



The Wilsonia News

Published six times a year by the Wilsonia Historic District Trust for all Wilsonia cabin owners and their families and friends.

© WHDT, Volume 1, Issue 2, March 2021. Jim Spitze, Editor; Doug Bartsch, Designer.

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The Editor's Column - Issue #2! Our goal was to reach every single Wilsonia cabin owner in an easy and accessible manner and I think we came close to that goal by reaching over 90% of them. There are 211 cabins (210?) with some families owning more than one cabin. We sent out around 80 copies via personalized emails and over 115 hardcopies via the US Mail. We received some three dozen responses - many with enjoyable-to-read compliments. So, here we are two months later with Issue #2.

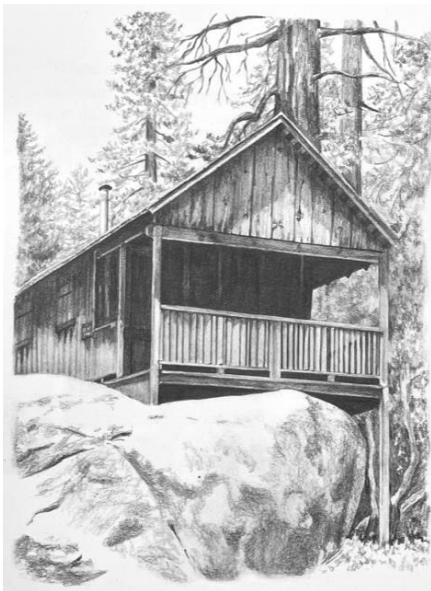
We will repeat the information on the clubhouse sound system project and on the tax deductibility of donations made to the WHDT with some clarifying remarks on the wide range in which those funds can be used. We will include (as we will in all issues) some material from Fern Tripp's two wonderful books, "Wilsonia, Yesterday, Today and Forever, A Scrapbook" (December 1989), and "The Wilsonia Experience, Jubilee Edition" (1998).

In Issue #1 we talked about the five partner organizations: ourselves, WVI, the Sierra Masonic Family Club, the semi-mysterious *Wilsonia Advisory Team* (described further below), and "the Parks." While in Issue #1 we answered the question "What is it?" regarding the historic district trust, below you will find the answer to "Who is it?" in the form of *very* short bio-sketches of the eleven fine people who are giving their time to insure that Wilsonia is here for our children's children, for generations to come.

In addition to all of this, you will find in the following pages:

1. An "intro" to our park's new Superintendent, Clay Jordan,
2. Rev #1 of a "Wilsonia Service Providers" list,
3. A highly preliminary Calendar of Upcoming Events,
4. Some "History Beyond Wilsonia,"
5. A bit about the what is it and who is it regarding the Wilsonia Advisory Team
6. Some closing humor.

Wilsonia Historic District Trust



Cabin on the Rock, Manzanita Lane
Illustration courtesy artist Jana Botkin

WHO IS WHDT? - Members are elected at the start of their tenure; officers are elected annually.

Drew Sorensen (President since 2014) - I have been visiting Wilsonia since 1955 when my parents purchased a cabin on Hazel Lane. Leslie and I are both retired educators and live in Visalia.

Gus Collin (Vice President) - The Collin Family has owned their cabin (Coll Inn) since HA "Harry & Elsie" Collin Sr purchased the cabin in 1927. HA "Gus" Collin III & Barbara purchased the Nash cabin next door (Coll Inn Too) in the late '60's. Gus has spent most summers in Wilsonia since 1939. The 5th generation is now enjoying Wilsonia. Gus joined the WHDT board of directors in the mid '90s and served as President from 2005-2014.

Bob Foster (Secretary) - My wife, Cordie, and I have owned a cabin in Wilsonia since 2015. We live in Three Rivers. We are retired. I worked for San Bernardino Co. Sheriff's Department and Cordie worked for CA State Dept. of Agriculture. I am a 3 year member of WHDT's Board.

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BJ (Betty Jean) Spitze (Treasurer) - Jim and I visited Wilsonia in 1971, discovered a small cabin for sale, purchased it, and have enjoyed our times in Wilsonia ever since. After a decade as a teacher, I served as the CFO of Jim's technology-focused management consulting firm. We now live on our ranch just an hour down the hill from our cabin. Having recently retired from managing the entire ranch, I still enjoy a small herd of Red Angus.

Susan Harper (Education Chair) - My great grandparents bought a lot in Wilsonia in 1919 and built a one room cabin on the corner of Lilac & Hazel. I was 3 days old for my first trip to the cabin in August of 1963. My father (Stephen Stocking) worked for the NPS and our family spent summers in Wilsonia and Cedar Grove. Don and I run our cattle ranch with our three daughters, sons-in-law, and grandchildren.

Jean Faszholz (recently retired from the Board) - My family has enjoyed the Aufweiderschen cabin behind the Clubhouse since 1944. I have organized 13 Cabin Tours, 4 Taco Dinners and am the Clubhouse Museum curator. Dave's art adorns the Clubhouse bathrooms.

Dede Virgo (recently retired from the Board, represented the Masonic Tract) - I was a young girl when my dad purchased our cabin in the Masonic Tract in 1937. I was always involved in the social activities and my husband, Gib, served as the Masonic Tract's President for several years.

Carley Metcalf (joining the Board this year) - Lyell and I purchased our cabin in 2017 on Willow Lane. We live on a cattle ranch in Squaw Valley. We are retired, Lyell from Cal Fire and me from Gottschalks.

Rick Carlstrom (joining the Board this year, will represent the Masonic Tract) - Our family's Wilsonia experience began in 1988, with my father-in-law purchasing a cabin in the Masonic tract. My wife Karen and I have been sole owners since 2005. We are both fully retired now. Karen was an educator and me a crop advisor. We and our 3 sons and families are enjoying Wilsonia more every year!

Doug Bartsch (joining the Board this year) - I have been coming to Wilsonia since my family purchased a cabin here in 1966. Susie and I live in Visalia and purchased a cabin at the corner of Manzanita and Fern Lanes in 2017. Susie is a retired teacher and very busy "Grammie", and I work for Fresno Pacific University at the Visalia campus.

Jim Spitze (Editor & Member Emeritus of the Board) - I first backpacked in the Sierra Nevada in the early 1950s and developed a permanent attachment. I'm a retired electrical engineer/computer scientist with a life-long interest in history, especially that of California.

Note - Gus Collin joined WHDT's Board ~1993 and served as its President from ~2004-2014. He will retire from the Board later this year and become a Member Emeritus. Susan Harper's father was Steve Stocking who served on WHDT's Board almost from its founding till his passing in 2014. Jim Spitze joined WHDT's Board at its founding and served as its President from 1991-2004.

The Sound System Project

As described in Drew Sorensen's letter enclosed with Issue #1, the WHDT is currently raising funds to buy a really fine, up-to-date sound system for the Wilsonia Clubhouse along with a portable version for out-of-doors events such as those held by our partner organizations in the Masonic Tract. As of 02/26/21, \$4101 of the required \$10,000 has been donated. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to this worthy cause, you may donate electronically by visiting WHDT's website www.wilsonia.org or you can write a check payable to WHDT and send it to BJ Spitze, WHDT Treasurer, 1484 S. Frankwood Ave., Sanger, CA 93657. The entire Board of Directors wants to thank all of the many folks who have thus far contributed to the sound system for the clubhouse, the portable sound system and the gift honoring Woody Smeck. The clubhouse sound system will be a fine six-speaker system with excellent video capabilities ... a modern, up-to-date facility that we have long needed. Our sincere thanks!

Tax Deductibility of Donations to the Wilsonia Historic District Trust

Article II, clause B of WHDT's Articles of Incorporation dated April 29, 1993 (and not amended since then) states: "The specific purpose of this corporation is to preserve the historic district and community of Wilsonia in Kings Canyon National Park, California through a comprehensive program of historical research and education, structures maintenance and restoration, and public participation." The words "structures maintenance" has led in the last quarter-century to several non-routine maintenance projects for our beloved Wilsonia Clubhouse. All four WHDT Treasurers since its founding in 1991 have insured conformance with this all-important clause.

As a fully compliant 501(c)3 organization, all funds donated to it - and used in keeping with its Articles of Incorporation - are tax-deductible. In theory, those funds could be used for *routine* clubhouse maintenance but that would require some form of WHDT annual dues which it has long wished to avoid. As long as WVI covers the routine stuff, WHDT should (as it has many times in the past) cover the rest and via this "separation of responsibilities" enable our cabin owners to benefit in the form of a tax deduction.

Our Park's New Superintendent

Clay Jordan is our park's new Superintendent. He comes from Great Smoky Mountains National Park along the North Carolina/Tennessee border, where he was deputy superintendent. He has been with the park service for 35 years with stints at Shenandoah National Park, Olympic National Park and others. Upon his appointment, Jordan said, "It is a dream realized to work in a place that has served for many years as a favorite vacation destination for my family and me." The Wilsonia Historic District Trust, the Wilsonia Advisory Team, Wilsonia Village Inc. and the Sierra Masonic Family Tract unite in welcoming Supr. Jordan to our lovely area. We look forward to a long and collegial relationship continuing that so well established by his predecessor, Woody Smeck.



Recommended Wilsonia Service Providers

We invite all readers to submit their recommendations. We expect this list to "grow & blossom" and to become a "go to" source. Here are the first eight:



- Estrada Tree Service, Tree Removal and Trimming, Gilbert Estrada, 559-393-3607, two quite positive recommendations.
- Mark Vetter, general contractor, numerous quite positive recommendations, 559-259-9538. He often has a waiting list.
- Paul Finck, general contractor, similar reputation to Mark Vetter, 559-358-5797. He too often has a waiting list.
- Tee Zee Painting - Many happy Wilsonia customers, Eddie Romero, 559-270-1558.
- Willies Chimney Service of Clovis, CA, 559-593-0444, good work and much less expensive than others. [might be a bit "dated" as work was done four years ago].
- The Coffee Shop at Clingan's Junction, fine scones and an excellent avocado on bagel sandwich, well worth picking up a few while en route; friendly personnel.
- Jana Botkin "I use pencil, oil paint, and murals, to make art people can understand, of places and things they love for prices that won't scare them. In other words, I do custom art and love to draw cabins. www.cabinart.net 559-561-7606
- Sequoia Outdoor Power, just off Highway 180, 0.1 mile south on Alta Ave.; repairs to outdoor gas/diesel powered lawnmowers, etc. 559-840-7174 fast, competent, friendly, inexpensive. One of the owner's sons is the *Chainsaw Artist* behind the wooden bears seen in Wilsonia.

Upcoming Events

The following are highly preliminary:



June

- Some kind of “Social” in June sponsored by the Wilsonia Advisory Team
Specific date, time and location to be determined, a **Business Meeting** of the Wilsonia Advisory Team. Meetings are open to all. See below for more information.

July

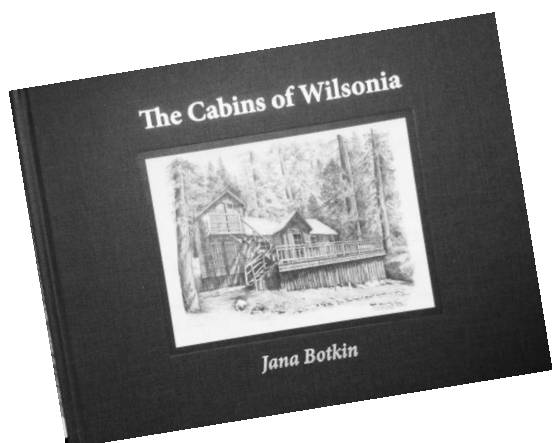
- 4th of July weekend (events on July 3rd):
 - **July 3 Special Tribute** to Woody Smeck (former Sequoia Kings Canyon National Park Superintendent, now Deputy Regional Director at National Park Service)
 - plus, we hope, the **traditional parade, ice cream social, potluck, and silent auction**
- During the summer, one or more **nature walks** sponsored by the Wilsonia Historic District Trust. Walks start from and return to the Wilsonia Clubhouse. Dates & times to be determined.
- **Book Signing with Author Jim Spitze** of the now at-the-printer first edition of *Treasures en route to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks*. Date, time, and location to be determined.

September

- Taco Night on September 4

The Wilsonia Advisory Team (Who, What, Why)

The Wilsonia Advisory Team (WAT) is comprised of representatives from the Wilsonia Village Inc. (WVI), the Masonic Family Tract, the Wilsonia Historic District Trust (WHDT) and the Sequoia-Kings National Park (SEKI). It meets every other month throughout the year. Its main goal is to keep the lines of communication open between Wilsonia and SEKI. A second function is to set up two summer meetings with SEKI in Wilsonia. Also, a yearly workplan is designed and evaluated by members. Most meetings occur in Visalia, although when possible, meetings are held in Wilsonia. Anyone may attend these meetings, either in person or calling in. If you are interested in attending, please contact Dick Moss (moss@ppeng.com) or Drew Sorensen (dsorensen102@gmail.com) and you will receive notification and any details pertinent to the meeting.



The Cabins of Wilsonia

by Artist Jana Botkin

Available now - \$50.00 (tax included)

Visit the Wilsonia Village Online Store at

<https://wilsonia-village.square.site/>

or contact Doug Bartsch 559 799-1584

A Wilsonia Family's Story

The following is from Fern Tripp's 1989 book, *Wilsonia, Yesterday, Today and Forever* (page 57):

Reflections of our family in Wilsonia Steve Stocking

Five generations of our family have enjoyed Wilsonia since my grandparents, May and W. A. Bennetts, purchased a lot from Andy Ferguson. This was one of the first lots sold, and after camping on the lot for two summers, they built the third Wilsonia cabin at the corner of Hazel and Lilac.



Cabins at Lilac and Hazel, Illustration courtesy artist Jana Botkin

My grandmother was a nurse and feared the malarial mosquitoes and other early day summer Valley problems, so she rented a livery wagon in Fresno to bring up the three children for the summer. That trip took two days.

There are many family stories: trips to the “old” Park Ridge Lookout; my uncle Roland and Aunt Elsie going on a hike to Buck Rock and Big Meadow, and my grandmother paying

“Shorty and Deak” (the lookouts) to check their progress; my uncle and friends getting in trouble for getting their Model A stuck near Rocking Rock, which did then rock. Later, of me guiding my grandfather, who rarely left the pharmacy, back to the cabin when I was only a few years old. We remember walking to the old campfire circle where government housing now is located. My sister remembers being bitten by many angry “meat wasps.” We all remember when the skunk committed suicide one winter trying to nest in our refrigerator.

Then, when I worked for the Park Service in the 1960s, we recall several trips to Fresno to have our second daughter. It is hard to forget boiling the cloth diapers on the wood stove in the “old cabin.” The cabin is larger now, and diapers are disposable, but the great-great-granddaughter of the original owners has enjoyed roughing it in Wilsonia. That is only a small part of about 70 years of family memories of Wilsonia.

The following recipe is not that unusual, but since our family got it from “Mama Fergy” (Arza Patterson Ferguson, i.e. Mrs. Andy Ferguson, Sr. of Orosi, Fresno, and Wilsonia) we think that it would be appropriate to include it. My grandmother, Mrs. W. A. Bennetts, got the recipe from Mrs. Ferguson, the wife of the “founder” of Wilsonia. The Fergusons built the first cabin in Wilsonia. My mother, Mrs. K. M. Stocking, passed the recipe on to us. It is still a favorite during the holidays.

Ice Box Rolls

Mix together:

1 yeast cake (or 1 pkg. dry yeast) in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup lukewarm water
1 cup mashed potatoes
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup shortening
2 tsp. salt
2 well-beaten eggs
1 cup scalded milk (we use instead $\frac{1}{2}$ cup
evaporated milk and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water saved from potato cooking)
6 cups flour



Knead a few times to mix if desired. Place ball of dough in greased bowl, flipping it over to grease top. Cover bowl and refrigerate overnight, at least. It keeps a week. Form into $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch balls, 3 per greased muffin pan cup. Raise $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours. Bake at 425 for 12 minutes.

The Road to Cedar Grove

The following story and the photograph following it are from the “now at the printer” book, *Treasures en route to Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks*, copies of which will be available to all Wilsonia cabin owners and their friends at a book signing party this summer. In late 1927 the concept of a road into Kings Canyon upward from where Pine Flat Dam now stands was dead and the idea of a road where one now is now, was taking shape. Based on never-before-published material from the NPS archives:



By March of 1927, the idea of a road up the canyon “from Trimmer” was largely dead, while White’s idea of a road “through Big Meadows and Summit Meadows down to Cedar Grove” was gathering steam.¹

The first survey extending the Generals Highway road from the north boundary of the Grant Grove to Cherry Gap was made in 1928; the second survey, from Cherry Gap to Cedar Grove, in 1929.

On January 10, 1929, White received a letter outlining a route proposed by District Engineer Wallace of the California State Highway Commission:

leaving north boundary of Grant Park where Hume road leaves at present, continuing to two miles along Hume road to Cherry Point; descending ridge west of this point into Indian Basin; following Indian Creek along to junction with Ten Mile Creek; following Ten Mile Creek to its mouth at Kings River; following Kings River Canyon north, passing through Cedar Grove and ending at Copper Creek [aka Kanawyers or Zumwalt Meadow].

A few other details were mentioned: the cost was estimated at \$2,500,000; a maximum grade of 7%, roadbed width of 20 feet, minimum curve radius of 300 feet (a “few places where 200 foot minimum will obtain”), with mileage of 40 miles to Copper Creek; and a completion date seven years from start of construction.

A camp of 200 convicts will commence construction early in the spring, with possibility of other camps being started later. One and possibly two tunnels of from two to four hundred feet will have to be constructed through what is known as Horseshoe Bend Country. Several bridges will also have to be constructed.

One interesting sidelight to the road’s construction is found in the following note dated April 6, 1929, from Superintendent White to Horace Albright, the new Director of the National Park Service who had succeeded Stephen T. Mather, the Park Service’s founding director, just four months earlier:

¹ The current Don Cecil Trail from the end of the Big Meadows Road at Horse Corral Meadow, through Summit Meadow, then east of Lookout Mountain, then down into Kings Canyon just west of Sheep Creek, appears to follow this route.

General Grant Park has, of course, been affected in many ways by the holdings of the Hume Lumber Company which has cut over hundreds of square miles of fine sequoia, pine, and fir timber on all sides of the park except the east side.

The Prescott Brick & Lumber Company of Fresno has now taken over the Hume property and the mill at Hume Lake which has been inactive for several years, will be put into commission.

The heavy trucking of lumber supplies, etc. through General Grant Park will increase the park travel and be added wear and tear on the roads.

It will be noted that the chief reason for putting the mill in commission again is to supply the large amount of lumber which will be necessary for construction on the Kings River Canyon highway which will pass close to Hume Lake.

Actual construction of the road from Grant Grove, first to Cedar Grove and then Zumwalt Meadow (aka "Kanawyers"), began in April of 1930. After ten years and much back-breaking work, the spring of 1940 brought success ... at least as far as Cedar Grove.



The road was immediately a great success. The lumber mill at Hume closed forever when the needs of the road construction were fulfilled. All that remains of it today are a few of the massive concrete foundations of the steam engines that powered the giant saws.

Before there was a road, there was a well constructed trail: Building the Cedar Grove Bridge in ca. 1912, William Clingan at far right, Ike Wildermuth with auger in center. (The Forest and Helen Clingan Collection).

**AND IN
CONCLUSION ...**

