NEWSLETTER OF THE
DRY CREEK HIST. SOC.

SPRING / SUMMER 2017

★ INTERVIEW: DAROL FORSYTHE
★ TOM BLESSINGER
★ NEW BOARD MEMBERS
I like when seasons are vivid seasons, so intensely themselves that when they’re over you can say “Whew, that was one to remember.” I think we are all saying that about the winter from which we are finally emerging, but I actually enjoyed the severity of it (I can say that because I didn’t have a roof cave in from the weight of snow on it, or have a car slide off into a ditch). It was a truly magical Christmas here in the Dry Creek Valley, and I enjoyed the sight of snow on Coyote Mountain or Shafer Butte, as long as it lasted, as I drove into Boise for work each morning. Perhaps the best part was the return of elk to the Valley, as documented in the previous issue’s cover photo by Connie Smith; most of us were fortunate enough to see “gangs” of up to 200 elk in the meadows of Jeker Ranch or on the slopes around Red Tail Trail, south of Forsythe’s Stack Rock Ranch, grazing for days at a time.

But the winter’s events weren’t all idyllic. Worst of them all, perhaps, was the ruling by the Ada County Commissioners in January to allow Boise Hunter Homes to move ahead with their plans to develop the Jeker Ranch into a new town with thousands of residents. The members of the DCHS were not always in agreement about this project, so officially the DCHS has no position about the good or ill of this development; but speaking for myself—and I did testify as a private citizen before the County Commissioners’ hearings—I think it is an abomination that the last piece of the Dry Creek Valley that is more or less intact, in historical and agricultural terms, is now slated to be paved over and obliterated. As I told the commissioners:

...The upper reaches of the Dry Creek valley, around Bogus Basin Road, are too hilly and steep and were never heavily populated or cultivated. The middle part of the valley was destroyed, historically speaking, when Hidden Springs was built. All that's left of the heritage of this special place is the lower Valley, the stretch between Seaman's Gulch Road and Highway 55...exactly the space to be filled by this new town, which will be half again the size of McCall in population. It is the only remaining piece of ground in the county where it's possible to envision the scale and types of 19th Century agriculture that made Boise, Ada County, and modern Idaho possible.

Many good arguments were made against the building of this new development. Young farmers from Peaceful Belly, Pied Piper, and other farms extolled the Valley’s 66-inch depth of rich topsoil which could be used to Ada County’s economic advantage, especially considering that the average topsoil depth in the county is only six inches. Several witnesses pointed out flaws in the ACHD traffic study, and the fact that the new town means a couple thousand extra car trips each weekday morning and afternoon down Dry Creek and Cartwright Roads, which BHH is under no obligation to widen or improve in order to handle the massive increase in traffic. Wildlife (like the elk) will be severely affected, if not eliminated, and there are serious questions about waste disposal (the development will not be connected to the sewer network, and will use what is, in essence, a giant septic field along the creek) and depletion of the Dry Creek aquifer, since all the homes and businesses will be drawing water from our local source...quite possibly using up the water needed by the remaining farms here in the Valley.

In my tenure as publisher of this Newsletter, I have not used this space to editorialize, nor have I written a personal note such as this; but this is the most extraordinary development (no pun intended) since I discovered the Dry Creek Valley and its special history and cultural significance. The Ada County commissioners—Case, Tibbs, and Visser—did nothing illegal in approving BHH’s development plans. In fact, they went out of their way to ensure that all parties, for and against, got a proper hearing. But in the end their hands were tied by the legal rights of the property owner, and as a staunch capitalist I can find no legal fault with their ruling, considering BHH has owned this property since about 2006. Defying the law in order to save a cultural and historical treasure is a slippery slope, and I would be slow to recommend it. But...

Well, it’s water under the bridge now. The ruling has been made, and the development will move forward. BHH is now no longer answering my email requests to go onto the property to take photos of the historic Jeker Ranch buildings before they are torn down. So as the weather softens and glorious green returns to our valley, I urge you all to drive the stretch of Dry Creek Road between Seaman’s Gulch and Highway 55, and take in the sights and smells of the last undeveloped part of our Valley, because they will be disappearing all too soon, and forever.
It’s easy to think about a place or event as a self-contained entity, and forget the context in which it fit. A good example is our Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead, which began life as a one-room hand-built cabin in 1868—the first permanent dwelling in the Dry Creek Valley and one of the oldest extant buildings in Idaho. But what else was going on in the wider world as P.L. Schick was nailing together his homestead?

U.S. Events, 1868:

• The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks (BPOE), originally a social club for minstrel performers, was formed in New York City as a private club, as a way of getting around city laws controlling the opening hours of public taverns. (From little acorns, might elks grow.)
• Andrew Johnson, 17th president and successor to Abraham Lincoln, was impeached on various charges including violation of the Tenure of Office Act for removing Edwin Stanton from his post as Secretary of War.
• The University of California was founded in Oakland. It opened its first permanent campus in Berkeley in 1873.
• The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (MetLife) was formed in New York City, to provide disability payments to soldiers and sailors who had been wounded serving the Union during the Civil War (which had ended just three short years before).
• General William Tecumseh Sherman brokered the Treaty of Fort Laramie between the US government and the Plains Indians—the Oglala, Miniconjou, and Brulé bands of Lakota people, Yanktonai Dakota, and Arapaho Nation. The treaty guaranteed ownership of the Black Hills of South Dakota to the Lakota, and ended Red Cloud’s War.
• Memorial Day was observed for the first time—only it was called Decoration Day, a day set aside to decorate the graves of Union war dead with flowers. It was the idea of the Union veterans’ group called The Grand Army of the Republic, in Decatur, Illinois.
• Wyoming became a territory, and Fort Fred Steele was established to protect the western terminus of the Union Pacific Railroad near Sinclair, WY, from Indian attacks. Steele was a Union general who fought in the Western theater of the Civil war, and had died just the previous January in California.
• The 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified, granting citizenship to everyone born in the U.S. and subject to its jurisdiction, and protecting civil and political liberties. It is one of the so-called Reconstruction Amendments.
• Thomas Edison applied for his first patent, for an electrographic vote recorder. According to one source, “Washington congressmen were not interested in the device and the invention was unsuccessful.” Apparently it reduced the opportunities for corruption and vote fraud to an unacceptable level.
• Union Civil War hero Gen. Ulysses S. Grant was elected president of the United States.
• The Battle of the Washita River was fought when the U.S. 7th Cavalry under Lt.Col. George Armstrong Custer attacked a camp of southern Cheyenne, led by Chief Black Kettle, near present-day Cheyenne, Oklahoma.

Notable births:

• Robert Falcon Scott (arctic explorer)
• W.E.B. DuBois (scholar and writer)
• Scott Joplin (ragtime composer and pianist)

Notable deaths:

• Kit Carson (explorer)
• James Buchanan (former U.S. president)
• Heber Kimball (early LDS leader and apostle)
eight years ago Jeanie Scepka and I were fortunate to meet with Tom Blessinger in Emmett, Idaho, and began the first of many oral history interviews with him. Tom was a magnificent storyteller, but his tales did not always run sequentially! This is a reworking of a small part of hours interviewing Tom. All of his oral history interviews can be heard by contacting the Dry Creek Historical Society. We have several oral histories of former and current Dry Creek residents but Tom's history is by far the lengthiest.

Tom's family typified the people who built the West. They were pioneers, cattlemen; hardworking and daring people. Alexander Blessinger, Tom's great-grandfather, came to Idaho in 1860 on the Oregon Trail. He settled in Boise and ran the Walla Walla Corrals, a livery barn located on 13th Street. In addition to providing stables for horses for those visiting Boise, the Corrals sold and rented horses for freight hauling. Hauling freight was Alexander’s main source of income, and he used three wagons, called “wheelers,” as well as about twenty horses that he kept in the corral, strictly for hauling. Whenever Alexander hauled things further north than Boise, he used the pack animals. Riding up front on the wheel horse, Alexander and his packers supplied the mining towns and camps with all they needed for daily living. Packers were the main source of supplies until enough roads were built, and then wagons and stagecoaches could travel more quickly and with bigger loads. As history has revealed, suppliers made more money than the miners, and freight hauling businesses certainly did quite well. By the mid-1860s most of these small packers were out of business.

According to Tom, his great-grandfather's freight line hauled freight from Portland to Boise and other points. The routes went from Kelton, Utah to Boise, Portland into Boise, and from Boise to Silver City. When they first built the transcontinental railroad, Alexander would circle his team around the north end of Salt Lake in Kelton because the south end was too boggy. Another old trail, Three Blaze Trail, was a well-traveled route that went from the other side of Grangeville to Boise. When the Forest Service wanted to make a trail, they would put notches in trees to show the way. They used an axe to make a small notch and a large notch. This was called a “blaze.”

Their main route to the north was up to Moore's Creek, where they would drop off supplies, or drop down above Lowman at Jordan Bridge. They crossed and went up the South Fork of the Payette above Lowman, back up the Lynx trail by Bull Trout Lake, and then down to the Salmon River. From the Salmon River they went into Grangeville. They would pack groceries and clothing into the mines, and then pack out the ore. They used another trail that left Fort Hall, went up north, and came in at Arco. From there it followed the foothills to Carey, then Fairfield, and finally Mountain Home to Boise.

Hostile Native American Indians were one of the many hazards faced by Alexander Blessinger as a freight hauler. A particularly worrisome part of the route was the desert, south of Boise, where there is a long land mass called Big Foot Butte. Tom said that any movement in the desert would cause a white dust cloud to rise up from the desert sand and provide a clear signal that there was something moving in the area.

The butte was named after one of the colorful local Indians, Big Foot. Big Foot was said to be about eight feet tall, and his name came from his very big feet. It is said that Big Foot would go on top of the butte where
he could see far and wide across the area and raided travelers and packers as they crossed the desert. [For more on Bigfoot, see Vol. VIII, Issue 1, Spring 2016.]

Once, when Alexander was hauling freight and camping on the south side of Glens Ferry at the Three Island Crossing, a friendly Indian came and told him that hostile Indians were coming and they had better get over on the north side where they would be out of the path of the Indians. Alexander and a couple of the men did just that, while the others stayed at the camp. Those who chose to leave had to re-harness the horses, reload the wagons, and move across the river. Those who stayed were hit hard. The Indians stole their food, burnt the wagons, and killed the horses.

Alexander Blessinger eventually had a ranch two miles west of Star, Idaho, near the Can-Ada Line. Back in the 1870s he was one of the first ranchers to take cows into Cascade and McCall and around Long Valley. They stayed in the Cascade area for three years with the cattle until one winter in the late 1880s when the snow was four or five feet deep and they lost half their animals. As soon as they were able, they took the rest down the North Fork of the Payette. They trailed the cattle right on the river since it was frozen solid. It was reported that cows froze to death while standing still during that hard winter of 1886. Tom mentioned the famous Charles Russell painting, The Last of the Five Thousand, or Waiting for a Chinook, which illustrates the severity of the winter during that time period.

In addition to the main ranch, Alexander also owned 220 acres, which he donated to the current Central Park School in Star.

If you drive west on Route 44 to Star, you will see a beautiful old barn on the left at the turn off to Blessinger Road. This barn on the Blessinger ranch was made from wood milled at Pugh's sawmill in Brownlee, near Sweet, Idaho. The beautifully made barn was trimmed so that it was perfectly square and built with square holes and wooden pegs. Although several of the boards have been broken and the present owner wanted to replace them, the boards measure fourteen inches instead of today's regular one by twelves, and it would be a difficult and expensive repair.

Tom’s maternal grandfather participated in the Land Run of 1893, also known as the Cherokee Strip Land Run. This marked the opening of the Cherokee Outlet and what would become part of Oklahoma. The run began at noon on September 16, 1893, with more than 100,000 participants hoping to claim land. The land offices for the run were set up in Perry, Enid, Woodward, and Alva, Oklahoma, with over 6.5 million acres of land. It was the largest land run in United States history. After living there for several years, he traded his land for a homestead, sight unseen, in Cascade, Idaho.

In order to take the family, the livestock, and all of their possessions, they went to Idaho on one of the emigrant trains. These trains had many cars set aside for people emigrating west, and while most of the cars were constructed with seating for passengers, Tom’s grandfather had a whole train car. One end of the car held their household possessions and the other end was filled with their livestock.

When they arrived in Idaho they found that their home was on Sugarloaf Island in the middle of the Cascade reservoir. Their homestead was located on part of that island and their plot of land ran vertically up a section of the hill and down to the river. Tom’s grandmother McClellan raised twelve children on the island and gave birth to two more while there. One of these children was Tom’s mother, Hazel.
From the obituary at Potter Funeral Chapel
(http://www.potterchapel.com/notices/THOMASTOM-BLESSINGER)

Thomas David Blessinger died January 1, 2017, at his home in Emmett, Idaho from a sudden heart attack. He was born June 25, 1941, to Roy “Tom” David Blessinger and Hazel Virginia Buchanan Blessinger in Boise, Idaho.

At the time of his birth, his dad and mom lived and worked for the Spring Valley Ranch and also trapped for the government. They welcomed his sister, Carol (“Care”), and purchased their own ranch north of Boise where they raised cattle and sheep. Within two years of buying their first place, they were able to pay it off from selling mink and muskrat hides, which always made Tom extremely proud of his parents.

Tom spent his early childhood putting up hay with a team along with his folks on the ranch in Boise, and trailing their cows and sheep to various northern pastures during the summer until they finally decided on a place just east of Donnelly, Idaho, on the Gold Fork River. His mother and father, along with his immediate family, were very influential throughout his childhood, teaching him the value of hard work and how to appreciate his heritage.

Tom went to grade school in Boise and graduated from Boise High School in 1959. He went on to attend college at Boise Junior College (BSU) transferring two years later to the University of Idaho where he graduated with a Bachelor’s of Science Degree. Even though he didn’t have his own transportation, he commuted back and forth from Boise to Moscow with other college students, thereby making friendships that lasted throughout his lifetime. While in college, he served on the livestock judging team and made trips to California, Washington, and Oregon. After college, he enlisted in the Air Guard, where he got to travel to Texas and Tennessee. Tom loved to learn and took advantage of every experience throughout his life to do so.

In 1964, Tom went to work for the Bureau of Land Management and became what is now classified as a Range Con. Through this position, he oversaw the southern half of Idaho, the northern portion of Nevada, and the southeastern section of Oregon. Working with ranchers and their federal permits/leases as well as writing grazing plans, Tom was very liked and admired among all those he dealt with. His desire to always learn something new and to better himself led him to join the Masonic Lodge. He continued to help his mom and dad ranch and began to fulfill his dream of having his own cattle operation.

In 1967, Tom purchased his first ranch. That same year, he met his future wife, Carol McDonald, and they married two years later. They welcomed their first child Katie in 1971, and two years later their son, Drew, joined the family. In 1974, after ten years working for the BLM, he took a position with the JR Simplot Company overseeing all of the land for their sheep and cattle operations. Tom was able to expand his résumé of land management by playing an incremental role in the transition of sheep range to cattle range as the Simplot “Rig” evolved. Still working with a lot of the same faces, he continued to make lifelong friends. After the loss of his father, Tom and his sister took on a greater role helping their mother by expanding the family ranch. During this period, he also acquired his real estate license and formed a partnership with some close friends selling ranches part time as Agri-Lands West.

After ten years working for Simplot, he went into real estate and ranching full time while continuing to do consulting work. After Tom and his wife divorced, they always remained very close friends. Tom was tenacious and very determined while at the same time a very understanding father. He always emphasized hard work, education, the Golden Rule, and turning daylight into a dollar. In 1982, Tom welcomed his third child, Sarah, and instilled in her his appreciation for knowledge and the western lifestyle. Around this time, he became involved with politics and was very passionate for causes that affected the West.

He was a strong supporter for the Republican Party and helped campaign for many of the politicians of that era. As his children began to enter their final education years, Tom took a stronger role in ensuring their success, while still ranching and doing some part-time consultant work. With both daughters either in college or preparing for college, he focused on helping Drew with his business plans. They began running cattle together and acquired two more ranches, a feedlot and some additional forest permits.

In time, Tom welcomed two grandsons and his focus again changed. Being a 4th generation Idahoan, rancher, and from a pioneer family, he was very passionate about history. For the last twelve years of his life, Tom was fortunate enough to fall in love with Sue Miche “the Bull Lady” and they were able to travel and share many experiences. Maintaining friendships; constantly looking for another deal that he, his son and grandsons could take on; never meeting a stranger; making time for everyone; owning plenty of dogs; telling constant stories; cattle; horses; and heritage were his entire signature. Tom was extremely proud of his family, especially his grandchildren, and was very interested in their future.

He is survived by his daughter, Katie Blessinger; son, Drew Blessinger; daughter, Sarah (Todd) Blessinger-Calhoun; grandsons, Colton Blessinger and Wyatt Blessinger; granddaughter, Gabby Calhoun; his sister, Carol Blessinger; nephew, Tom (Melisa) Olsen; two great nieces Ky and Shae Olsen; and ever patient, Sue Miche. He was preceded in death by his father, mother and niece, Sue Olsen.

Sadly, Tom left this world on January 1, 2017. We will miss his presence at many functions and his great enthusiasm for history. We will always be grateful for his wonderful support of the Dry Creek Historical Society.
The seal depicts a miner and a woman representing Justice. The symbols on the seal represent some of Idaho’s natural resources: mines, forests, farmland, and wildlife.

The seal contains the text "Great Seal of the State of Idaho" in the outer ring, with the star that signifies a new light in the galaxy of states. The inner ring contains a banner with the Latin motto, *Esto Perpetua* ("Let it be perpetual" or "It is forever"). The woman signifying Justice and a man, dressed as a miner, support a shield. The miner reminds us of the chief industry of the State at the time of statehood (1890).

Inside, the shield bears images symbolic of the State. The pine tree in the foreground refers to Idaho's immense timber interests. The husbandman plowing on the left side of the shield, together with the sheaf of grain beneath the shield, are emblematic of Idaho's agricultural resources, while the two cornucopias, or horns of plenty, refer to the horticultural. Idaho has a game law, which protects the elk and moose, and an elk's head rises above the shield. The state flower, the wild syringa or mock orange, grows at the woman's feet, while the ripened wheat grows as high as her shoulder. The river depicted in the shield is the Snake or Shoshone River.
All Quiet Along Dry Creek Tonight...

by Doug Cooper

While the weather was best described as “only fit for ducks and soldiers,” the members of the Fort Boise Garrison (FBG) Living History Association returned to the Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead on Friday, April 7th for an overnight reenactment of a typical army patrol in the late 1860s in the Dry Creek Valley.

The FBG is a local group of living historians dedicated to bringing to life the soldiers and civilians of the 1860s in the Treasure Valley. Fort Boise was built in 1863 to protect the new community of Boise and the surrounding area from attacks by—primarily—the Shoshone Bannock tribe along the Oregon Trail. The 1st Washington Territorial Infantry was the fort’s first permanent unit, and it was these soldiers the FBG was emulating. They wore exact reproductions of the uniforms, and reproduction equipment and weapons from the 1860s. The members have adopted the names and back-grounds of the soldiers from the original roster. We were very fortunate to have the Schick-Ostolasa farm, dating from the mid-1860s, as the perfect backdrop for the encampment.

Showing the flag via constant patrols was a strategy to discourage Indian raids while protecting the local farmers, miners, and town dwellers, as well as emigrants on the Oregon Trail. Receiving permission from the farmer to pitch their tents near the house, the soldiers returned the favor by gathering downed limbs and brush in the farm yard. Some was burned all night in their fire and the rest set aside for the farmer. Rations were issued before dark, consisting of coffee, sugar, hardtack, salted beef, and dessicated (dried) vegetables. This last item was more often termed “desecrated” vegetables by the soldiers.
The soldiers cooked their supper using various recipes of the period, which were very imaginative considering the meager fare they had to work with. After supper the men set the guard and most turned in for the night, sleeping under thin canvas as the rain came down. The combination of barnyard noises and the rushing of Dry Creek in flood stage lulled the men to sleep—except those on guard, of course.

The next morning the men were up at dawn with roll call. The most important task was preparing coffee. Coffee was normally issued roasted in whole bean form. The soldiers first crushed the beans with a rock or bayonet, then boiled the mixture for several minutes in cups or small pots. Grounds were skimmed off, and the remaining grounds settled to the bottom of the cup by pouring in a little cold water. Sugar was added and the soldier's best friend consumed. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of coffee to the daily routine of the soldier.

After breakfast, camp cleanup was performed, daily orders read, and equipment readied for company drill, the ever present activity of camp life. The soldiers practiced the various marching maneuvers and rifle movements in formation, vital to efficiency and maintaining good order and discipline. Several civilians from other Dry Creek Valley settlements braved the elements to visit. All were content to know the US Army was close at hand at Fort Boise. After drill the camp was packed up, the grounds returned to their previous condition, and the farmer's wife thanked for her generous hospitality.

We wish to thank Jay Karamales and Kristin White of DCHS for the opportunity to spend a day at such a special place. The Fort Boise Garrison, both military and civilian, want to make this at least an annual event and support the DCHS mission any way we can.
In December 2016 I struck up an email correspondence with Dave McArthur regarding his recent book, From the Shadows of Coyote Mountain... which recounts his childhood at the Healy Toll Gate. That area is in the foothills north of Hidden Springs, along what’s left of Cartwright Road after it passes from Hidden Springs property onto private land. Dave’s vivid memories inspired me to visit that area on foot and explore it for myself—with the possible goal of leading Dry Creek History hikes to the area a couple times per year.

But there was one problem: to get to Toll Gate, I’d have to cross private property along Cartwright Road owned by someone called Forsythe. In local lore he was a reclusive, crotchety old man who hated Hidden Springs and jealously guarded his borders. His fearsome reputation gave me ample excuse for procrastinating on seeking permission to cross his property. But after corresponding with Dave I was determined to try, so as the snows finally started to recede in the spring of 2017, I found an address for a Darol Forsythe on the Web and wrote him a letter. (I could find no email address or phone number.) I introduced myself and said that I would like to feature and article about him in this Newsletter. I hoped that I would be able to flatter him into giving me permission to access his property.

To my surprise and delight, I received a phone call from him just a few days later. Rather than an ogre, I found myself speaking to one of the friendliest, most down-to-earth men I’ve ever come across. We chatted for 45 minutes, and by the end we felt like old friends. He invited me to come up to his house soon, and I gladly accepted.

The next Saturday I made the short drive up Cartwright Road from my house and was ushered into the beautiful ranch house that Darol built himself and his family when they first came to the Valley in the early 1980s. He and his vivacious wife, Judy, welcomed me into their kitchen where we talked and laughed for a solid hour. During the course of that time I learned, to my dismay, that 90-year-old Darol (you’d never have guessed he was that old, he was so vibrant) had suffered a mini-stroke in March. As much as he appeared to be enjoying our visit, he was visibly fatigued after an hour, so I prepared to leave—after extracting a promise that I could come back soon to pick up our interview where we left off. Darol and Judy agreed, but before he would let me return home he insisted that we drive up to the top of Coyote Mountain.

Judy and I helped him out to my 4WD, and he navigated me along a faint track on the east side of the mountain. Along the way we passed a flat area that clearly had just been recently leveled by bulldozer (Darol’s own D8, in fact). He told me that this was the area he was preparing to be a family cemetery, and that he wanted to be buried here when his time came. He wanted it known as the “Forsythe Family and Friends Cemetery.”

After a few minutes we pointed the nose of my truck uphill and picked our way up the steep flank of Coyote Mountain. Soon we were at the summit, parked next to a brick patio and generous fire pit. A picnic table and benches on the patio enjoyed a breath-taking, 360-degree view of Stack Rock, the Dry Creek Valley, the Owyhees, and even into Oregon. I helped Darol to the bench, and while I soaked in the view, he continued to talk about his life. This article is condensed from that conversation, and comments from his children and from his company’s website.

O n October 3rd, 1927, Glenn and Vera Forsythe welcomed a son to their little farm in southwestern Iowa, in a small town called Nodaway (about 100 miles SW of Des Moines, and 75 miles SE of Omaha). As this boy, Darol Forsythe, would later recall: “I always liked farming.”

His childhood might not have been idyllic, but was probably fairly typical for rural Americans during the Depression. “My dad was a disciplinarian, and boy I got beat on a lot. Mom raised the girls and dad raised the boys, and dad was beating on us all the time. Mom never did anything. This one time he was going to spank me, and I decked him. Now, he was a professional wrestler—he could have whipped me; but he couldn't get up. I had hit him right under the ear. This was when I was 16. I told him there was a lot more where that came from.”

Darol Forsythe, c. 1929

Not many days after, Darol and two of his buddies skipped school one day to go play pool. “Somebody ratted on us. When we got back to school, the principal was going to spank us. Now, we're 16 years old. He reached for the paddle, and I decked him. He was a big man, but he wasn't getting up, he was dizzy. My two buddies took off.” Needless to say, this time the police got involved and Darol was brought before the town magistrate. “At that time you could join the service to avoid going to jail,” Darol says, so in 1943 at age 16, he “voluntarily” joined the US Navy—“My dad and the judge thought I ought to join.”

Being from Iowa he had never seen the ocean before, and “I had never realized that ships were built of iron, and iron sinks!” He was sent to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center in Chicago. Instead of the normal 16-week boot camp for new inductees, Darol only completed three weeks. “I had been in trouble a couple of times for fighting. At that time, I felt that it was cowardly to run from anything. I got whipped a lot, but boy, I was gonna try. My motto was that no one was ever going to whip me for free.” In addition to his disciplinary infractions, there were interracial tensions and violence between other young men in his cadre. Darol got drawn into one such incident one evening while he was writing a letter home, when a young man from Tennessee ran into his barracks, trying to escape from two other trainees who were chasing and threatening him. Darol decked one of the pursuers and the fight ended in a stalemate, but he was given partial blame for the incident anyway. “They inactivated the company and sent us all out,” appar-
that was fair. They called me a 'gook-lover' for having a bunch of Filipino buddies all called them 'gooks' and looked down on them. I didn't think they had been abused by the Japanese, they were treated badly. My controlled], and he had one area that was for 'entertainment.' His type of guard duty one time on his quarters. He had more than one area [that he Darol had more run-ins with this particular commodore. “I was standing on the main gate, but no one ever came through at that hour. I was told: No one enters this area without written permission from Mr. Moore, my boss.’ He looked at me without written permission from an ensign, Mr. Moore, my boss. So they handed me a weapon and 15 rounds of ammunition, and put me on guard duty there. That's all I knew! Sometime between midnight and 4 o'clock a jeep came up—never slowed down, came screaming right on through. I went out to meet him. I leveled one [bullet] in and hollered ‘Halt! Halt! Halt! I will shoot!’ He stopped and yelled ‘Do you know who I am?’ I said ‘No sir. But no one comes in here without written permission from Mr. Moore, my boss.’ He looked at me and said ‘How long have you been in this Navy?’ I said ‘Well, 28 days in boot camp. I just got here last week.’ He said ‘Forget it,’ and he turned around and drove away. I thought that would be the end of it. Twenty minutes later the whole road lit up—the executive officer, the CO, the master-at-arms…everybody was roaring down the road. They yelled ‘What did you do?!’ I said ‘Well, this clown came through and didn't even slow down. I was gonna shoot him!’ “Oh, no…he's a commodore!!”

Darol moved to Salt Lake City in 1953 with his young family—his first wife Barbara and two children, Sharon and Jeff. (According to his son John, they were on their way to California when they stopped in Ogden, Utah, to visit an aunt and uncle and “kind of got stuck there.”) At first he got a job in the construction industry; Darol claimed it was because he owned his own Skilsaw, a rarity at the time, which allowed him to frame houses faster than someone could with just a handsaw. Before long he was doing work with linoleum and Formica countertops. His son John was born into the family at this time (1955). Darol went to work in the natural gas industry as that industry was expanding into Idaho, and Darol moved to Idaho as well, becoming a salesman for Hood Heating and Air Conditioning in Pocatello. At the time, Hood was putting in natural gas pipelines all over the West. Darol's job was to sell home gas appliances on commission. “I did too well the first month, so the guy I worked for made me a manager which cut my pay in half!” He also transferred Darol to Idaho Falls. Before long, though, the market was saturated and sales dropped off to the point where the job wasn't paying enough.

In 1958 Darol went to work for the University of Chicago’s Argonne National Lab West (later the Idaho National Laboratory) balancing air conditioning systems. “I had been installing air conditioning systems in bowling alleys. I went to work for the University of Chicago even though I didn’t have a high school diploma. I came in through the back door, because they had an air conditioning problem and I fixed it. The HVAC
company I was working for was going out of business, so the University offered me a job, and I took that opportunity. It was two years before I even got a Q clearance. 1 There were places I couldn’t go without a guard.” He also began working on his GED in order to stay employed. “I didn’t even finish high school; I came up the hard way. It takes longer, but you can get an education without a professor—it’s all right there.” And this was long before the Internet and all its free online courses! “I read the Encyclopedia Britannica; took me two years.” And he had educated friends who were willing to tutor him. “I had two good friends who were certified smart. They helped me a lot. Ken Faler had a doctorate degree in nuclear chemistry. He spent time with me. It can be done.”

One night in the spring of 1965, a former colleague living in Boise asked if Darol wanted to help install some ventilation equipment in a potato storage unit. At the time, there was only one such air-conditioned unit in eastern Idaho—the normal practice for farmers was just to open the doors of their storage buildings and let the winter wind blow through. Obviously this wasn’t very effective, and a lot of each year’s potato crop was lost to rot or freezing. The system Darol installed was very successful, cooling the potato pile from the bottom up and keeping it dry, and soon there was massive demand from all around the state. As a result, Darol founded Industrial Ventilation Inc. (IVI), revolutionizing the potato industry. This was at a time when staggering amounts of new cropland, much of it newly-irrigated desert, was being turned to potato production. “I was very fortunate; I came along at the right time when potato storages needed air conditioning. The sprout inhibitor they had at that time…needed an air system to carry it through [the container facility].”

With potato production increasing, the seasonal variation in their availability soon became apparent. They were less available in the summer, making them up to 400% more expensive during that part of the year (and very profitable for growers and sellers). One businessman, Claire Krakaw, hired Darol and IVI to refrigerate one of his potato storage warehouses in order to preserve potatoes until summer. The updraft of cooled air worked very well to preserve the potatoes, and quickly this became a standard feature throughout the industry. Darol had made his name as the pioneer of refrigerated potato storage. In 1969 Darol moved IVI’s headquarters to Boise because of its central location in the main potato-growing region of the US, and the company prospered for a number of years.

After 20+ years at the helm, Darol retired from IVI in 1982 and bought the current ranch, which he named Stack Rock Ranch. The location of his land purchase was inspired in part by reading Dorothy Stiff Wyman’s Light Upon the Mountain. The ranch encompasses much of the northern foothills area that can be seen from Hidden Springs, including Coyote Mountain—from the top of which, on a clear day, you can see all the way to Ontario, OR. Darol has said he wanted to be as far away from Boise and all the noise and development as possible.

Unable to stay retired for long, in 1990 restless Darol founded Pin/Nip, now called One Four Group, which grew “from a single CIPC product to a full system of post-harvest potato sprout chemicals.” Darol obtained the first EPA biochemical registration for the chemical dimethylnaphthalene [called 1,4-DMN1 for short] for application to potatoes. Today, 99% of the potatoes sold in the United States are treated with the method Darol devised, which eliminated dangerous methanol from the process. He built the laboratory and workshop space that still stand along Cartwright Road, where he carried out his research and engineering work when he wasn’t taking care of his ranch.

Darol had always wanted to be in the chemical sprout-inhibiting business, and he secured a distributorship for Pin/Nip selling a chemical to keep potatoes from sprouting while in storage. His son and partner, John, admits that they didn’t know anything about that business when they started. He points out that the mezzanine of the Forsythe workshop on Cartwright Road is filled with prototype machines Darol designed and built while learning the tricks of the new trade. He recalls that a lot of people would see Darol sitting in a chair with his eyes closed and conclude that he was sleeping. “No,” John would say, “he’s scheming. He’s dreaming up the next one of these machines.”

By the mid-’90s the EPA was threatening to regulate or ban CIPC. Overregulation could ruin the industry and put Darol out of business, so he began searching the globe for a substitute chemical. Darol says, “Actually a student in Glasgow, Scotland discovered it, and printed a paper on it. I got hold of a little vial and I treated a ton of potatoes with it. The law said that if you treat with an unregistered product, you must bury the [resulting] potato crop. I called my friend at EPA and said ‘I’ve treated

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1Department of Energy (DOE) security clearance that is roughly comparable to a United States Department of Defense Top Secret clearance with Sensitive Compartmentalized Information Access (TS-SCI).

2Chlorophenyl Isopropyl Carbamate (potato sprout suppressant).

1,4-DMN is a dormancy enhancement chemical that, when applied correctly, helps a potato maintain its natural dormancy. (Dormancy enhancement acts like a “pause” button for sprouting in potatoes. 1,4-DMN will stop sprout growth above the applicable residue level.) 1,4-DMN can also stop further sprout growth on a potato that has started sprouting prior to an application. Unlike CIPC, 1,4-DMN is reversible and does not prevent normal growth once residue levels have dissipated.
these potatoes with the isomer of the 1,4-DMN molecule, we’ve finished the treatment and the study, and the law says I have to bury them. Will eight inches deep and six inches apart be adequate?” And he said ‘Well, yeah; what are you going to do?’ And I said ‘Plant ‘em!’ I planted them, and they grew perfectly. In fact they grew better than I ever expected.”

Darol and his son and partner John also expanded their operations overseas, including a chemical packaging and sales company in El Salvador. While running that organization, Darol and John discovered that one of their managers was embezzling money from the company. They fired him, of course; but they also got him to sign an agreement exonerating 1,4 Group from what he did and agreeing to pay back the money, in return for not turning him over to the police. This sort of forgiveness and compassion, which Darol demonstrated frequently and which he inculcated in his children, is typical of his strong Christian beliefs and behavior. “Jail is not a good place for people,” he told me, “and only the violent ones belong there.” He set up a foundation to help a number of Salvadoran children to go to school, and even paid for several people to attend college. His only condition for helping anyone was that anyone he helped should look for opportunities to help others.

Back in the States, Darol had been busy trying to find a better method for manufacturing 1,4-DMN. By 1993, “I’d given up on it. It’s very tricky to synthesize. Now, it is in oil, and I was going to try to get it out of oil. In fact I was working with Koch, and we were trying to extract it out, but we never could get it.” This led to him focusing not on producing the chemical, but finding more efficient ways of applying it: “I was in a meeting with Sumitomo, the Japanese trading company, and they were selling [1,4-DMN] to the pharmaceutical world. They gave me a price that they could furnish it to me for, and doing the math, I figured it was doable. So I cut a deal with Sumitomo that I would pay all the registration costs of the 1,4-DMN through the EPA. My first [patent] registration I got because I had developed a way of becoming more efficient. I went back to EPA and showed them what I had done, and they were all excited about it because I had taken it from 5% efficiency to 50%. And all we did was slow the air down! Before that, all [the chemical] did was plug the air ducts under the [potato] pile—the air had to go under the pile and up through—it plugged the ducts, it plugged the fans; oh, it was a mess. They’d been doing it that way for 20-some years. But we looked at it more closely under a microscope and found that it wasn’t really a droplet at all—it was a snowflake, a crystal. It reacted the same way as a snowflake in a blizzard. The crystals would stick together and plug everything up. Now, I had designed a motor to mount on a fan so that I could slow it down. But I had a guy working for me who was pretty good on electronics, and he developed a pre-drive that could electrically slow the fan down—it worked much better. We patented that and brought it to market, and just slowing the air in the ducts down brought the efficiency of the chemical from 5% to 50%.”

During our interview, Darol spoke briefly but fondly of his friendships and interaction with other long-time residents of the Dry Creek Valley and the hills to the north, including Earl Ourada, Pete Echanove, and Andy Ostolasa.

Eventually Darol retired for good to work on his ranch, caring for his cattle, chickens, horses, sheep, and turkeys. He seeded 250 acres with grass this year; he said it was cheaper to buy hay than to grow it, because of the high cost of getting water up to the ranch. The Forsythe herd currently consists of about 90 cows plus their calves. Darol said he was planning to sell all but about 20 of the very best “to local people.” When I asked him why someone so mechanically and chemically minded was drawn to ranching, he answered simply: “I was having fun.”

My first and only meeting and conversation with Darol Forsythe, on which this article is based, took place on 15 April 2017. The next day—Easter Sunday—he suffered another massive stroke, from which he never recovered. Darol passed away on 03 May 2017. He is survived by his wife of 35 years, Judy Forsythe; daughter Shari Draayer; sons Jeff and John Forsythe; step-daughter Teresa Walko; step-son Brandon Christensen; nineteen grandchildren; seven step-grandchildren; and seventeen great-grandchildren. He is buried right where he wanted to be, on top of Coyote Mountain, overlooking the ranch he built and loved.
Hiking to Healy Toll Gate

by Jay Karamales

Since David McArthur published his memoir, *From the Shadow of Coyote Mountain...* in early 2015, I have wanted to visit the Healy Toll Gate area in the hills north of Hidden Springs, where Dave spent much of his childhood with his foster parents, Angus and Nellie McArthur MacPherson (see the book *Deep Stuff* for more details). That chance finally came in June 2017, when—having obtained permission from the intervening landowners—I made the short, pleasant hike up Cartwright Road. I stopped along the way to explore other historical sites, like the original location of Stack Rock School (look for an upcoming article) and the Mason, Shearer, and Donald McDonald homesteads.

Once I’ve mapped out a loop hike that includes the crest of Coyote Mountain (including views of Forsythe’s Stack Rock Ranch and Ourada Ranch), I would like to organize occasional History Hikes. These will consist of about half a dozen hikers at a time. We will explore some of these sites as we go, and I will tell what historical facts I know (or guess). We will hike north along Cartwright Road, stop for lunch at Toll Gate, then head back across Coyote Mountain. Watch our Facebook page for announcement of the first hike!
Welcome Our New Board Members!

At the DCHS annual meeting in March, we sadly said farewell to Kristin White and Emerald Clarkston, who by their service the last few years have transformed the Farmhouse and the way we organize events. Anyone who came to the last couple of Old Time Farm Days and noticed the myriad small touches—the corn shocks adorning the pillars, the clusters of decorative gourds and small pumpkins strategically placed, the placards, the Christmas decorations—could plainly see the positive impact these two ladies have had on our Society. And dare we say, lasting impact; their terms on the Board of Directors may be up according to our charter, but our ties to Emerald and Kristin remain strong, and they remain vital and influential members of the Society.

In their place, we were blessed enough to have two additional talented and dedicated members volunteer for the Board, and we’d like to introduce them to you now.

Cyndi Elliot has about 20 years’ experience in volunteering and sitting on boards of non-profit organizations. These include:

• Idaho Dance Theatre – volunteer and interim managing director. She wrote many grants, and was awarded quite a few of them.
• Boise Optimist Group – volunteer and Vice President for two years.
• Optimist Football – was on the board and a volunteer, also Fundraising Coordinator one year.
• Hidden Springs Baseball Field – came up with the idea, did fundraising, gathered volunteers, and built the field.
• Ada County Assoc. of Realtors – VP and President of Realtor Outreach and VP and President of Circle of Excellence and volunteer on both boards.
• Friends of the Library – currently part of a small group that created the HS cookbook for two years and is currently creating the Calendar – both fundraisers.
• Boise Regional Realtors Community Foundation – currently the President, VP last year and on the committee for about 5 years. They fundraise and award grants each year. Last year awarded $37,000.
• BK Boys Lacrosse Board – currently on the board.
• HS Farm Committee – this will be her second year to be involved and she has taken on the Social media/outreach coordination lead on the committee.
• HS Charter School – Treasurer, VP, and volunteer.
• HSTA – On board for 2 ½ years after the developer left.
• Special Olympics – volunteer at Skiing event at Bogus Basin.
• HS Library – Book Club member.

Cyndi has a great deal of interest in the history of the Dry Creek area. Many years ago, she spent about 4 months doing research, creating information boards, pictures, and antiques and had a wonderful display at the Farm Days event. The boards and pictures were moved to the walls of the Charter school and hung there for years. After they became the Elementary School, they were taken down and unfortunately lost.

Cyndi has read the local books written by community members, and has purchased quite a few of them and used them for her book club.
Sean Conner was born in Boise and has spent most of his years here, and currently lives in Hidden Springs. He has 6 children and owns a tree company as well as a pest control company. His wife Amy does hair here in our town salon (Bohemian Rogue). Sean enjoys spending time with his wife and kids, and has spent some time helping out at our farm with his children—they love this culture. He is interested in being a part of this vision to preserve and protect our culture here in the community by contributing his efforts in any way he’s able. He hopes to build on the vision of what we have. He loves history and in particular the history of Boise. He finds the story of the Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead fascinating, and is happy to be a part of it.
Did You Receive This Newsletter in the Mail?

If you did, it’s because we don’t have a valid email address on file for you. If you do have an email account that can receive PDF attachments, and would like to help us keep our costs down (printing and mailing these newsletters is expensive, and we can put your membership money to better uses!), please email us at DryCreekHistory@gmail.com so we can update our records. Thanks!
News and Notices

Ordnung Muss Sein!

As most of you know, we have historically (no pun intended) relied on volunteers to help with the everyday maintenance and upkeep of the Schick-Ostolasa Farmhouse and grounds. However, with so many members either moving away or reaching more advanced stages of retirement, it’s become more difficult to predict when volunteers will come to clean the inside of the house, or mow the lawn, or maintain the gardens.

To help manage these activities a little better, this year we engaged a professional cleaning service owned by Jennifer Jackson to give the house a thorough cleaning before the grand opening at the beginning of May...and boy, did they! Jennifer and two of her technicians spent two hours going over the ground floor with a fine-toothed comb: mopping, dusting, scrubbing, polishing, everything you can imagine. When they were finished, the Farmhouse was as immaculate inside as you can imagine—so clean that, unless we get heavier-than-expected traffic over the summer, we probably won’t need to call them back until fall when we prepare to close the house for the winter. If any of you need a top-notch cleaning service for your home or office, you would do well to contact Jennifer at jjacksonscleaningservices@gmail.com.

In the same vein, we have contracted with Alex Lopez to do the yard maintenance at the Farmstead. Alex, of Treasure Valley Lawn & Order, is well known around Hidden Springs as a lawn care specialist, sprinkler maintainer, and general handyman. His can-do attitude and friendly manner have made him a neighborhood favorite.

We’re delighted to be partnering with both these local businesses, and hope you will drop by the Farmhouse one Saturday afternoon this summer to see what a great job they’re doing for the Farmstead.

Tree Trimming...Not the Christmas Kind

When spring “came in like a lion” this year, it added to the worries we already had during the deep snows of last winter regarding the possibility of limbs falling on the Farmhouse or one of the outbuildings. Therefore, as soon as the ground was firm enough we hired Sean Conner of Conner’s Tree Service to assess which of the tall old trees on the property could be pruned in ways that alleviate the danger, yet not reduce the leafy shade too badly around the Farmhouse once summer came. (Full disclosure: this was before Sean was nominated as a new member of the DCHS Board of Directors; see p. 12.)

Sean, in conjunction with local business Timmy’s Tree Service, was already scheduled to work on pruning some of the trees along Dry Creek for the HSTA, so there was wonderful synergy in having him work on the Farmstead trees as well; and the results were highly satisfactory. We recommend that as soon as you get a chance, you walk the Dry Creek trail, cross the bridge near the Farmstead (by now it should be above water again!), then stroll around the Farmstead and see if you can spot where Sean worked his magic. His labors have bought us additional time in which to try to raise funds to restore the granary and other outbuildings on the historic property.
Rent the Shick-Ostolasa Farmstead Grounds

The Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead grounds are available to rent; several pricing packages are available to fit your needs. The Farmstead grounds are perfect for:

- Weddings
- Receptions
- Conferences
- Reunions
- Seminars
- Dances
- Banquets
- Family Gatherings
- Holiday Parties
- Company Events

To reserve your date, or for additional information, contact:

The Dry Creek Historical Society
(208) 229-4006
DryCreekHistory@gmail.com

Commercial Photography Policy

Commercial photographers are required to purchase an annual membership at a price of $75 in order to take pictures of and on the Schick-Ostolasa house and grounds. This grants the right to sell photos of the Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead. In addition, you will be able to shoot at the Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead as many times as you like during the year in which your photographer membership is active. All photo sessions are by appointment only and you will need to contact DCHS at DryCreekHistory@gmail.com or call (208) 229-4006.

If you only want to have a single photo session we do offer a $25 single-session fee.

Photographer Membership benefits include:

- One-year admission to the Dry Creek Historical Society and photo shooting by appointment only.
- Full rights to sell your Dry Creek Historical Society photos.
- A link to your web site in our Newsletter’s Photographer Member Index.

Additional membership benefits include:

- Discounted fees for Old Time Farm Days.
- Invitations to members-only events.
- Subscription to the DCHS Newsletter.
Who Were They?

Most residents of Hidden Springs can identify the people after whom some of our streets were named.

Schick’s Road and Schick’s Ridge Road are, of course, named for Philip “P.L.” Schick, who founded the first homestead in the Dry Creek Valley in the late 1860s, and built what we now call the Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead. Banker Drive comes from P.L.’s original partner and co-homesteader, George Banker.

After P.L.’s death in 1902, his aged wife Mary moved to Boise, and his adult daughter Clara and her husband did not want to take over the ranch, so they sold it to Boise businessman Frank Parsons—hence Parsons Drive.

DeChambeau Way is a tribute to the DeChambeau brothers, John and Earl, who purchased the former Schick Ranch from Parsons’ estate in 1942, after the latter’s death. Andy’s Gulch comes from Anastasio Ostolasa, known as “Andy” to his friends and family, who took over management of the DeChambeaus’ 7L ranch from his father Costan when Andy returned from service in World War II.

That leaves Shafer Way and Humphreys Way. Shafer is no doubt related to Shafer Butte, the highest point of the Boise Ridge mountains where Bogus Basin ski resort is located. But who was Shafer? And who was Humphreys? If you know, please contact us at DryCreekHistory@gmail.com and let us know!

UPCOMING EVENTS

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<td>12:30 - 4:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>HS Community Garage Sale</td>
<td>Saturday, Jun 9th</td>
<td>12:30 - 4:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence Day Celebration</td>
<td>Tuesday, Jul 4th</td>
<td>Evening, TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>HS 20th Anniversary Party</td>
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Support the Dry Creek Historical Society

The Dry Creek Historical Society and the Schick-Ostolasa Farmstead are supported solely by volunteers, donations & grants. We depend on membership to keep the Farmstead open to the public and the property in good shape. Members receive regular Email Newsletters and advance notice of activities and events. Join us. Become a DCHS member! Mail in the form below, or join via PayPal at http://www.drycreekhistory.org/Membership.html.