



The Scruffy Post



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A THANK YOU TO THE SPIEKERS

As the New Year rolls around, SCRFI honors Ned and Carol Spieker's contributions over the years with a tribute bench dedicated to them. They have been with us since the bell tower restoration project began in 2017. It required substantially more money than was in our bank account. These two generous souls came to our rescue, locating a structural engineer that would accept the challenge, and have been behind our work ever since. We also thank the SCRFI committee who searched long and hard for this magnificent bench – Brian Bisnett, SCRFI treasurer, and Kathy Smith, SCRFI vice-president. Thanks to Jim of All Seasons Awards in Grass Valley for helping design a bronze plaque.



Bronze plaque on the new bench east of the church



Walker Marshall of Marshall's Metal Art installed the bench.



Carol, Kit and Ned at Pioneer Day, 2017



An electric candle avoids using kerosene in the sconce.



Joe Ramus Jr. and Sr. and the chandelier

AT LONG LAST

The installation of an antique chandelier on the 23' ceiling is now complete. Kathy was responsible for locating one which best matched the original chandelier. She worked with Madison Kirkman from Luxman Lighting and Restoration Company to find one with three lamps. It was restored and electrified by Madison. Once again, we hired Joe Ramus of JR Squared Construction Co, Inc. for the installation, with his father, Joe Sr. helping him. Antique sconce lights on the side walls became a final touch to the church's new "dressed-up look", as expressed by Kit.



A rare old photo inside the church helped to guide Kathy's search for a chandelier and sconce lights.
(The pews weren't actually white, so this photo's coloration remains a puzzle.)

TWO MEMORABLE EVENTS IN SMARTSVILLE

With gratitude, SCRFI thanks Smartsville's own Tim and Mary Clark for faithfully organizing and carrying out the annual Veteran's Day Parade and Wreaths Across America. We were one of over 5,000 Wreath Across America events taking place! These traditions honor our veterans, both alive and buried. Others who work in service areas also participated, such as our local firefighters and the park ranger of Engelbright Lake, Tom Bookholtz.

The Veterans Day parade on November 11th was the largest yet, with two vehicles and three firetrucks. This is a first, as Tim has always been the only driver who brought one of his unique antique vehicles every year. We had the most Veterans Day celebrators ever, congregating before our historic church, cheering them on.



Veterans Day parade on Smartville Road (Main Street) with five vehicles – 5 times larger than ever before!

Wreaths Across America on December 13th was also a successful event, with 75 wreaths placed on veterans' headstones in our local cemeteries and a ceremonial wreath placed on the redwood tree next to the church. Progress inside the church was viewable, too. Kathy Smith, SCRFI vice-president, attended the event and saw, for the first time, the recently installed chandelier, expressing her approval in one word, "Ooooooh!"



Jeff Tuttle, American Legion Post 105, playing Taps on bugle at the Wreaths Across America ceremony

Placing a wreath at the cemeteries is a solemn occasion, with the veteran's name spoken, as well as a "thank you" for service given to our country.



Jeannie Pittman went over and above in decorating around the redwood tree, as well as getting ready for Christmas in front of the church. Thanks, Jeannie!

This article was written fifteen years ago by SCRFI's president for the Penn Valley Courier. Rodney and Pat Ivie are local residents who recently attended the Veteran's Day parade in Smartsville.

PV-39 RODNEY IVIE

"From the Big S" PV Courier column, May 2010

By Kit Burton

If you ask one of us in SCRFI, the Smartsville historic church restoration group, who of us is the most important you will probably get an answer like "we're all important." If you ask which one of us is indispensable, your answer is likely to be "Rodney Ivie."

I joined the group in 2001 and I don't remember a time when Rodney was not involved. In those early days the church had a very badly leaking roof and was slumping noticeably on the east side. We knew what had to be done: fix the roof and repair the structural damage on the bottom of the east wall. But we didn't know what to do first and, more importantly, how to do it with very little money. Rodney was instrumental in coming up with a workable solution.

Rodney has led us through the "briar patch" by developing unique construction procedures that have allowed us to continue making our restoration progress with a limited budget. He is also the person who coordinates all of our construction activities.

Although Rodney is not a life-long Smartsville resident, he is certainly not a newcomer. Born in Tulare, California, he grew up in Yuba City, attending Yuba City High School. As employees of Spence Robinson Construction out of Oroville, Rodney and his friend Robert Hereford worked on many of the same earthwork and paving projects.

As time went on, the two men were increasingly sent out together on small projects as the only two workers, so they decided in 1970 or '71 that they could just as well do these projects themselves. They formed a partnership, called it Valley Paving, and were in business together under that name for about 30 years. About the same time that Rodney and Robert formed their paving company, Rodney met Pat, his wife and mother of their four boys.

In 1979 the Ivies and the Herefords jointly purchased 60 acres of land south of Hammonton-Smartsville Road and then split the property into two 30-acre pieces. Rodney and Pat commenced work on their new house in 1982 and they moved in about 3 years later.

After the Ivies settled into their new Smartsville area home, Rodney became a member of the board of directors of the Smartsville Fire Protection and served the community for about 12 years in that capacity.

Both Pat and Rodney are now retired and Rodney generously devotes a portion of his spare time to our church restoration project. He is generally quiet, but if you listen carefully, you will frequently hear nuggets of wisdom and occasional pearls of subtle humor.

On Pioneer Day, Rodney was heard talking to a young boy inside the church. When the lad asked if any para-normal activities ever occur inside the church, Rodney replied, with a twinkle in his eye, "I haven't noticed any, but I'm only here in the daytime."

A typical display of "Rodney brilliance" is the display of 19th century carpentry he made out of waste materials from our recent foundation repair work. This remarkable museum-piece is a hands-on working example of the mortise and tenon joinery for the original church studs, floor joists, and timber sill plate. It is a fine illustration of the workmanship of early California carpenters, perhaps Smartsville's own John Rose.

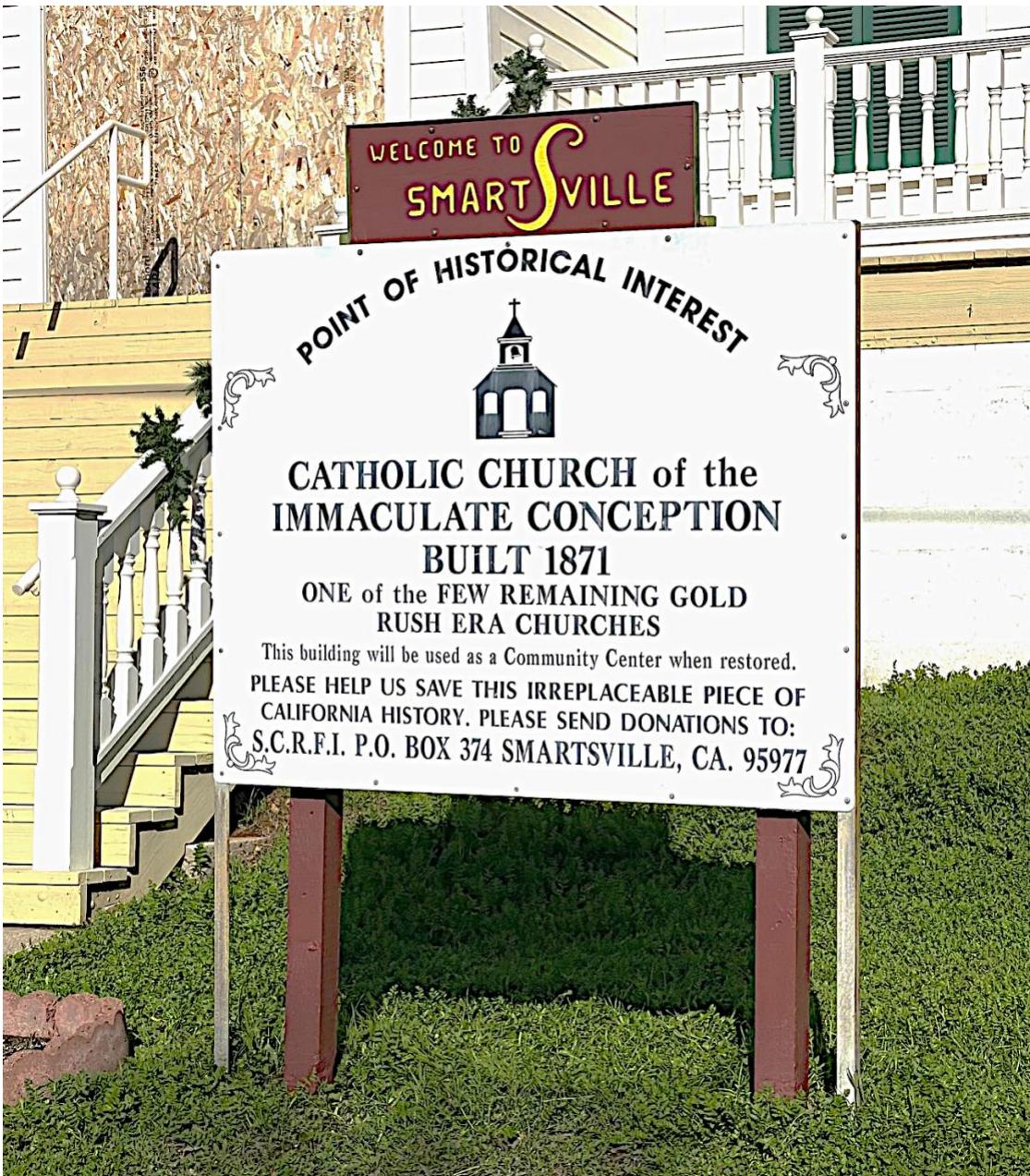
Rodney is one of those guys that you think of when you're puzzled about how something works or why it doesn't. In short, he's indispensable.



Rodney Ivie's donation boxes used at our various events



Local Smartsvillagers, including Rodney and Pat next to Kit, waiting for the Veterans Day parade on Nov. 11, 2025



Rodney made this Welcome to Smartsville sign many years ago. He also built the deck and railing seen here. Michael Carling, who does historic site sign maintenance for Friends for the Preservation of Yuba County History, repainted it.

WISHING US ALL A HAPPY NEW YEAR AND CONTINUED SCRFI SUCCESS!

This past year has been successful in multiple ways – with restoration progress on the church, events at the church and in Smartsville, and fellowship and support within our small community. Upcoming we hope to see more of the same – door installation, railing restoration, pews usable inside the church; Pioneer Day on April 25th, the Veterans Day parade November 11th, and Wreaths Across America in December.

Some of our SCRFI Board members are also members of Yuba Parlor 55 of the Native Sons of the Golden West. The Yuba Parlor has received an invitation from the Quartz Parlor of Grass Valley to participate in their 49er Days next March 20 – 22nd. They will visit Smartsville and Timbuctoo as part of their event. We'll keep you updated as to how this may involve the historic church. If you'd like to volunteer or participate, please reach out to us.

As we get closer to the completion of the original building restoration goals, we have other details to address, such as front entry weather protection from the rain, a more decorative bell tower (as it once was), and a back door which functions better. Eventually we need to figure out how to have water and a bathroom in order to allow the restored building to function as a community center, and a permanent stage for our outdoor activities. We've begun to discuss plans to sustain a fund for maintenance of the building once it's restored.

For now, we carry on and look forward to continued progress and gratefully thank YOU ALL for your support and friendship. Don't forget we're always around to show you inside the church and hear your ideas.



Save the date!