



# Echoes From The Past

Celebrating 42 Years  
1968 - 2010

## TRUCKEE DONNER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded July 24, 1968 as a 501 (c)(3)

Volume XXVIII Issue 2

SUMMER 2010

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Chelsea Walterscheid

We are gearing up for our busy season here at the Truckee Donner Historical Society. Not only has the Old Jail Museum opened for the season, the 30th annual Old Timers' Picnic and the 6th Annual Ice Cream Social are right around the corner! This year we sponsored the Truckee Optimist Club's Cannibal Cruise Poker Run that was held July 11. For the first time the Old Jail Museum participated as a Poker Run stop during the 20th anniversary of the Cannibal Cruise. And another first this year, any car was allowed to participate in the Poker Run, you didn't have to be driving a classic to sign up for a chance to win the \$500 purse! It was a hoot with some notorious characters needing to be "handled" by Truckee Railroad Regulator law enforcers that led the Old Jail Museum to be VOTED THE MOST ENTERTAINING POKER STOP!!!! Kudos to all who participated.

I would like to acknowledge our busy workers who have kept the Joseph Research Library doors open for one year now! Every Thursday from 10am to 2pm we had volunteers staffed to help people with their research requests. Katie Holley, Chaun Owens-Mortier, and Dennis Beeghly were busy all winter. And on those slow days they have been re-organizing our files and archives to make researching easier for our guests. I go down some Thursdays to get my work done and become very distracted by the great historic tidbits we come across in the files. Come down and see us sometime. If Dennis is here, there is sure to be some yummy home baked goods from the Beeghly house!

We have a couple new members on our team. We would like to welcome Patty Spielmann as our new Publications Chair. Patty will take care of selling our books to customers and retail stores, as well as keep the Old Jail Museum stocked for our visitors to purchase. We would also like to welcome Les Atkins as a Special Tour Docent partnering with Don Colclough to open the Museum for special tours and on Truckee Thursdays from 5pm to 7pm throughout the summer. Thank you Patty and Les! We depend on our faithful volunteers!

And, lastly, we always need new volunteers. The Old Jail Museum is often short staffed and has to close its doors during the prime-visiting season. If you can help us staff the Museum, please contact us! Reina Markheim can work you into the docent schedule [rmarkheim@truckeehistory.org](mailto:rmarkheim@truckeehistory.org). Every little bit helps us out greatly!

**CALL FOR NOMINATIONS!**  
TDHS IS LOOKING FOR NOMINEES  
for the upcoming Board of Directors election.

September 28th is the date for our next annual Board of Director Elections and Annual Dinner.

Do you have an interest in Truckee history?  
If you or someone you know is willing to serve on the TDHS board of directors contact Judy Dunlap at 530-582-1178 or email [jdunlap@truckeehistory.org](mailto:jdunlap@truckeehistory.org).  
Nomination ballots will be mailed in mid-August.

**SAVE THE DATE!**  
TDHS ANNUAL ELECTION AND DINNER  
6PM Tuesday, September 28

The setting for the September 28th dinner is still being finalized. Invitations will be mailed in mid-August.

Join in this fun summer evening and the fellowship of TDHS. And if you care to be involved with this event, contact Don Colclough at (530) 587-1343 or email [dcolclough@truckeehistory.org](mailto:dcolclough@truckeehistory.org).

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2009-2010

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**Truckee Donner**

**Historical Society**

P.O. Box 893 | Truckee, CA

96160 | 530.582.0893

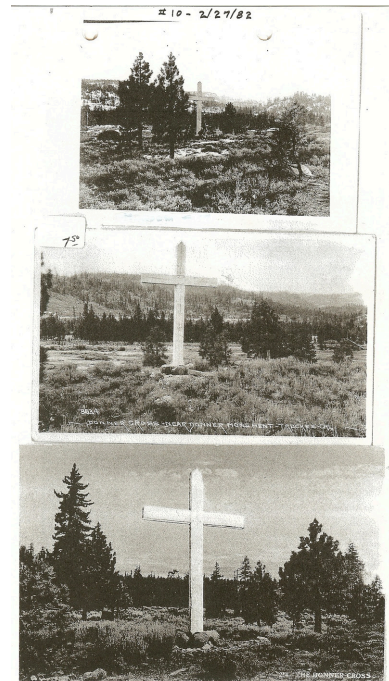
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Board meetings held on the 4th Tuesday of the Month at 6pm

Many people drive by a large white cross everyday without even noticing it. Other people see it, but don't know why it's there. Located off Donner Pass Road between Truckee Elementary and the Citizens Bank Plaza (aka Factory Stores), the 16-foot cross is a site to see.

Truckee citizens erected the first cross in 1887 to mark the site of the Graves-Reed Cabin at Donner Lake, where members of the Donner Party were trapped during the infamous winter of 1846-47. According to the Truckee Republican, "The Cross is 24' high and is painted white. It can be seen from the road to Donner Lake". There were plans to erect three more crosses as soon as funds could be raised.



photos of original historical locations of the Cross  
Truckee Donner Historical Society all rights reserved

By 1906 the Donner Cross was rotting through. Owning the land where the cross rested, the Donner Ice Company replaced it with a new 20-foot cross. In the 1920s Captain Charles E. Davis set out looking for lost emigrant trails. One of the trails Captain Davis followed was the same one blazed by the Donner Party. This expedition led him to the Donner Cross in 1927. At this time, the cross was burned away at the base from a campfire. Davis condemned the desecration of the landmark and vowed to restore the cross.

Work to construct a stretch of Interstate 80 through Truckee began in 1958. During the early construction of the highway, the Donner Cross was moved to make room for the road. The original Agriculture Station was built on the site where the cross was located since 1887. For many years, motorists passed the cross as they drove through on I-80. This would not be the final resting spot for the Donner Cross. In 1988 the cross was moved again, this time to make room for the Factory Outlet Stores, now referred to as Citizens Bank Plaza. At that time, the Donner Cross and a bronze plaque were



moved to a piece of

land between Truckee Elementary and the factory stores and an easement was granted to the Truckee Donner Historical Society.

This spring the Donner Cross once again fell victim to years of Sierra weather, rotting through and falling down. Mark Tanner stepped forward to help the Truckee Donner Historical Society replace the cross, ensuring that residents and visitors continue to remember the story of the Donner Party.

Mark Tanner Construction sent out a crew, led by Jim Smith, to construct and erect a new cross. Kevin Casey of Caseywood Lumber donated half of the materials, Mike Rodarte of TNT Materials donated the concrete and Stephen Birch of Accurate Painting and Staining painted the cross. Bill Whitehead, The Richardson House and Marissa Campbell donated money to cover the rest of the costs. Everyone was very generous with their time and their wallets to make this project happen! We would also like to thank Tom Macauley for providing historic newspaper articles and photos of the original Donner Cross. If you would like to view these photos, visit the Joseph Research Library, open Thursdays from 10am-2:00pm in the Old Gateway Motel Cabin in Meadow Park. The Truckee Donner Historical Society would like to thank everyone who helped us carry on the tradition of the Donner Cross!

More photos and a web version of this article will appear in the August TDHS E-News.



The Truckee Donner Historical Society will be having their Sixth Annual Ice Cream Social on Saturday, August 21st at the Old Jail Museum and Community Memorial Garden. So mark your calendars and plan to join us for some sweet treats!

Ice cream sundaes will be sold for \$5 and root beer floats for \$3. Each ice cream purchase includes a raffle ticket for a door prize drawing of vintage photographs from the Truckee Donner Historical Society collection. Additional raffle tickets will be sold for \$1 each.



There will be a live music by Jody Sweet and Cabin Fever. ToTo the Clown will be available for children's face painting so there will be fun activities for the whole family! This is a great opportunity to tour the jail museum. Catalogs of the Historical Society's vintage photo collection will be available to view and special orders for reprints can be made at the Social.

This event is a fundraiser for museum upkeep and repairs. The Old Jail Museum dates from 1875 and is always in need of maintenance and repair. Please come and lend your support. The museum is located near the intersection of Jibboom and Spring Streets in Historic Downtown Truckee. For additional information, contact Judy Dunlap, 530 582-1178, [jdunlap@truckeehistory.org](mailto:jdunlap@truckeehistory.org).

### 30th ANNUAL OLD TIMERS' PICNIC AND FAMILY REUNION TRADITION

Come join us on Saturday July 17 at the Truckee River Regional Park for a double celebration. Besides 30 years of reuniting with life-long friends, family and neighbors TDHS will also be celebrating the first year of the Joseph Library being open to the public. Our dedicated library staff have managed to keep the library open every Thursday from 10am - 2pm come rain, sleet, snow or sunshine.

Be sure to bring your picnic lunch and lawn chairs. Arrive early for a close parking spot and a seat at one of the picnic tables. TDHS has reserved the area from 10am to 4pm. Be sure to bring the entire family so the young Truckeeites will learn to carry on this grand tradition. Plus they will enjoy the celebratory cake to be provided in honor of YOU and the many volunteers past and present who have made the Old Timers' Picnic an annual event you never want to miss !!!

**Violet (Vi) H. White** was born in Oakland, California, February 9, 1918 and passed away at 92 years old, Saturday, April 17, 2010. Her Mother, Walburga Popp, was a German immigrant and her father, Harry Hanson, emigrated from Sweden. Vi graduated from Oakland High School. Vi was one of the original members of the Oakland Ski Club (OSC) where she met and married Carson White and helped build the ski lodge on Donner Summit, near Sugar Bowl. Vi worked as a Beautician in Oakland. After Carson returned from WWII, they moved to Walnut Creek.

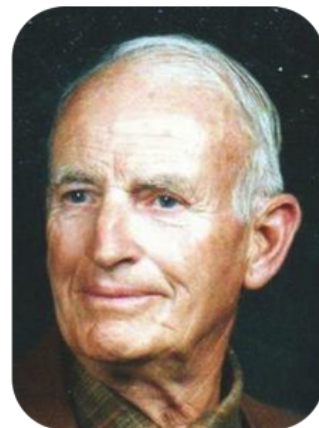


Vi was an excellent skier and participated in some local races while members of OSC. Vi worked at McDonald's Nursery and occasionally at the "Contra Costa TIMES". They moved to Donner Lake, Truckee, California in 1960. Vi and Carson attended the 1960 Winter Olympics, as well as Olympics and FIS Races in Europe. Vi was a charter member of the "Sierra Tinker Belles Garden Club" and member of the Truckee Donner Historical Society. Like

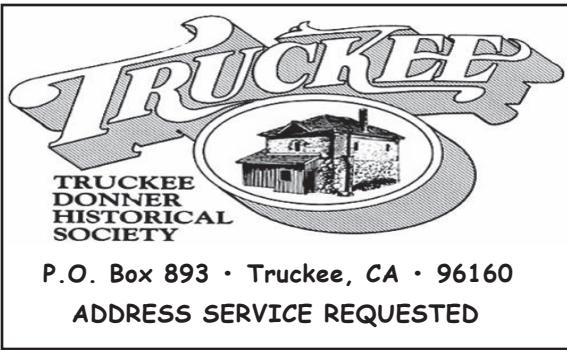
her Mother, she helped support the "US Forest Service Pennies for Pines" program. Carson and Vi were Truckee Fourth of July Parade Grand Marshalls twice. They moved to Auburn for several years and Vi moved to Reno after Carson passed away. Son, Charles, and Grandson, Chris, live in Truckee and continue to run Donner Lake Realty which Carson had started in 1973. A "Celebration of Violet's Life" was held May 29 in Truckee. Donations to the US Forest Service Pennies for Pines program, or the Reno, Auburn, or Truckee Hospice would be appreciated.

For more information, call Charlie White at 530-587-4811.

**Reginald Edwin Smart** was born on June 23, 1916, in Winnipeg, Canada, to Gladys and Edwin Smart. Reg moved to the United States and earned his U.S. citizenship. He attended Washington University and graduated with a degree in Restaurant Management. During World War II he served his enlistment in the San Francisco Bay Area working for Pan American Air Lines. He and his wife, Arline, moved to Truckee in 1947. They opened the Good Fellows Grotto in downtown Truckee. In 1955, Reg and Arline opened Smart's Cafeteria and Dining Room located at the Tahoe-Truckee Y. They sold Smart's in 1968. They continued to operate the Good Fellows Grotto and renamed it "The Wagon Train Coffee Shop." They sold the Wagon Train Coffee Shop to their son, Brian, in 1978. Reg and Arline raised four children in Truckee.



Reg was very active in Truckee and the surrounding area. He was an active Mason right up until his death and was the oldest living Mason in Truckee Lodge No. 200. He served on the Tahoe-Truckee School Board as well as the Sierra College School Board. He was a long time Truckee Lion and a founder/charter member of the Chief Truckee chapter of E Clampus Vitas. Reg Smart was also a long-standing member of the Truckee Donner Historical Society. Memorial Services were held at the Truckee Cemetery Tuesday, June 22, 2010.




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Are your dues current?  
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 Thank You!



I/We would like to JOIN or RENEW (circle one) my membership in the  
 Truckee-Donner Historical Society  
 Make your check payable to TDHS  
 Mail to P.O. Box 893, Truckee, CA 96160

Founded July 24, 1968  
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**RENEWAL/MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**Please check below for any changes:**

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Enclosed please find a check for:

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES (please check below)**

Individual \$20 \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$30 \_\_\_\_\_ Junior (18 years & younger) \$10 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Non-Profit Organization \$25 \_\_\_\_\_ Business \$40 \_\_\_\_\_ Sustaining \$75 \_\_\_\_\_ Contributing \$100 \_\_\_\_\_

**SPECIAL DONATIONS (insert amount and names)**

Community Memorial Garden \$ \_\_\_\_\_ In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_  
 Memorial Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ In Honor of \_\_\_\_\_  
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Areas of Special Interest and/or Comments/Suggestions:

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