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8.7K

Friday, August 20, 2004

living

Gold Mine fetes volunteers

By **DANA DUGAN**
Express Staff Writer

Down in a basement in the middle of Ketchum, women toil away, working for no money, and rarely seen. Alas, it's not a scandal. Instead, they are tireless and generous volunteers folding, marking and sorting donations for the Gold Mine Thrift Shop on Walnut Avenue.



Trudy Brohan, left, and Celia Freilich sort clothing in the basement of the Gold Mine Thrift Shop.

The volunteers have always played a huge part in the Gold Mine's success since it was started in order to help support the fledging Community Library. In 1955, the founding members of the library--Clara Spiegel, Mary Ellen Moritz and Elnora Seagle--opened the Gold Mine Thrift Shop in an abandoned miner's shack.

In 1957, the Community Library opened in the Walnut Avenue building that today is home to the Gold Mine. The library was then moved to its current Spruce Avenue site in 1976. Its main support continues to be contributions from the community, fundraisers such as last weekend's Tour of

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Extremely concerned

Very concerned

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AREA

Homes, and do-nations to the Gold Mine.

The Gold Mine, people will tell you, is where almost anything you need or want can be found. From bikes, books and clothes to sports equipment and furniture, chances are this Ketchum institution has it.

But none of it would be possible without people like Trudy Brohan. A resident of Sun Valley since 1947, Brohan, 82, has volunteered at the Gold Mine since 1959. Her dazzling smile, finely tuned sense of humor and warmth can be found in the store's basement five days a week.

She and the many other volunteers who work at the Community Library and at the Gold Mine are being feted today, Friday, Aug. 20, at an annual luncheon at the Library.

A Belgian, Brohan met her husband, William K. Brohan, during World War II when he was stationed in Belgium and then Germany in Counter Intelligence. When he returned to Sun Valley, where he was living, he asked Trudy to join and marry him.

Bill Brohan was born in Germany but had moved to the states and become an American citizen at 17 years old. He eventually became the well-known maitre d' at Sun Valley, and was in many of the movies filmed at the Lodge in the late 1940s through the 1960s. The couple also owned and ran the Jack Frost Motel in Ketchum on Fourth Street. They lived next door in a log house they built that is now where the store Burnsie's Boca is located. In 1959, their daughter Frances was born and they moved to a home just south of Ketchum. Later, they were part owners and proprietors of the Tamarack Inn.

"When I first came I couldn't speak English. We lived in the Lodge and I got a job as a food checker in the Inn," Trudy said. The cooks and bakers she worked with taught her some slang English, she remembered laughing.

"They used to tease me and tell me when I got home to ask Bill for a double sawbuck."

Egged on by fellow volunteer Judy Milazzo, who said, "And four letter words!?" Brohan recalls one night when a man called room service and asked for a Moscow Mule.

"I said, 'The front or the back?'" He came down to the kitchen. He wanted to meet me."

Brohan remembers Clara Spiegel coming to her home looking for contributions when they were just trying to start the library. "I gave her \$20. It was a lot of money in those days!"

She started working at the Gold Mine as a cashier in the original miner's cabin, but with running the motel, she ultimately didn't have the time. She became a regular volunteer, working when she could.

Years later, Spiegel asked her to join the Library Board. "She said, 'You know some people consider it an honor to be asked.'"



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Brohan laughed while reciting her response to Spiegel's invitation to join the all-women board, "I like men better."

"It takes a certain kind of man to take on all those women," Milazzo agreed, from her table where she was marking jackets.

Brohan's speech retains a lilting accent and she's apt to spell things phonetically. For instance, her daughter came to visit and noticed a sign, clearly written by her mother, over a pile of pillowcases (sometimes called pillowslips) that read Pillow Sleeps.

"I'm down in the basement now, where the next season items are," she said looking around at piles of blankets, jackets, turtlenecks and sweaters waiting to be marked. "We do have some humor here," she said while helping fellow volunteer Celia Freilich fold flannel sheets. "Never a dull moment!"

It's clear that Brohan, who also lives in Seal Beach, Calif., in the winter, loves what she does.

"I think the library is so important, more now than even years ago. The population has grown and there are so many more young children now," she said. "It was a wonderful idea to start it, now look. I'm very proud that I am part of supporting the library. It's been a long time."

On taking leave of the busy elves in the basement, I got an invitation from Trudy Brohan, accompanied by a mischievous and very devilish smile.

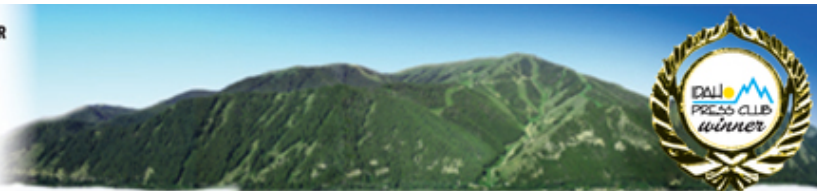
"You come more often, we tell you more stories."

8.7K

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Wednesday, September 14, 2011

OBITUARIES

Gertrude Trudy Brohan

Longtime valley resident Gertrude "Trudy" Brohan has passed away of natural causes in Long Beach, Calif. She was 89.

Trudy came to Sun Valley in 1947 as a war bride of William "Bill" Brohan, who worked as maitre d'hotel of the Sun Valley Dining Room until 1966. She was a cashier in the Sun Valley Inn during her first years in Sun Valley. Trudy and Bill purchased the Jack Frost Motel in Ketchum on Fourth Street East and Walnut Avenue in the early 1950s. The structure and the house they built next to the motel remain there today. Trudy managed the motel while Bill maintained his position in Sun Valley.



In 1959, their only child, Frances, was born. Shortly after Frances' birth, Trudy and Bill sold the Jack Frost so Trudy could spend time raising their daughter. In 1966, Bill resigned from Sun Valley, and the couple took on the management and part ownership of the Tamarack Lodge on



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AREA

Sun Valley Road. With Bill's natural charm and Trudy's outgoing and friendly nature, they successfully ran the Tamarack until Bill retired in 1975.

Trudy and Bill were avid hikers and regularly explored the Boulder and Sawtooth Mountains. Bill was an expert fisherman and Trudy became an expert chef of the trout that Bill caught, inviting their numerous friends to "fish-fry" picnics complete with sheepherder potatoes and white table cloths on the picnic tables. They had an active and rich social life through their adult lives in Sun Valley. Beside the picnics they hosted was their famous Christmas Eve "Cheers" that they started at the Tamarack for guests away from home for the holidays. It grew to include not only Tamarack guests, but also their many friends who lived or visited Sun Valley over the holidays.

After Bill's retirement and after Frances went to college, during the colder Idaho months the couple journeyed to Mulege, Mexico, where they purchased a place on the Mulege River just a short distance from the Sea of Cortez. Bill learned to ocean fish on his ponga boat while Trudy crocheted, knitted, sewed and enjoyed other crafts. As in Sun Valley, they made a huge circle of friends and continued to host and attend many gatherings. They returned to Sun Valley for the holidays and the warmer summer months.

In 1990, Bill's health precluded returning to Mexico, so they sold their place and came to Southern California to be near Frances, who lives in Long Beach. They spent a winter in Carpinteria near Santa Barbara, continuing to return to Sun Valley for the summer. The following year they chose Goleta, Calif., for the winter, where in 1991, Bill passed away suddenly. Trudy continued to stay the winters in Goleta until 1999. She then moved for the winter months to Long Beach to be near her daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren. She purchased a home in the retirement community of Leisure World.

She saw Frances and her family daily during her time in Long Beach, attending her grandchildren's recitals, games, concerts and school activities.

During all her years in Sun Valley, Trudy was an active member of Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Church. Her everyday routine was to attend the morning mass and then go on to the Gold Mine where she volunteered daily.

Trudy was born in La Calamine, Belgium, on March 26, 1922. She was the daughter of a prosperous café owner and butcher. After Belgium was occupied by Nazi Germany in 1940, her two brothers were forced into the German army. Her younger brother, Joseph, disappeared during the war. It was when the Americans liberated Belgium that she met Bill Brohan, a naturalized German-American, who was stationed in her hometown. With Bill's numerous language skills, he was an officer of the U.S. Army in counter-intelligence. After the war, Bill wrote to Trudy from Sun Valley, which had been his home since 1937 and proposed. They were married Nov. 24, 1947, in Trail Creek Cabin.

Her health prevented her from returning to Sun Valley after 2007. Pacemaker surgery in 2009 gave her another few years of life before complications from congestive heart failure claimed her on Aug. 31.

Trudy leaves behind many dear friends, including the extended Donald Siegel family, for whom she was a second mother. In addition to her daughter, Frances, she leaves



behind her beloved son-in-law Joe Gawel and two grandchildren, Isabelle (16) and Dominic (12).

A memorial mass is scheduled for Friday, Nov. 25, 2011, at 11 a.m. at Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Church in Sun Valley. A reception will follow in the church hall.

In lieu of flowers, the family is asking for donations to be made in her honor to the Hospice of the Wood River Valley, Box 4320, Ketchum, ID 83340.

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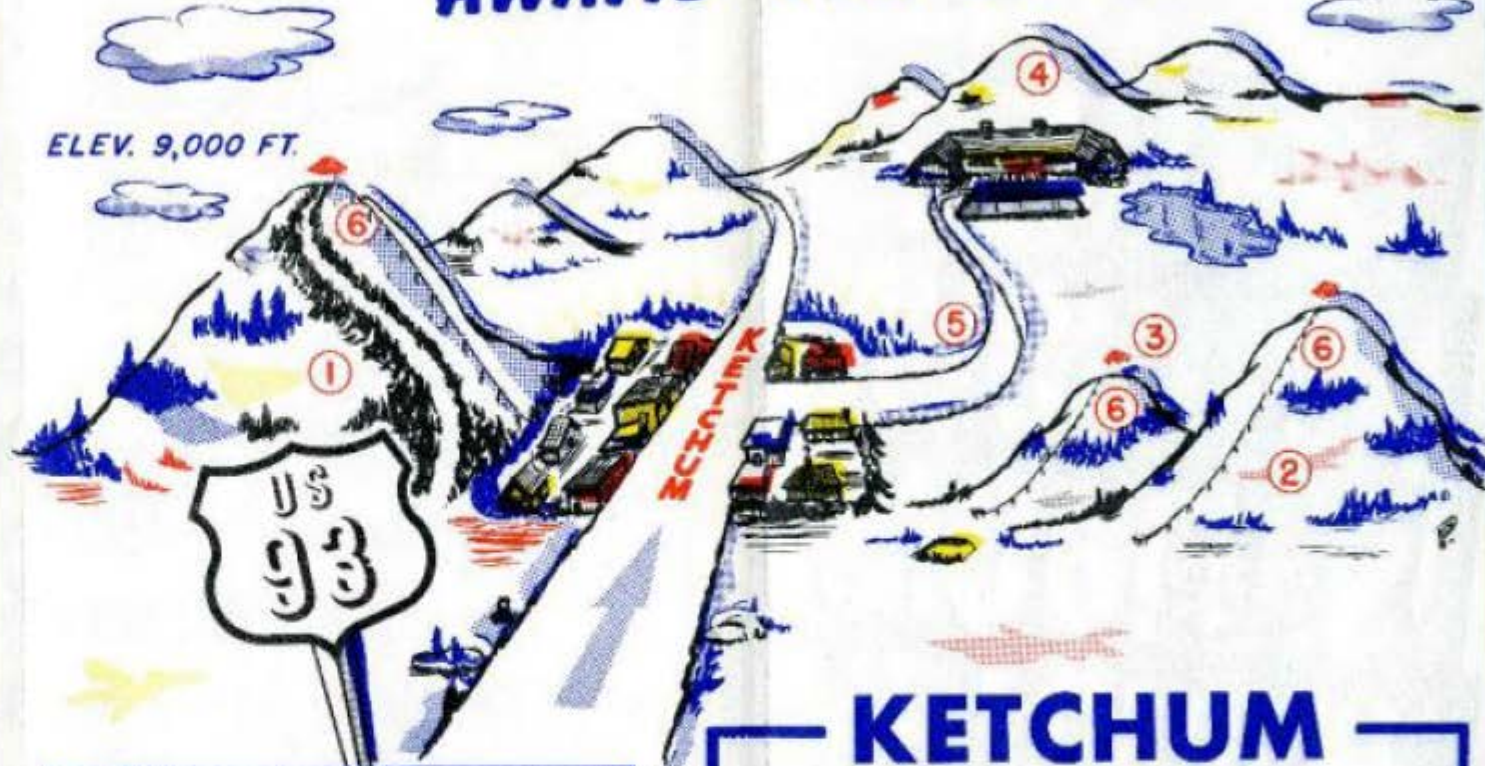
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