



The Historacle

The Official Newsletter of the
Talent Historical Society

Volume 29 Issue 1

March 2023

THS Member Profile - ALL ABOUT JACK - Jack Latvala

By Marla Cates

The first thing you need to know about Jack Latvala is that he is super shy, leads a quiet existence and keeps a low profile... which is pretty unusual for a business owner who is very much in the public eye.

The second thing to know is he doesn't like talking about himself, and certainly doesn't talk about (or answer questions about) the amount of community support he's done over the years in Talent. Even though I've known him for years, here's how a conversation with him might go: "Jack, I keep hearing how nice you are and how much you help people out. Can you tell me about that?" And he'll say something like: "Oh, I don't know. I just try to be a good neighbor and support my community. I really don't want to toot my horn."

The third thing to know is how to pronounce his last name, which is Finnish: LAHT-vah-lah. If you don't get it right the first time, no worries, he won't laugh or try to correct you.

The fourth thing to know about Jack is he's one of the most kind, honest and humble people I've ever met.

Our story as friends goes back to the early 1990s, when we were both beginning to get involved in the Talent community. Jack had opened Star Properties in 1991 in a modest two-story office that was part of the Quick Shop Market building on the SW corner of the Highway 99 and Valley View intersection. I'd been living in Talent for about 10 years and had become distraught over the fact that a couple of really great historic buildings – cornerstones of the downtown – had recently fallen victim to the wrecking ball.

Our paths first crossed as a result of Talent Enhancement Month which was a month-long clean up, beautification, and city-wide recycling and yard sale event that debuted in Spring 1991. I was a co-founder of the event

and Jack was the first business to become a sponsor and get involved -- I remember feeling so jazzed! (Note: Talent Enhancement Month lasted for several years then morphed into the City committee now called Together for Talent.)

We soon learned we shared an appreciation for history, small towns, and the role vintage buildings play in shaping and sustaining a community's identity.

About the same time, others in the community stepped forward, also, with the desire to help the city however they could. We all brought different points of view, but everyone got along, and we accomplished a lot both collectively and individually for many years. Some have referred to this as the "Camelot" period in Talent's history. It was pretty remarkable.

Jack, myself and a number of others began focusing on the built environment. We continued to help grow Talent Enhancement Month, were co-founders of the Talent Historical Society along side others. From 1994 through 1999 we served together on the City's Community Center Restoration Commission with others who worked to restore the historic 1899 schoolhouse -- now named Town Hall -- undoing earlier "remodelings", rebuilding windows, and re-creating original elements that had been lost, re-



moved, or damaged over time.

To my mind, our greatest achievement was in the mid-1990s when we co-founded, the Talent Architectural Review Committee (TARC) with others. We created the application forms and review processes that are still in use today by the City. We raised awareness through mailers and public meetings, and obtained funds that allowed us to hire professionals (like George Kramer) to produce the Context Statement, Survey of Historic & Cultural Resources, Building Right guidelines, Old Town Design Standards and Historic Preservation code language.

We were involved in establishing the Old Town Overlay Zone and worked to educate people about the value of historic buildings and pride of ownership. We focused on making TARC an easy-going, helpful committee that could meet with property owners on-site to provide free advice, and we often hired George to consult on certain properties that were beyond our abilities. Within a few years, we had at least 20 property owners interested in participating in a multiple property application to the National Register and by 2005-06, the Talent Urban Renewal Agency began giving façade improvement grants to commercial and residential rehab projects that had received TARC approval.

Jack recalls that a lot of historic properties were saved as a result of these efforts. He continued to serve on this committee for over two decades and became the longest-serving member of TARC.

Jack was born in North Dakota, and grew

Talent Historical Society

The Talent Historical Society researches and preserves the history of the Talent area in southern Oregon

We offer a collection of historical archives to help local residents and visitors become

better acquainted with our area's rich history.

We are members of the Jackson County Heritage Association; a group of heritage nonprofits dedicated to the collection, preservation, and interpretation of Southern Oregon's cultural history.

We operate a museum and meeting place located at:
105 North Market Street
Talent, Oregon

The museum is open
Wednesday and Sunday
12:00PM to 4:00PM

General Business/Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 582

Talent, OR 97540

Phone Number: (541) 512-8838

Email: info@talenthistory.org

Web Page: www.talenthistory.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/talenthistory/

Blogspot: talenttowninflames.blogspot.com

The Historacle is published quarterly.

Editor: Myke Gelhaus
myke505@gmail.com

You may submit your written work about historical Talent to be considered for publication in this newsletter. Our research library is ready for you to get started on an interesting local article! We are especially looking for more tales from early to middle 20th Century.

Museum Hours Wednesday & Sunday 12:00 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Memberships Since Last Issue

New Members:

Albert Gill
Bill Gill
Glen Kuhl
Mardell Lau

Natalya Marchuk & Greg Grebenni
Greg & Julie Rockfellow
Phoebe Quillian
Beverly Vondra
Candace Williams
Eugene & Marilyn Wright

Renewals:

John Abbott
Ryan & Joy Baker
Ann B. Banks
Bill & Carolyn Cecil
Allison French & Emily Minah
Goebelt Real Estate - Greg Goebelt
Wendy Lynn
Ron & Stella Medinger
Page One - Debra Moon

Kent Patrick-Riley
Myke Reeser
Judith Ann Richards
Wayne & Julie Rohde
Diana & Charles Roome
Mike & Julie Serrano
Bruce D. Snook
Gayle F. Stubbs
Talent Dental - Mehdi Ghavam
Arn & Karen Wihtol

Lifetime Memberships:

Susan (Hartley) Andrews
Kathy Apple
Joan C. Barnhart
Poppie Beveridge
Jim Bradley & Patricia Remencuis
Karen Carr
John & Judy Casad
Marla Cates & Jan Ritter
Joan Dean
Gladys Fortmiller
Margay Garrity
Bud & MaryLouise Gleim
Lunette Gleason-Fleming
Dale Greenley

Sue Hawkins
Joe Hunkins
Kathy Jerman
George Kramer
Jack Latvala
Jeff LaLande
Matt & Antoinette Lichtenstein
Edwin McManus & Family
Michael Mills
Janice A. Napoleon
Ryan & Carly Pedersen
Wanda Perdue
Brent Thompson
John Wahl
Claire Barr-Wilson

Additional Donations:

John Abbot
Jack Latvala
Katherine Harris
Judith Ann Richards
Diana & Charles Roome
Dick Philips

Candace Williams
Gayle F. Stubbs
Judith Ginsburg
Allison French & Emily Minah
Katherine Harris
Judith Ann Richards
Diana & Charles Roome
Bruce D. Snook

Honorary Lifetime Memberships

Jan Wright Tom & Susan Moulder Katherine Harris



The Pre-Paid order period for

2023 Talent Tomatoes is now open!

Our 2022 Talent Tomato sale was a rousing success. We are taking prepaid orders to be sure you get your special Talent Tomato plants from the May 2023 sale. Don't miss out!!!

See page 11 for instructions on how to order online or for a mail-in order blank to send to in. Don't wait, do it now to make sure you get the plants that you want. We are now offering a prepaid delivery service - see page 11 for details.

Continued from Page One

up in Arizona and Los Gatos, California. After graduating from high school, he moved to Arcata, California, where he had a cooperative vegetarian restaurant from 1969 until 1971 when he moved to Gold Hill. Working mostly in the construction trades in the Rogue Valley, he ultimately got a general contractor's license and specialized in building repairs and rehabilitation. For a few years he was a general partner in the historic Enders Building in Ashland (south of the current Lithia Springs Hotel), and used his skills to rehabilitate the Columbia Hotel which was part of that building. He also worked in the solar business utilizing a system from Australia in the late 1970s. He obtained his real estate license in 1986 and started Star Properties in 1991.

Jack has always had an interest in buildings related to history and has a fondness for collecting old photos of Talent. Many of these photos are displayed on the walls of his office to help educate people about our town's small town, rural, agriculture roots and he tries to educate both buyers and sellers on the value of historic and vintage properties whenever he can.

When his first office was in the Quick Shop Market building, he discovered that underneath the 1970s façade was a Quonset hut used by the Skeeters Logging company at some point in its history and heard that logging trucks sometimes parked in the middle of Highway 99. He later moved his office to various other vintage properties in downtown Talent, including the building at 106 Talent Avenue which many remember as Jittery Joe's second hand shop (Hills-Stearn Building, 1923); a portion of the building at 200 Talent Avenue which now houses Gather Restaurant (Bates Service Station, 1930); a mid-century house at 88 LaPree Street (now the home of Middleway Medicine), then to the shopping center on Main Street which he and business partner Rick Harris purchased in January 2020 and named Wagner Plaza.

In 2019, Jack acquired a cute, but somewhat neglected cottage, at the corner of Main and Market streets with plans to renovate the exterior and turn the interior into office space for Star Properties. As a lover of old buildings, he was excited about maintaining the building's visual character while also meeting local code requirements for converting a building's use from residential to commercial use. In the 11th hour, however, a structural surprise forced Jack to ask the city for a dem-

olition permit, not something he had anticipated or wanted to do. (The original building turned out to be a loosely constructed shop or shed, to which a residential exterior had been applied.) The building he constructed in its place followed the city's architectural design guidelines precisely. It is probably the best example in Talent of how to design a new building in the Old Town overlay zone that meets or exceeds the city's architectural design standards.

Jack has made many other contributions to Talent, including:

- Starting the Talent Business Association in the 1990s along with the manager from Talent's branch of Valley of the Rogue Bank. The association held an informal monthly lunch meeting for business owners to network, share information, express concerns and think creatively about how to support existing businesses.
- Being a charter member and annual supporter of the Talent Historical Society. Recently, he tracked down the artisan who produced the Talent Centennial belt buckle in 2012, bought out his remaining inventory and donated them to the THS gift shop.
- Supporting youth sports through Phoenix High School and Little League.
- Contributing real estate expertise to the Talent Urban Renewal Agency (TURA). During the 13 years I served as Executive Director of TU-

RA, I handled 22 real estate transactions of various sizes and purposes. Jack often offered to help on those transactions, and never took a commission or fee of any kind.

- Immediately after the Alameda Fire, offering the use of Wagner Plaza's parking lot and a vacant office space as an emergency relief center serving displaced residents.

Jack and his partner of 14 years, Carole Manning, live on a rural property "way up Wagner Creek". Son Jed (named after Jedediah Smith) lives in town with his family, and daughter Lizabet lives in Orange County with her family. Up until a few years ago, Jack's beloved Corgi, Dylan, was his sidekick and constant companion around town.

Jack's presence and heart has made an indelible mark on Talent. I'm proud to be his friend and to have worked alongside him for so many years. Our roots go deep.

Additional Comment From Joe Hunkins, a co-founder of the Talent Historical Society:

Last year, when we were in the process of a complicated family real estate transfer Jack helped us with real estate estimates and details even though he knew there was no commission, and he refused payment for his time and trouble. This is typical of Jack, who has been a friend ever since selling us our house in 1989. I'll always remember his prediction at that time, that Talent was going to become one of the very best places to live in Oregon. He's been a big part of Talent's "renaissance" over the past 3-4 decades, helping it evolve and transition into one of Oregon's friendliest and coziest communities.



Star Properties at 209 East Main Street in Talent

The History of the Talent Poker Tour

By Ron Medinger

The Talent Poker Tour is played as a fundraising event for the Talent Historical Society four times per year.

The Talent Poker Tour started in 2004 as a private poker tournament held in my home for my poker playing friends to gather and challenge each other's skills. The rules have always included no smoking and no alcohol (I've never seen anyone play better poker under the influence). In the years following, we played tournaments with varying frequencies from one every six months to one every two months. It was modeled on the TV program, "The World Poker Tour" as an organized, rules-based competition.

Most of us were just learning the game of Texas Hold-em poker and were playing in a free poker league called Riverdogs Poker. While I mostly enjoyed playing in the league, since it was free poker, and open to anyone who cared to attend, I felt it did not offer the best conditions for those of us who were trying to play the game seriously and become improved players.

Most tournaments were held in bars and lounges where the main activity was the consumption of alcohol. Because there was no money involved, more aggressive players dominated the games because they weren't risking any monetary loss if they lost all their chips.

Poker is not just about how aggressively you can play. Aggressiveness is a tool a good player can use to win hands, but it must be used in conjunction with a player's knowledge of the odds of certain cards coming out, fellow competitors' playing styles, and chip stack management. Because of all this, I wanted a playing field that contained players who did have something at stake and were interested in improving their game. This was achieved by using a modest buy-in, the amount of money each player adds to the prize pool, and limiting the invitation list to players I knew were

really interested in becoming better poker players and were just fun to play with.

The Talent Poker Tour, or TPT as it has come to be known, started small with just 5 players in the first tournament. It grew quickly with 22 players in the ninth tournament and then 40 in the nineteenth tournament in 2009. By that time my wife and I had moved to a 55 and older park where there was clubhouse that I could hold our tournaments in. We could only host 24 players in our home, while the clubhouse allowed me to increase the number to 40.

Of course, as the popularity of the tournament rose, so did the number of players who asked to be included. I tried my best to stick to my founding principles and include players who wanted to be better poker players and were friendly and kind to

assist along the way. We've never had a disagreement at a TPT that has brought angry voices or raised tempers. We're there to play for fun, win or lose. Of course, there may be frustration when you lose a hand you were sure you were going to win, but most people realize that's part of the game and bounce back when they win a few hands later. That's part of learning to play poker.

In 2016 a fellow board member, who was also a poker player, suggested the Poker Tour might be a good fundraiser for the Talent Historical Society. With the board's approval we contacted the Oregon Attorney General's office and learned the rules we must follow to legally hold the tournaments. The first fundraising tournament was held on September 29, 2016. While there are donations made by players at the tournament, and we do sell concessions

during the tournament, the main way THS profits from the tournaments is by Family Memberships to the Historical Society. The fact that all the players are members of our organization allows us to legally hold the tournaments. Currently thirty-three of our Family Memberships are participants in TPT tournaments, with twenty-nine of those joining specifically to play in our tournaments.

In our most recent tournament, I played well enough and had fortune on my side to win the tournament! Our next tournament, in April, will be the 50th Talent Poker Tour with these last twenty tournaments played to benefit Talent Historical Society. If you have a love of play-

ing Texas Hold-em poker and would like to participate, please drop me an email at r.medinger@talenthistory.org. You can be a beginner, or an experienced player, as long as you like to have fun playing in a friendly well-run environment, you are welcome.



12-03-2022 Talent Poker Tour XLIX Final Table

those who knew less about the game than they did. I appreciated the kindness that some of the more experienced Riverdog players had shown me, and I wanted others to have that experience as well.

I was lucky to have a core group of players who had the same vision I did to

Update on the Bird Survey on the Greenway

by Debra Moon and Emmalisa Whalley

Note: Emmalisa Whalley, THS Board Member and volunteer Bear Creek Burn surveyor, is an excellent photographer, providing us with amazing photographs of our birds and producing a bird calendar yearly, available on the THS website, www.talenthistory.org. This article is a summary with highlights. If you are interested in the complete survey data, contact Klamath Bird Observatory, <https://klamathbird.org/>.

This update draws from data in November 2022 through January 2023 survey walks, mainly winter months. The walks in winter are starting close to 8 am, versus the walks beginning at closer to 6 am during the summer and fall months.

The first reported walk in November was in the Lynn Newbry transects. Two new water birds, Northern Shovelers and Buffleheads were sighted. Emmalisa notes,

“Highlights of the survey in transect B were seeing an Orange-Crowned Warbler flitting through the trees and the largest number of American Robins we have seen so far, in this transect there were 308.” Adding both transect A and B together there were the highest number of total birds ever, 910 birds.

Along the Suncrest transects in December, Emmalisa reports, “We were also fortunate enough to see three Lincoln Sparrows, which are a

beautiful little birds with multi-colored feathers. The only water birds we had on the creek were Mallards and American Wigeons.” In this area, they also saw 75 European Starlings, 50 Brewer’s Blackbirds, a Bewick’s Wren, and a pair of Western Meadowlarks.

Emmalisa shared with us, “One of my favorite sounds is hearing the Belted Kingfisher calling while it travels over the water, up and down Bear Creek. We also saw an American Kestrel and a couple of Black Phobes, which tend to winter over in our area.”

The second walk on Lynn Newbry transects A and B, in January, revealed even lower numbers of species and total number of birds due to the low temperatures. The pond was frozen in some parts and

Emmalisa said, “The water birds seen were two American Coots and a female American Wigeon diving in the only open water”. She added, “When we got to the upper pond it wasn’t as frozen, and

we saw 23 Ring-Necked Ducks with a couple of American Wigeons thrown in. There was also a group of female Buffleheads, 5, that were on the edge between frozen and clear water.”

Number of species is down due to the time of year, but number of birds is

up. Large numbers of Robins, House Finches, Starlings, Crows, and Golden-Crowned Sparrows, Mourning Doves, and Acorn Woodpeckers were seen during these three months in both areas, Suncrest and Lynn Newbry. However, total numbers of birds decreased as the season progressed and weather became colder.



Mallards and American Wigeons



Red Winged Blackbird



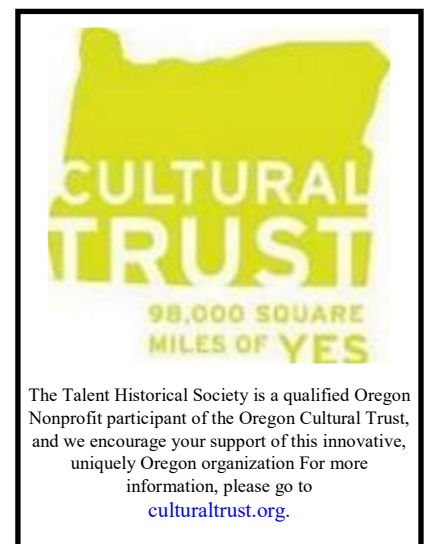
Female House Finch



Female Buffleheads



Great Blue Heron



The Talent Historical Society is a qualified Oregon Nonprofit participant of the Oregon Cultural Trust, and we encourage your support of this innovative, uniquely Oregon organization. For more information, please go to culturaltrust.org.

Talent Oregon's Historical Firsts by Bob Casebeer

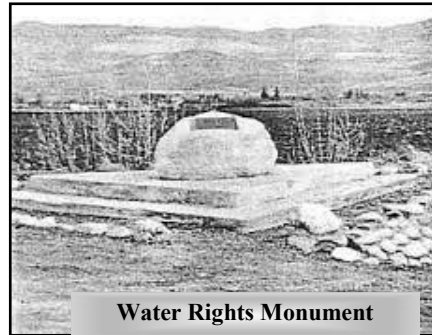
According to historic records and anecdotal information, the Talent community can claim many firsts in the history of Southern Oregon. Founded roughly the same time as Jacksonville, the Wagner Creek area was primarily an agricultural community rather than a mining community. It was settled prior to Ashland, Central Point or Medford.

Agriculture: The first wheat and oats were planted and sold by Eli Knighten and Firman Anderson in 1853. They planted twelve acres of wheat and sold the first crop for \$8.00 a bushel. E.K. Anderson located an orchard on his donation land claim and planted apples, peaches, pears and nut trees. At about 65 acres in total, Anderson's was the largest orchard in Southern Oregon for many years. The first peach orchard in southern Oregon was established by Samuel Robinson when he set out peach seeds in 1853. The first grapes grown in the Rogue Valley were in the Wagner Creek area, using grape starts from San Jose, California. Walnut trees located at the Van Aucken house (also known as the Emmet Beeson or Stearns place) were planted prior to 1859 and are believed to be the county's first. There are other walnut trees from this period associated with the Fort Wagner site on Wagner Street near John Street and along Wagner Creek Road. Much later the first commercial agricultural shipment by train out of the Rogue Valley originated in Talent.

Family: The first pioneer girl born in Jackson County was Alice Wrisley, born in Fort Wagner on Christmas Day, 1853.

Irrigation: The first water right in Oregon was established by Jacob Wagner when he dug irrigation delivery ditches from Wagner Creek to his fields. In 1952, this feat was recognized with a monument placed at the corner of Wagner Road and Rapp Road.

Military: The first palisade fort in



Water Rights Monument

Jackson County was built, with the help of Captain Alden and his men from Yreka, on the Jacob Wagner donation land claim in 1853. During pioneer and Native American skirmishes over the next two years, the fort offered Bear Creek Valley pioneers refuge. The walls covered about an acre of ground and were two feet thick and twelve feet high. Portholes were placed every few feet and each corner housed an observation station that was manned by look-outs. A blockhouse was built inside the fort. Today, a stone monument has been placed on Talent Avenue near the site of Fort Wagner.

Education: The first known schoolhouse in the county was founded by the residents of Talent and built in the sum-

mer 1854. It was located west of Bear Creek about a quarter mile northeast of the Fort Wagner location, where Suncrest Road crossed Bear Creek.

Timber Industry: One of the first two sawmills in Jackson County was operated by Granville Naylor on Wagner Creek as early as 1854. He and his partner operated several sawmills in Southern Oregon in the early years, including one on Spencer Creek in Klamath County which was the first sawmill in that county.

Churches: The oldest Baptist church built in Southern Oregon stands at the corner of Main and Market streets in Talent. It is believed to be the second oldest of its kind in the state. The first sermon given in Jackson County was delivered by William Royal, Methodist minister, who came to Oregon on the Preacher Train, in late October 1853. He and his son Fletcher Royal, also a Methodist minister, then went to Jacksonville and preached in the saloons, gathering money which subsequently in 1854 paid for the erection of a Methodist church in Jacksonville, a building now owned by Jackson County as a historical structure.

Political Activity: The first woman in the state to be elected to public office after suffrage was Miss Leta Luke. She was elected as City Recorder in Talent in 1912. Also in 1912, the city elected William H. Breese as Mayor, one of very few socialist mayors ever elected in the state.

Reprinted from the 2010 Centennial Issue commemorating the incorporation of the City of Talent.

KRAMER & COMPANY
Historic Preservation Consultants
George Kramer
386 North Laurel
Ashland, OR 97520
541-482-9504
www.kramerandcompany.com
george@preserveoregon.com

City of Talent
Serving residents of
Talent since 1910
www.cityoftalent.org
Facebook: @City.of.Talent
Twitter: @City_of_Talent
PO Box 445 110 East Main St. Talent

Sanctuary One at Double Oak Farm
13195 Upper Applegate Rd.
Jacksonville, Oregon 97530
541.899.8627
sanctuaryone.org

Renee Tokar
David Tokar
Owner
541.900.0159
rtokar20@gmail.com
Personal Adult Family Care
ARPO Foster Dr.
Medford, Ore

541.840.5966
GREG GOEBELT
Deluxe Home Team
Specializing in Talent and Ashland
GGoebelt@gmail.com | www.GregGoebelt.com

Page One Press
Debra Moon
Writing Services
Books/Articles
Grant Writing/Evaluation
Group Instruction/Facilitation
Presentations
530-570-5113 debra.moon7@gmail.com
www.page1press.com

Emmalisa Whalley's Story

I was born in Portland, Oregon and lived there the first 17 years of my life.

In 1978 my mom, Ruby, got a job as the Vice-Principal of Ashland Middle



School. I was the last kid, out of four, and was still living at home, so I had to move with her. I finished my last quarter of my junior year and my senior year and graduated from Ashland High School in 1980. I stayed in Ashland after graduating for about five years, and then I moved to Corvallis for a year, going to school. After that I moved back up to Portland where I remained for over 25 years. I was working for the City of Portland at the Pittock Mansion. Then I got a temp job at Standard Insurance that turned permanent, and I remained with that company for nearly 20 years.

I moved back to Southern Oregon in 2014 and found a place to live in Talent. My mom still had her house in Ashland, so I was only four miles from her. After I moved back, I started to do birding trips with local groups, beginning the birding friendships that I have developed over the years. My dad passed away about 20 years ago, and I wanted to do something with my mom that she would enjoy so I took up birding with her. We travelled all over Oregon, and then we broadened that to birding in some other states and Cuba. About 10 years into my birding with my mom, I picked up the camera. Ever since then I have been taking photographs on every bird trip. Last year we went to Hawaii and saw some very unique

birds on two birding tours. Also, I have created a bird calendar every year that is for sale on the THS website. Before I started the bird surveys, I mainly took pictures in my back yard of all the birds that visited me.

Shortly after moving to Talent, I met Jan Wright, and she convinced me to join the Talent Historical Museum Board. I have been there ever since. I am the Webmaster for the THS Board, and I help plan and execute the Tomato Sale Project each year. I am also helping with the documentation of the Alameda Fire.

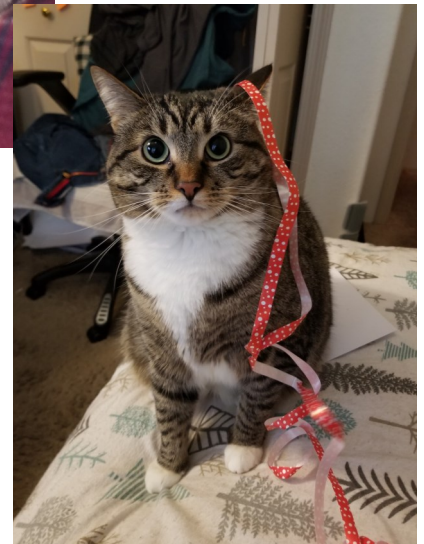
I adopted two cats from the Humane Society at the beginning of the pandemic and they have helped me a lot to not feel lonely during that time. I made them a "catio" on the top deck of my house, but then I had bigger ideas. With the help from my friend Cindy, we built them an 8 x 10 x 8 cat enclosure. I added a door with a cat door from the house leading to the entrance of the enclosure, so they could go outside but not be free to get the birds in my yard.


(See pictures on Page 10.)

I have always grown tomatoes and some other vegetables, but I realized that

we had a very strong growing season here in Southern Oregon and my brother-in-law didn't have the same season in Portland. I decided two years ago to try and grow some hot peppers for him. Mind you, I don't like hot peppers, and I must harvest them with gloves on. But it was pretty successful, so I also did it last year and I tried growing some different peppers for people to enjoy. I am already planning which peppers to grow this year.

My mom started coming to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival when I was six, I thought the actors from the festival lived in Talent. Now that I live here I know that isn't true, or is it? I have always loved Southern Oregon and I was grateful that I got to grow up here in the last of my childhood and then come back again and live here now.





Rick Chester, Pharmacist
Naturopathic Physician
& Acupuncturist

We'll always make time for you.

STORE HOURS
Monday-Friday: 9:00AM-6:00PM
Saturday: 9:00 AM - 1:30PM
Free Local Delivery
Drive-Thru Window
Compounding

205 N Pacific Highway
Talent, OR 97540
Phone: 541.535.5843
Fax: 541.535.6362

Kelli Cox
Branch Manager II
1370 Center Drive
Medford, OR 97501
kcox@roguecu.org
P: 541.622.7350
F: 541.770.3714








harryanddavid.com

Harry and David LLC
2100 South Pacific Highway Medford, Oregon 97501

Mehdi Ghavam D.M.D. L.L.C.
P.O. Box 275
106 North Market St.
Talent, OR 97540
541-535-1597



Talent Dental
General Dentistry

Mon to Thurs 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Friday to Sunday Closed
Office Hours by Appointment



Biscuits & Vinyl
NEW & USED
VINYL RECORDS & GOODS

Open Wed thru Sat - Noon-6pm
805-455-6616
316 East Main St - Talent, OR



STAR PROPERTIES
Call today at 541.535.9999
Talent's Full Service Real Estate Office for 25 Years.

JACK LATVALA BROKER/OWNER

P.O. Box 442 - 88 Lapree Street - TALENT, OR 97540 - 541.535.9999
jacklatvala@gmail.com - www.starpropertiesrealestate.com

The Story of my Life by Alice Rockfellow Meacham Foster Ough

Illustrations by Myke Reeser

In the year of 1853 a congregation of men and women were sitting around William Hurst Rockfellow's farmhouse. (The name was formerly spelled Rockafeller.) They were setting up preliminary plans toward setting out on the long trek across the plains. William had been home from the gold mines of California. He was a 49'er miner for about two years but he had the fever still, and the people were hearing much in regard to the gold mining of '49.

Many debates had taken place with the result that we now see around this farm. It appears that William was the only one who had had this experience, so naturally everyone looked to him as a leader. Now they are getting their wagons and teams equipped for a long journey of six months and they knew it would be a hard trip, so they fixed their wagons as comfortably as possible.

In those days it looked to the people like they were going to travel to the end of the world. William had been a leading spirit ever since his father had moved his family to Iowa from Indiana. Now those young people who had grown up together and had families were among the immigrants. They were all acquainted and expected to have lots of fun. There were about 50 wagons, some one-horse, some two and some oxen teams.

It made a fine showing that bright May morning as we started out. Some are laughing and some are crying. It was harder for the women than the men to leave their loved ones. The yard was lined with people with good wishes, both young and old. Many of the men of the neighborhood rode with us to our first camp, and helped strike the first campfire. Henry Rockafeller and my mother's father, (Henry D. Hendrix), traveled two days with us as also did some others.

We had plenty of fun in the evenings up until the time we had to look out for the Indians. We started in early spring and it took us six months on the road. Many of these immigrants were pretty old. They had given up homes that they had lived in all their lives for the sake of making more money, and the trail was great for them. Two years previous to our

starting had been terrible times for us with the Indians massacring the whites. The following year there had been some depredations and we did not know what our fate would be, so we were on guard all the time. It was proven later that the Mormons were mixed up with us. There was a tenor of fear all of the time; mothers were afraid to let their children out of their sight after leaving the settlement.

We crept along slowly. William's wagons were a light two-horse wagon for his family and a big ox team named Duke and Brandy for provisions. We slept in that wagon and I never got up until we were

When night came on and our day's drive was finished, our teams circle around with their wagons placed on the wagons' tongue up against the next wagons and all around, making a circle or enclosure so we had a complete circle. Then every man would attend to his horses and guards would take turns watching, others got wood and water, placed tents, and the horses would eat their fill of the long grass. Then the men would lie each by their own wagon, but still, the men would patrol the country near us. In order to get water, some days the drive would be short, others longer, but we always stopped when we reached water.

When we made camp, it was like a little town. People just swarmed around, each woman making preparation for her own family's comfort, plenty of laughing and singing going on. The pickets would sometimes pass the word around for quiet if they heard something they did not understand or like. It was always over in a little time and everyone was happy again when the word came, "only a coyote".

My first thought would always be to pick flowers, there were usually many inside our little fort. There was one family we were traveling with, Beeson by name, a father, mother and one son. They were English and my first thought was always to get some flowers for "Auntie Beeson".

Dear white-haired mother Beeson, how I loved her. I am sure her influence followed me through life. I would take my bouquet to her, sure of its being appreciated even though it was nothing but weeds, because I thought them pretty. She always admired them. (I was only four years of age.) She would hand me her chair, saying she did not need it as she had her work to do. I always left in a ceremonious way. We were friends many, many years after we were settled. So many pleasant memories come up as I write this, the way-marks in a life so full as mine have been numerous. This dear woman, father and son have long since gone on their last journey. The son also was my very dear friend for many years.



The young immigrants had grown up together and were expecting to have lots of fun trekking across the country.

traveling. We had some seamless sacks of soda crackers in this wagon. I remember making my breakfast out of these soda crackers at the same time looking back at my mother and talking. I remember one morning we started very early, we had camped that night without water; the stocks were very dry. We had traveled several miles since starting that morning. All of a sudden, an ox team whirled out of the team and started to run. They ran quite a distance before they were stopped. Men said they smelled water and we soon came to water. Our teams were near the front of the train; old Duke and Brandy just trailed along after the teams; they did not need a driver.

The Story of my Life by Alice Rockfellow

Up to this time nothing of moment had occurred, but now some of the horses were giving out, not being very well fed and as strong when we started. Among the first was my mother's sister and family. They were not very well fixed for such a long trip, so they decided to take up a homestead in a new country where they farmed for a good many years. There were others who stopped with them at different points in that state. We were not molested by Indians on the trip although they would often visit our camps and beg for 'mulumuc as they called food. One Buck picked up a dish of soft soap, thought it was something to eat, mother took it away from him. They tried to buy my six-month-old sister. She was so dark from suntan and had black eyes, they thought she was a papoose, an Indian baby.

They tried to steal her and we had to watch very close or they would have taken her. They followed us many miles to get her. I don't remember things very definitely because I was so young. A child of four does not take note of everything. One thing I do remember is crossing a big river. There was no ferry, so my father, with some others, contrived a way to cross. They swam over with the stock, then took the wagon beds, caught them up and made boats. Families and everything crossed over that way. We crossed without incident, but then it took many hours to put everything right again. From that place, I don't remember much about crossing the mountains. In some places the rocky ledges and rough places were so bad that the wagons would be let down with ropes.

Our first stop was in Oregon, in Wagner Creek in the Rogue Valley, a very beautiful place. There had been a big Indian outbreak there the year before we came. The old fort was still standing at Wagner Creek. The creek takes its name from a man who settled first in this place. Afterwards he married a younger sister of my mother's. At the time he had an abundance of green vegetables, potatoes, etc., in which we were in great need, as we had been without them in so many months. We were nearly starved for some fresh food. My father and brothers settled on the same creek. We could see each other's houses. I remember my mother went over the creek on a board. She went to Wagner's to grind her coffee. One morning

we were going over and I fell into the water. It was so deep it washed me down to the road crossing before mother could get to me. The water was shallow there. We were both very much frightened. Another time I ran ahead of her and opened wide the gate going out to the farmyard, and then I ran to meet her and I saw a big snake, probably three feet long, stretched out full length, sunning itself. I got such a start, but could not stop and jumped over it with a screech. Mother picked up a stick and killed it, but it proved to be harmless.

My favorite family, the Beesons, settled about two miles up this creek and many were the visits we had. Farther on still were the Stearns family, whose daughter and myself grew up together, great friends. We spent the winter of '53 very pleasantly there. In the winter the men built fences and put up barns, chicken houses, got the ground ready to plant, set out trees, and many necessary things were done. Also we stocked up with hon-

ey bees, about twelve stands. One of my duties after being old enough was to watch them swarm and then tell someone about it. The following summer, after arriving in Rogue Valley, the people were much exercised about the Indians. The previous year there had been an Indian outbreak and much depredation had been committed, so there was much talk and expectation of other outbreaks as there had been rumors of a war north of us. So the preparations were carried out for our protection. Fort Wagner was made strong and provisioned for the people around the country. The building ground was on an incline. on one side, so that at one point there was a root house built back under the hill and a house built over it. This gave us a tool house and storeroom and the root house would provide a good protection from the bullets and for the women and children. One night the arrangement was carried out. We thought the Indians were coming.

The fall of '54 two men had taken up a claim just across Bear Creek from us, and were building up quite a nice farm, but they were not good neighbors, always doing dirt to someone, so consequently not well liked. They were looked upon with suspicion by

Continued on Page 10



A Wagon Train pulling into Fort Wagner.

The Story of my Life by Alice Rockfellow

Continued from Page 9

everyone. It seemed that through their talk, people were looking for trouble. The word had been passed around to be ready to fly at the intimation of trouble. The Valley is surrounded by high mountains so we were always watching for signals between the Indians, as it was said that that was their way of communicating to each other. Now, occasionally we had noticed one fire. This time in the night the guards awakened us and told that there were fires at different places on the mountains and from the way they acted it was as though they were signals. It was thought best for us to go where it was safe for the women and children. The first intimation that I had of the move, an old friend took me in his arms with just a blanket wrapped around me. Mother had her baby in her arms. Others had bedding and we were soon deposited in the root house. The children fell asleep, and the elders stood around and talked.

The next morning, since nothing happened in the night, we all went to our homes. Nothing more happened that week, but in the meantime father had reason to be suspicious of Bingham and Dailey. He did not like their actions and laid a trap to catch them. He and others went over one evening to chat with them for a while. In talking they let fall a few words that were very, very suspicious and when they left that evening it was fully settled in their minds that these men were the cause of all the disturbances and signal fires. Well, father and the boys laid a trap for Bingham and Dailey. The next thing was to prove it. Nearly all the neighbors placed the blame on them. Everybody had felt so sure that they were going to punish them, so they did. Their plans were laid out; father and some others dropped in to chat with them. They told all the blood curdling Indian stories that they could think of. Soon some more men dropped in, making a half dozen or so in the house. Soon a gun was fired near the cabin and then in the windows. Our men yelled, "Indians, run boys". Father stayed by Bingham and another man watched the partner. They ran for Bear Creek, the supposed Indians letting out war whoops and firing all of the time. Father said again, "Run boys, run", and started for the foot log, starting his

man first. It was a very dark night. Just as they were barely started, with just a little help, Bingham fell into the water and father pretended to be helping him to get out, but when he would have him nearly safe his hand would slip and back he would go into the water. All of the time, Dailey was having the same kind of treatment. These men were so badly frightened they could hardly get their breath.

After their dunking, father and the other men accused them and told them why they did what they did, and told them there were no Indians in the country, that it was a concocted plan of the ranchers to punish them for they had

found out it was their plan to frighten the people. They finally owned up that they did it out of spite. They were the worst pair of whipped curs that you ever saw. They were not long in getting

out of the country and left after dark. After that everything settled in peace and quiet.

The children started in school, a country school is usually far away from most everyone. This one was about two miles from our house. When I was little, father took me on horseback. We had a big pair of roan horses for our team and they were also broken to the saddle. One particular morning the hired man took me. Father lifted me up into the saddle. Tracy was the horse's name. The man looked around and saw Jack, a neighbor boy. He says, "Jump up behind Jack." That was the last thing I remember for several hours. Tracy would not carry double, he threw us all. I think Jack and the man were not hurt, but I was knocked senseless. When I came to, the doctor and Mother were working over me. I was wrapped in a wet sheet but was soon myself. The school threw the young folks together often. Auntie Beeson and her son brought us together at her home

many times, and such lovely times we did have. My particular chum was a year older than I. I remember I always looked up to her. I thought she knew so much more than I did. She always came to the parties. Auntie Beeson's flowers were my delight. The flowers were fenced in just a great big circle and they had all kinds of them mixed together. I could never find a weed, everything was so neat. I can close my eyes and make myself see it just as plain as if I were there and the dear white haired lady with her gentle voice and ways. Her son was so tender with her in so many ways. He had a great deal to do with the formation of the character of those whom they invited into their home. She seemed never to tire in answering my questions.

To Be Continued in the June Issue

More Pictures from Emmalisa



The Pre-Paid order period for 2023 Talent Tomatoes is now open!

Our 2022 Talent Tomato sale was a rousing success. We are now taking prepaid orders to be sure you get your special Talent Tomato plants from the May 2023 sale. Don't miss out!!!

To order the 4" pots online, visit: <https://store.talenthistory.org/category-s/134.htm>

For the gallon sized pots visit: <https://store.talenthistory.org/category-s/135.htm>

We are returning to the pre-Covid system of having you to pick up your plants at the THS Museum at 105 North Market St in Talent on May 13th from 9AM to 2PM. However, we're also offering a delivery service. We will deliver your tomatoes to you for \$10 per address (home or business) to select zip codes in the Rogue Valley. (Zip codes included are 97501, 502, 503, 504, 520, 524, 525, 526, 527, 530, 535, 537, 539 & 540). Deliveries will be made on May 12th and May 13th. Please prepay for delivery on-line by visiting: <https://store.talenthistory.org/category-s/152.htm>

Or you can fill out this mail-in form and mail it to us - we must receive it by May 8.

2023 Talent Tomato Order Form

(When filling out this form, please print clearly)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

How many Talent Tomato plants would you like to order?

_____ plants in 4" pots at \$4.00 each - total due for 4" pots _____

_____ plants in one-gallon pots at \$9.00 each - total due _____

_____ home delivery at \$10.00 per address - total due _____

Total due for whole order is: _____

Please mail this completed form, with payment, to:

Talent Historical Society

PO Box 582

Talent OR 97540

Thank You!

Order form and payment must be received by May 8

Talent Historical Society Board of Directors

Willow McCloud	President & Art/Design Chair
Ron Medinger	Interim Vice President
Tessa DeLine	Secretary
Ron Medinger	Treasurer & Membership Chair
Emmalisa Whalley	Webmaster
Debra Moon	Outreach & Volunteer Coordinator
Myke Reeser	Board Member
David Oman	Board Member
Alicia Cobiskey	Board Member

The Talent Historical Society Board Meeting is held monthly on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Museum Building at 105 North Market St. in Talent. The meetings are also still being held on Zoom. If you wish to participate on Zoom, please contact debramoon7@gmail.com and she will email you an invitation to join.



Talent Historical Society
P.O Box 582
Talent, OR 97540

T.E.A.M. Meetings Tuesday Evening at the Museum

Tuesday Evening at the Museum is off to a good start with a wide variety of topics to entertain and inform us while we meet together every 4th Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. All meetings are free for THS members and the general public to enjoy.

March 28 – Celebrating the Talent Tomato’s 65th Birthday. David James will share the remarkable, true history of how the Talent Tomato was saved. In addition, David’s three-member band, The James Consortium, will entertain us with original songs including one titled *“A Tomato Named Talent”*.

April 25 – Larry Smith, recipient of four National Teaching Awards for Environmental Education will share “Jacksonville’s Emerald Necklace”. The heartwarming story of how Jacksonville created the most successful all-volunteer land preservation project in the state of Oregon.

May 23 - Elegant Bustles and Bows Historical Costumes Group will present a Spring Fashion Show featuring the changing styles of clothing and hats worn from Pioneer days through the 1920s. Guests will have the opportunity to take photos with the models at the photo booth.



The James
Consortium