



Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation

May Newsletter, 2022

What Ever Happened To...

This month's subject came to light (literally) when fellow SCCBF volunteers Tim Murphy, Rick McCombs, and I (Rick Champlin) decided to clean out the storage cellar at the Old Sutter Creek Grammar School. After removing junk and trash accumulated over the years, the room's bare walls could once again be seen.



Sometime in years gone by, several children had decided to decorate the walls with their autographs scrawled in pencil. We have run across several kids' names at the school while working on a variety of construction and cleanup projects and they always sort of make you wonder, "whatever happened to..."

Sylvia Kosich

In this case, a student named Sylvia Kosich had written her name in letters large enough to be easily seen on the side wall of the cellar room.



While mildly interesting, such cases are not uncommon and none of us really thought much of it. However, sometime later it was discovered that we had in our possession a high school graduation picture of the class of 1932.



SUTTER CREEK HIGH SCHOOL PHOTOS

1932

Back Row: Homer Mannix, Gwenevere Cassella, Primo Pinotti, Olga Lugonja, Joe Vicini, Sylvia Kosich, Rey Littlefield, Danelda Rupley, Clifford Atkins, Mary Prdavica

Row 2: Aileen Barnes, Wilton Rupley, Eunice Darling, Nick Eliskovich, Edith Brown, Jack Walkmeister, Eleanor Truscott, Stanley French, Eleanor Boitano, Dominic Fustolera

Row 3: Edward Hale, Julia Fereccio, Willard Deaver, Angelina Martin, James Grillo, Lorraine Keson, Eldon Dillian, Annie Battaglia, Willard Shealor, Lowella Tallia

Row 4: Ely Kosich, Betty Merwin, Aloha Tyler, Virginia Leoni, Eva Skarich, Bessie Lugonja, X, Verna Boitano, Alberta Ferry, Charles Bonneau

Front Row: Melba Ratto, Lee Elbert, Olga Grist

Edith Brown and Eleanor Truscott are not named in the 1932 Skip (yearbook).

Names by Jackie Dunn Mosher via Facebook, and Ed and Mimi Arata checking against the 1932 Sutter Creek High Skip.

One young lady in the photograph was identified as – you guessed it – Sylvia Kosich.



This is where the “whatever happened to...” gene kicks in. Wondering if she could be traced, research began online.

Sylvia Emma Kosich was born in 1914 to Savo and Hazel Bernardis Kosich of Amador City. Sylvia’s father, Savo (born in 1888), came to Amador County from Austria and was of Croatian descent. In 1911, he met lovely young Hazel Bernardis, and in January 1912 they were married. Savo became a naturalized citizen in January of 1915 and with a good steady job at the Treasure Mine, outside of Amador City, things looked good for the young Kosich family. Sylvia’s older sister, Marie, had been

born in 1913, Sylvia came along in 1914, and mama Hazel was expecting Lois to arrive in late 1915.

In July of 1915, Savo and a partner were setting charges at the 2,000-foot level of the Treasure Mine. One charge failed to detonate so Savo went to check on it. As he reached the site, the charge went off and Savo Kosich was killed instantly.

MEETS DEATH IN TREASURE MINE

Tuesday afternoon, Savo Kosich, a miner employed at the Treasure mine at Amador City, was instantly killed by a blast while at work on the 2000 foot level.

Kosich and his partner were engaged in drilling when they struck a missed hole. The partner, whose name we were unable to learn, escaped with slight injuries.

At the coroner's inquest, held the same evening, a verdict of accidental death was returned.

It seems that Kosich had placed and fired a number of charges of dynamite. When one blast failed to go off at the proper time he went to the scene to determine the cause. Just as he reached

the scene the explosion occurred. He was considerably mangled and the top of his head was blown off.

Kosich was 31 years old and a native of Austria. The funeral took place yesterday in this city.

DIED.

TYPTON—In Jackson July 4, 1915, William Typton, a native of Indiana, aged 81 years.

KOSICH—Near Amador City, Cal., July 6, 1915, Savo Kosich, a native of Austria, aged 31 years.

[The funeral took place yesterday afternoon the body being brought to Jackson where services were held in Sabba's Servian Church by Rev. Wm. Rigby of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church.]

SHEIT—At the Amador County Hospital, in this city, July 8, 1915, George Sheit, a native of Germany, aged 78 years.

In a flash, the Kosich family became fatherless. Since he died without a will, the probate court valued the estate at \$50 (fifty dollars) plus half interest in the Old Corner Saloon in Sutter Creek (listed as Amador Cit) at \$250 (two hundred fifty dollars).

Estate of Savo Kosich deceased
Petition of Hazel C Kosich for letters
of administration filed. The petition
sets forth that deceased died July 8,
1915, at Amador City, that he left real
and personal property of about \$50, an
undivided one-half interest in the "Old
Corner" Saloon in Amador City, valued
at \$250, an interest in a mining claim,
the value is now unknown to this peti-
tioner and lot 4, block 4, in Amador
City; that the whole of the estate does
not exceed \$1400 in value; that the
heirs of deceased are: this petitioner,
Mario Kosich and Sylvia Kosich,
daughters, residing at Amador City.
Petitioner alleges decedent died intes-
tate.

A scary proposition for a pregnant 21-year-old woman with two toddlers and no immediate prospects. Somehow Sylvia and her sisters received their educations in Sutter Creek, graduating from the old grammar school and high school. It is unknown if any of the children went on to college.

On Sunday, March 31, 1935, 20-year-old Sylvia married 21-year-old Milan Ferdani of Jackson in Carson City, Nevada. Hazel Kosich (mama) had apparently remarried by this point as the Dispatch mentions the bride being given away by Mr. and Mrs. (Hazel) Fitzgerald. Sylvia and Milan were both employed – he at The Purity Store, thought to be a pharmacy/drug store at the site of today's Wierschem's Train Town on Main Street and she at Gorman's Store.

Married Last Sunday

Miss Sylvia Kosich of Sutter Creek, and Milan Ferdani of Jackson, were united in marriage last Sunday, March 31st at Carson City, Nevada.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Sam Fitzgerald and attended the local schools, being a graduate from the Sutter Creek High with the 1932 class.

The groom is employed in the Purity Store in Jackson where the young couple will reside. The newlyweds are well known throughout the county and are very popular with the younger set. They have the best wishes of all their friends for a happy married life.

Milan, however, had a rheumatic heart and on Tuesday, May 17, 1949 he did not show up for lunch as usual with Sylvia. When she could not reach him by telephone, she rushed home to find Milan unable to be revived. Bam, as he was fondly known, died of an apparent heart attack that day.

Friday, May 20, 1949

SUTTER CREEK MAN
PASSES SUDDENLY

Milon Ferdani passed away at his home in Sutter Creek Tuesday forenoon, his death coming as a shock to members of his family and friends, although the young man had been in failing health for some time. Mr. Ferdani usually joined his wife, Sylvia, in Jackson where she is employed at Gorman's Store, during the noon hour, and with his failure to arrive she attempted to contact him by phone. Failing to do so, Mrs. Ferdani left for her home in Sutter and it was there that she found her husband. Medical attention was summoned, but it was not possible to revive him. Mr. Ferdani has just recently returned after a medical checkup at the Woodland Clinic.

"Bam", as Mr. Ferdani was familiarly known to his many friends, was a native of Woodland, where he was born 35 years ago. In addition to his wife, he is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Sam Ferdani, of Kennedy Flat; four sisters, Mrs. Lena Darling of Stockton, Mrs. Kathryn Wilson, Mrs. Palmera Rule and Mrs. Mary Rimmer, all of Jackson; two brothers. Primo

Ferdani of Sutter Creek and
and Sam Ferdani of Kennedy
Flat.

The funeral services were held
on Friday morning, May 20th, at
ten o'clock, at the mortuary of
J. J. Daneri and Son, interment
following at the Jackson Cath-
olic cemetery.

In September of 1949, Sylvia began her long career with the Amador County Library System. She was appointed Assistant County Librarian by the Amador County Board of Supervisors at \$40 (forty dollars) per month.

In 1951, the widowed Sylvia Ferdani met William F. Neal, the Principal of Oleta Grammar School in Fiddletown. On March 28, 1952 the couple was married in Las Vegas, Nevada and she became Sylvia Neal. Although divorcing sometime later, she remained Sylvia Neal for the rest of her life.

Fast forward to April 1957, and Sylvia Neal was appointed Head County Librarian by the Board of Supervisors at the impressive salary of \$315 (three hundred fifteen dollars) per month. Remember, gasoline at the time was 0.22¢ (twenty-two cents) per gallon and a nice house would set you back as much as \$8,000.

Mrs. Neal spent the rest of her working life as Amador Head Librarian, not retiring until October 1993 at 79 years of age.



Soccer Donation

George Shipp, the vice president of the Mother Lode Youth Soccer League presents \$400 of instructional soccer material to county librarians Sylvia Neal and Wilma Yount in Jackson. Seven video tapes plus 21 books were donated to the library. In addition to his MLYSL duties, Shipp has taken over the head coaching position for the soccer squad at Argonaut High.

Sylvia is on the left, George Shipp in the center, and Wilma Yount on the

Sylvia Emma Kosich Ferdani Neal passed away on May 14, 2003 at 88 years and is buried in Sutter Creek's Catholic Cemetery.

PAGEA2 Friday, May 16, 2003

SYLVIA EMMA NEAL

Born in Sutter Creek and a county librarian for 43 years



Sylvia Emma Neal, 88, died on Wednesday, May 14, 2003, at Sutter Amador Hospital in Jackson.

Mrs. Neal was born on May 28, 1914, to Savo and Hazel Kosich in Sutter Creek. She attended local schools and graduated from Sutter Creek High School.

She was a lifetime resident of Amador County and worked as the librarian for the county library for 43 years. She was also a member of the Rose Society and the Friends of the Library.

She is survived by her sister, Marie Matulich of Plymouth; cousin, Jeanette Paul of San Leandro; nephews, Gerry Ninnis of Pine Grove, Ronnie Matulich of Plymouth, great-nephew, Lance Ninnis of Plymouth; great-nieces, Gerelyn Ninnis of Sutter Creek, Marcia Coppock of Camanche North Shore; great-

All in all, Sylvia lived a relatively quiet, but busy life of service to the library and her community.

My thanks to Teresa Ferdani Guidi of the Amador County Archives for her help with research for this article. Teresa is truly a fountain of information.

DONATE TODAY

Do you know someone who would like to receive our monthly newsletter? Send contact information to info@sccbf.org to be added to our distribution list.

The Historic Sutter Creek Grammar School is rich in Gold Rush history. This beautiful building is California's second oldest two-story brick schoolhouse. The Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation has restored the first and second floor making it a wonderful rental for any occasion. There are four rooms within the Historic Grammar School that can be rented.

Contact the City of Sutter Creek for information on rates and availability - (209) 267-5647 ext. 230 or email info@cityofsuttercreek.org

Whether it's a love of our heritage, a special connection to our town's diverse, deeply rooted cultures, or a desire to improve your community, every donor's passion for Sutter Creek is unique. A gift to Sutter Creek Community Benefit Foundation is the perfect way to fund your passion and watch it prosper. By connecting people who care with causes that matter, we help ensure a stronger, healthier tomorrow. We provide a simple, powerful and highly personal approach to giving. (Donations to SCCBF are received through the Amador Community Foundation.)

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