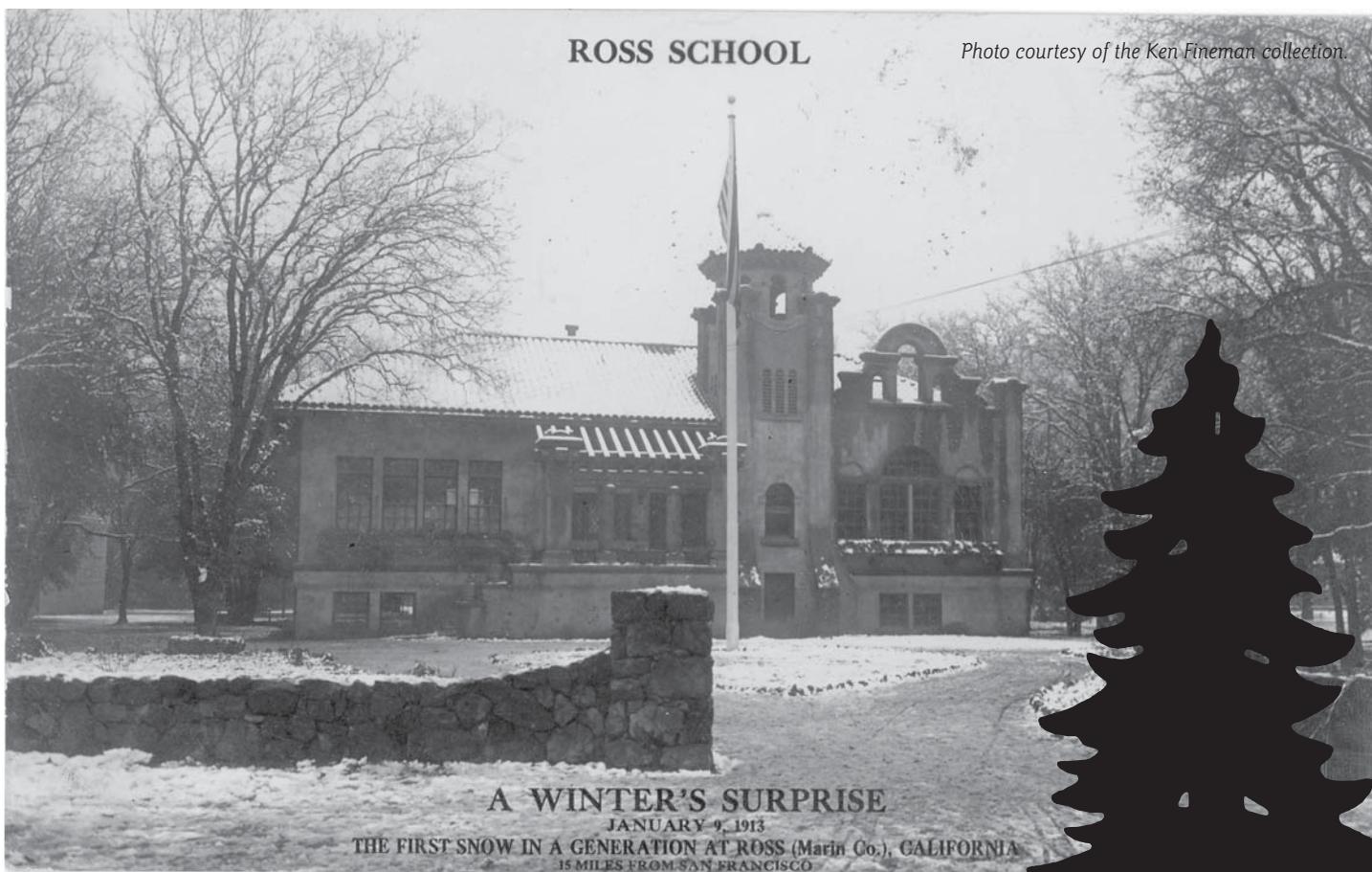


THE ROSS SEMPERVIREN

www.townofross.org

TOWN OF ROSS CENTENNIAL NEWSLETTER VOLUME 3 2008



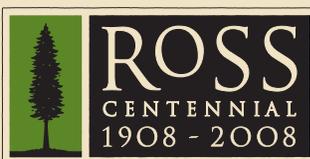
Centennial Update

GROWERS, BAKERS, AND ARTISTS UNITE!

Start cultivating your blue-ribbon produce and garden items, planning your baked delights, and expressing what Ross means to you in the “My Town...” art competition at the Ross Town Fair, September 20. Check the informational kiosk at the post office for details throughout the summer.

SAVE THE DATE

The Town of Ross will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary **September 20, 2008**, with a huge “once in a hundred years” parade and picnic.



100 YEARS OF COMMUNITY

If you have not yet signed up on the Town’s email list, please do so to stay in the Centennial loop. Contact Linda Lopez at llopez@townofross.org or call her at 415-453-1453 x105.



Ross at Play

by Gary Scales

Ross residents always have been a robust lot, with outdoor and physical activities long a part of community life. Early on, the eastern slopes of Mount Tamalpais became the Town's "extended backyard." Hiking and riding have been popular pastimes for generations, and it wasn't many years ago that there were more horseback riders than bicyclists on Lagunitas Road. Ross garden enthusiasts helped Alice

built elaborate bathhouses and boat docks along the marshes near Escalle Vineyards, which in its prime produced 20,000 gallons of a "drinkable red." Later a beer garden, with slot machines in the back room, was added.

At the turn of the century, families would board the four-horse stagecoach for the half-day journey over Mount Tamalpais to spend weekends camping at Bolinas or Willow Camp (later Stinson). The 65-foot schooner, Owl, carried passengers, freight, and even livestock from San Francisco to Bolinas until the early 1930s. Rough weather with a load of pigs aboard made for memorable tales.

Until after World War II there were but a handful of restaurants in Marin County. Before it burned in the 1930s, dinner and dancing at the Hotel Bel Aire (now the site of Marin General Hospital) ranked with the Hotel del Coronado in San Diego and the Del Monte Lodge at Pebble Beach.

The Mount Tamalpais Railway, known as the "Crookedest Railroad in the World," carried passengers from Mill Valley to the East Peak and a tavern offering food and lodging. The tavern prospered during Prohibition, as it was virtually impossible for federal agents to make a surprise raid. After an evening of dining and dancing, patrons would coast silently down the seven-mile trip in engineless gravity cars that sometimes exceeded 15 miles per hour. On clear summer nights, it must have been exhilarating.

In 1913 the Larkspur volunteer fire department created the "Rose Bowl" open-air dance floor within a grove of redwoods with hundreds of garden roses climbing along wooden trellises and thousands of twinkling lights among old fire pails, helmets, and

hoses. Nationally acclaimed orchestras played on Saturday nights to the delight of thousands of dancing couples until the early 1960s.

A marching band, dignitaries riding on horseback, and horse-drawn parade floats marked the annual Ross Valley May Day celebration from 1910, with grammar-school students parading colorful maypoles. Horsemanship, baseball, foot races, and folk dancing were all part of the festivities and competition.

The annual Grape Festival benefiting Sunnyhills Orphanage was held at the Kent Estate from 1903 to 1945 and featured homemade preserves, cakes, pies, as well as entertainment by local musicians. In the early 1960s the Marin County Fair, then held at the Marin Art & Garden Center, boasted a full-size Ferris wheel.

Poetry readings, musical recitals, and tea dancing all were regular Sunday afternoon social events for early Ross families. Some residents were invited to join the "Chit Chat" Club. Started in 1881, this congenial, but serious-minded organization continues to meet monthly for dinner, essay, and discussion.

On fall weekends in late 1960s, a loosely organized band of several dozen Ross Valley men, calling themselves the "Ross Rascals" gathered to play a spirited game of touch football, some displaying their collegiate gridiron abilities. Crowds of enthusiastic spectators cheered on their stouthearted endeavors while enjoying grilled hotdogs and keg beer from the sidelines. The participants, some now in their eighties, fondly remember those "rough and tumble" Sunday afternoons on the Great Lawn of Gabrielsen.



Photo courtesy of the Ken Fineman collection.

Eastwood, famed curator of the California Academy of Sciences, collect over 700 species of plants, and were early members of the Tamalpais Conservation Club. Ross families have supported the annual Mountain Play since 1913 and participated in the first Dipsea Race in 1904.

Hunting and camping were also part of early Ross outdoor life, with numerous hunting clubs dotting thousands of acres of the present-day watershed. The Lagunitas Rod & Gun Club held an annual venison barbecue until the clubhouse and grounds were flooded by the construction of Alpine Lake in 1917.

Swimming, boating, fishing, and duck hunting along the Corte Madera Creek were popular pastimes from 1890 to the early 1940s. Camp Ho Ho, later named Hill's Boathouse, rented canoes and sailboats. Log cabins and tents were available for longer camping stays. Many Ross families

Ross Remembers

Don and Aggie Gabrielsen have lived for almost fifty years in the home Henry Bothin built at the corner of Lagunitas Road and Glenwood Avenue. When the Branson School went co-educational, the Gabrielsen field, pool, and gym were, for a time, used as the boys' athletic facilities.

Don and Aggie fondly remember the "Ross Rascal" touch football gatherings on their lawn:

"All the players had nicknames, and a commissioner to keep order and schedules (No games when the 49ers were in town). Everyone had to be over thirty years old and many had lettered in collegiate sports. While all in fun, it was competitive, with a good share of bruises, both to limbs and egos. Wives, children, and friends cheered on, along with a collection of neighborhood dogs that usually romped on the field. It was a wonderful community activity and after the games families stayed to socialize until darkness fell."

The Ross Centennial logo, an inspired vision of place and time

Few artists capture the spirit and mood of California as beautifully and succinctly as Michael Schwab. Whether through posters for Golden Gate National Parks, his illustrations of the Wine Country, or the Ross Centennial logo, Schwab reveals the soul of his beloved state through the judicious use of silhouette, color, and scale. "Northern California is my inspiration," he says, "just as it was for many of the graphic artists and painters around the turn of the last century. Inspiration is everywhere — the redwoods, the mountains, the lakes, the vineyards. And the people — the organic farmers and ranchers, the wine makers, the chefs — are all artists. We have an abundance of creative heroes. Everyone inspires everyone. I strive to create images that are strong and dramatic, without giving too much away, romantic in their message."



Ross, California The People, the Places, the History

The first published comprehensive history of our town and the surrounding Ross Valley, this newly released first-edition book makes a great Centennial gift for friends and family.

Published by the Jose Moya Del Pino Library and Ross Historical Society, cost is \$40 donation, cash or check only. Please call 415-461-4816 to order, or stop by the Octagon House on the MAGC grounds Mon-Fri, 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.