facilitate a way to help people leave, and I thought about it around Wednesday, but in the end I didn't want to leave my home or deal with my two cats that aren't used to travel, let alone live in someone else's home.

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From President Pat:

I hope all SHS members are doing well in this very strange time in our history.

My best wishes to you and yours. Please stay safe, stay well, and stay kind.

Museum Receives Exciting McCausland Legacy



Norm & Clarice in their yard in 1982. Clarice HS senior picture. Norm showing off his Raliph Bellamy good looks. Clarice's 90th birthday party with grandson Mike, who produced wonderful histories for each of his grandparents and gifted them to SHS.

Norm and Clarice McCausland were prominent Skykomish citizens for more than half a century, and now their grandson Mike McCausland has presented SHS museum with two fascinating books that comprehensively cover their lives, their activities, and their roots. That their individual ancestries are traced back centuries will be of interest to serious historians, but any average soul interested in what life was like 50, 60, 70, or 80 years ago in Skykomish Valley and the PNW would do well to spend a few hours with the books Mike has gifted to SHS once the museum reopens..

In 6th grade at Oak Lake School in Seattle Norm was graded in the following categories, not all of which appear to be subjects: Department, Industry, Reading, Spelling, Writing, Arithmetic, Language, Geography, Music, Drawing, History, and Physiology. He got several E's for excellence, several G's -even some G+ marks, several F's for fair, and only two P's for poor and he was NOT promoted. One of the P's was in Arithmetic, the other Physiology. His Physiology grades went from G+ to F to P over the course of 6th grade. Caught smoking, perhaps? With an October birth date he would have been the youngest in his class. As a 7th grader he got G or G+ across the board.

It is especially timely to note during the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic three of his brothers died in Seattle, and he was sent to Sky. In ninth grade he got A's in algebra and was freshman class president, having caught up with his age group. One can but assume that 6th grade teacher knew what she was doing.

For many Sky citizens Norm was the face of Skykomish Ranger District from the 1950s through the 1970s. He began with USFS in 1925 and played an amazing number of roles over the years. Copies of letters to his mom say things like, "I'm a million miles up Deception Creek," and "Don't look for me until you see me." He built and manned fire lookouts on mountain tops when the only way they could communicate was by heliograph, using sunlight reflection to send Morse code messages. After the fire season, Norm headed up a crew that strung telephone wires to the tops of mountains. Those simple times were anything but simple.

These are marvelous books for anyone who has an interest in local history,

and Grandson Mike also gifted us a series of recordings made with Norm in 1973 by the UW History Dept.

The account of Clarice and her people is equally complete. She was named Clara at birth, but changed her name to Clarice during her first year of school, tired of being called Clara Bell, the name of a cow. She had to have been one strong-willed first grader.

Her mother had a bit of pluck as well, coming on her own from Ireland at age 31 to "Sultan City" to join her older sister. The Sultan City she saw in 1902 did not match her expectations, but the conductor convinced her to get off the train.

She was 39 years old when "Clara" was born at home in a small house. The doctor was sent for, but arrived too late to attend the birth. As was the custom of the day, the doctor only received half the usual house call fee for a delivery if he arrived after the child was born.

Charming accounts like this of what life was like a century ago make so much of Clarice and Norm's lives and history interesting reading, even if you never knew them.

For decades Clarice was known as the Gardening Queen of Skykomish, as well as having been a remarkable historian in her own right. SHS has scrapbooks she made that include clippings of every news story about Sky or Sultan that appeared in the Everett Herald, Sky Valley News, and the Monroe Monitor for decades. We also have her daily diary that includes temperature, rainfall, and snowfall.

Mike's cousin Darren Armstrong also donated photos and several special items in the McCausland collection including the hand-carved West Cady Packers Camp sign and Norm's climbing spurs.

Karen

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annually in August since 2010, the past two years have seen her play a larger and larger organizing role raising funds, booking bands, securing permits, coordinating volunteers, as well as designing posters, and otherwise advertising the event up and down the Valley.

Thanks to a grant from 4Culture, and Tunnel Days she has recently updated the Skykomish Walking Tour brochure, and is about to bring the Walking Tour online thanks to another grant from the Port of Seattle.

Karen, Shelly Farnham, Beanne Hull, and Federico are working to form a new creative space called GiddyArts to nurture, serve and grow the creative community in Skykomish and beyond. The long range vision is it will include: Co-working space: desks and large tables to work, meet, and collaborate. Maker Space: shared studio space so people can create new work with the latest art and technology tools including a large format printer, laser cutter, DSLR camera and photo booth, 3D printer, and more. Arts Gallery/Gift Shop: to feature works of Giddy Arts members. Educational Workshops: covering a wide variety of topics including creative skills and professional development. And an Online Store: to reach a broader market.

A favorite aspect of working at the museum in Karen's eyes is meeting people who are moving into the community and being able to help them. They come in hoping to learn about the history of the place they are planning to call home, and she wants them to leave with that, plus lists of every present day resource available to them.

Synergy is defined as "the interaction of elements when combined are greater than the sum of their individual parts." In contracting with Karen to operate our Museum, SHS had little inkling of the synergy her representing our museum would bring.

NON-Schedule of Events

Due to the Covid -19 situation several annual events like **Tunnel Days** and the **Old Timers' Picnic** have already been canceled for this summer.

When the SHS Museum opens will be determined by how the initial phases of the Governor's plan for reopening the state play out.

Snowmageddon

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I'm really glad I chose to stay. I had a wonderful time at the Masonic hall: feeling the community spirit; helping when needed. I got hooked on a game called "Can't Stop" which a group of us played day in and day out; laughing, just having a great time. Friday Tony and Crystal Grider brought a lot of pizza, donated by Dominoes. Later that night that the power came back.

One other glitch: the water was very low pressure down to a tiny trickle Wednesday. Thursday it came back like normal but wasn't safe to drink for a week, due to sediment. There was a lot of water donated, most likely by Garry Vire from Gold Bar, the gentleman who organized a "go fund me" fundraiser and brought a convoy of food up and supplies twice, braving travel on the still "closed" road. They traveled with chain saws. Garry and his friends brought a wonderful Mexican dinner for all from La Hacienda restaurant in Gold Bar. That was on Saturday the 18th, a day after the power came back on. That dinner was like a celebration!

Looking back, we had challenges but also had a lot of fun. All in all I felt safe and cared about by so many who contributed to my sense of well being, from offers of places to stay if I wanted to leave, and just the wonderful community I live in that feels like a big family; people helping one another. I have no complaints about any of the powers that be, from the Washington state governor on down, to our town mayor, the power company, other agencies, our fire department, all the volunteers—all dealing with a difficult situation.

Great Northern Day

As of now we are hopeful by Sep 12, the scheduled date for Great Northern Day in Skykomish, the state will be into Phase 4 of the Governor's easing of restrictions for gatherings, which would allow us to hold the event. Social distancing for a crowd of 50 will not be possible at the Masonic Hall, but face masks and hand cleaning would be easy enough. We expect to make the final decision by August 1, 2020. Please send an email or phone number if you are considering attending, and we will update you when the decision is made.

The event is planned for September 12, 2020 at the Masonic Hall in Skykomish WA. The hall will open at 8:30 am for people who want to set up a display and the program starts at 9:30. In the morning there will be short presentations on local history, and plenty of time to visit. A feature presentation will be scheduled just prior to lunch.

During the leisurely lunch, time is provided for visiting the museum, the town market, or the Great Northern and Cascade Railway operating at the Depot. People attending may bring their own lunch or a lunch will be arranged. In the afternoon an additional presentation concludes the event. This event is free and open to the public.

Anyone with questions about the event may contact Bob Kelly at 425-432-3884 mvmvmv@frontier.com

Thank You 4Culture

SHS continues to be supported by a two-year sustained support award from 4Culture which will contribute \$4000 per year toward general operating expenses. In past cycles we have received \$3000 & \$3500. This support allows us to keep the museum open on a regular basis and expand our efforts in other areas. 4Culture provides "funding and support for the cultural work that makes King County vibrant."



Archives

Our last cataloging system back-up before closing due to Covid-19 restrictions was February 25, 2020. At that time we had completed cataloging 4534 items and 3593 of the catalog listings were photographs. Books totaled 439 and Archival items were at 413. We have many more objects than are cataloged, but 89 individual historical objects have been entered into the computer records.

2019 SHS Activities

March 23: SHS Meeting where Debra Cuyle, author of "1910 Wellington Disaster" spoke of her experiences writing the book.

May 4: Museum opened for season.

May: Published spring newsletter.

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May – Nov: Presence at five Skykomish "Open Air Markets."

Jun 15: Tunnel Days. Specially themed exhibits at museum, and 10¢ Root Beer Floats.

June 27 & 28: Skykomish Paint out at Maloney's.

July 20: SHS Booth at annual *Old Timers' Picnic*.

Aug 12: Booth at *J. J. Hill Day* at GNCR & Depot Park.

Aug 19: SHS presence at *Music in the Park* at the Ballpark.

Sep 12: *Great Northern Day* in Sky attended by 50+ rail fans.

Sep 26: *SHS Annual General Meeting* at museum. Guest Mike McCausland spoke of his childhood and his grandparents.

Nov 16: *SHS Annual Planning Meeting* at the museum.

Dec: Published *2020 SHS Calendar*: History of Skykomish Historical Society for 25th Anniversary.

Mynar Joins Board

Newest SHS board member Skip Mynar joined SHS while attending our Wellington Disaster event in 2010, and he looks forward to helping us grow for future generations. He lives in Ellensburg on a 400-acre farm and owns an off-the-grid cabin built by his uncle in 1939 on Miller River.

The history of Miller River (Berlin) and the mining, logging, and mills, along with the inseparable railroad history of the area have always fascinated him.

Born in Seattle and grew up in Bremerton. Served three years as an Army medic. Graduated from Central Washington then taught English in Thailand for Peace Corps, returning to CWU for a bit of grad school before another Peace Corp adventure with a new wife working with small farmers in Costa Rica. His banker was pleased when he gave up failing as a cattle and hay rancher after 20 years and became director of several chemical dependency treatment clinics in central WA.

He retired in 2011 and comes to Sky Valley as often as he can.

SEI Update

In spite of the Covid-19 disruption and the challenging requirements of social distancing, it's still possible to find an outdoor respite, an escape, from the isolation that confines us. Skykomish Environmental Institute's Maloney Creek Trail (MCT), at the end of Thelma St. just past the P.O. in Sky, provides a simple, safe and beautiful opportunity to get outdoors.

January 2020 was particularly harsh, thus MCT was obstructed by fallen trees, etc. SEI has postponed its usual May cleanup until group activities are allowed, but trail clearing occurred, despite of the lack of an organized effort.

Kind individual volunteers have continually removed trees and branches so the MCT is available to enjoy. It will be appreciated if individual volunteers continue the cleanup as they enjoy their walks along the trail.

Additional interpretive signage has been designed and is planned for installation this summer. The USFS and Sound Salmon Solutions are contributing grantors for this Town of Skykomish sign project.

Please come out and enjoy the beautiful, accessible, short, easy, and local Maloney Creek Trail.

Membership Information

Our January to January dues year is working well. Anyone in arrears on dues may send them at any time to treasurer Dorothy Beck, 815 124th St. SW, #54, Everett WA 98201. Dues are \$20 (\$15 for seniors & students) or \$35 for a family.

Membership is easy and rewarding. You get newsletters, the historical calendar, and the satisfaction of supporting our valuable work preserving the history of the upper Skykomish Valley, and presenting it to the world.

Skykomish Historical Society
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Special Thanks to the Koplitz family. Don and Bertha (above) and Brent, Steve, and Monica Koplitz Howard. Each family member has supported SHS by joining at the \$1,000 Lifetime Member level.