

QUICK TURNS

By Nancy O'Connell

Preserving the Past

A Conversation with Olympic Ski Museum Foundation Executive Director Jill Milne

Jill Milne is the new Executive Director of the Olympic Ski Museum Foundation. She has strong ties to the area as a long-time Squaw Valley skier with two children on the Squaw Valley Ski Team. She has contributed hundreds of hours to Tahoe-area non-profits including The Shane McConkey Foundation and arrives with 20-plus years of experience in marketing and fundraising. Quick Turns caught up with Jill between meetings to learn a little more about her and get the latest news about the museum.

QT: Tell us about your background .

JM: I've been in corporate marketing, events and fundraising for 25 years and worked in marketing at the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort. I was also at the 2002 Salt Lake City Olympic Winter Games managing Sprint's VIP program and developed the Xerox Sponsorship Program for the 2004 Athens Summer Olympics.

QT: How did you end up in Tahoe?

JM: I was working in San Francisco for a variety of tech firms and launching a series of conferences and events. I moved up here in 2006 and telecommuted from Truckee. We had a home here since 2001, and we were coming up as often as possible before moving here full-time in 2006. One day, I was in the lift line with Sherry McConkey and she asked me to come to a meeting - she had an idea about how to carry on Shane's legacy and asked me to be one of many to join her in establishing The Shane McConkey Foundation.

QT: Tell us about the scope of this project - isn't it much broader than Squaw Valley or the 1960 Winter Olympics?

JM: It's about the 1960 Winter Olympics and how that came to be, and it's also about the rich winter sports history of the Sierra Nevada region - currently there are 26 ski areas in the region, along with several that are now defunct. Most people don't know about the very first ski resort here that was planned for Rifle Peak at Stateline in 1938. It was going to be connected to the Cal-Neve hotel by an aerial tram. Wayne Poulsen, who founded Squaw Valley, did a snow survey and determined that a ski resort wasn't viable at that site. But that snow survey research became the foundation for most of the resorts that were ultimately built here. There is just so much history here and a lot that happened before and after the 1960 Olympic Winter Games.

QT: Why a museum? Why now?

JM: There is a strong need for a single location that curates and exhibits our extraordinary winter sports history, both as an educational facility and one that is entertaining as well. Squaw Valley is the only Olympic site in the world that does not have a museum. When you add that to the other amazing stories, from Snowshoe Thompson to the 10th Mountain Division - there is a lot of interesting



Towers photo courtesy Bill Briner



GREAT EXPECTATIONS: Olympic Ski Museum Foundation Executive Director Jill Milne hopes to see North Lake Tahoe/Truckee's rich snowsports history showcased for generations to come.

material here and right now, there isn't one place to discover and learn the history.

Local legends, both athletes and snow sports builders, will be honored with a Hall of Fame. Certainly, there will be some overlap with the US Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame, but there

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are also people who are so important to this region that have been overlooked. In addition, this region has produced record numbers of U.S. Ski Team and Olympic Team members - and the only other place that has numbers like that is in Steamboat Springs.

QT: Are there any other benefits to the community?

JM: The proposed facility includes a state-of-the-art events center that the community will have the opportunity to use. It has the potential to pro-

vide a venue space for longstanding organizations and events, including the Squaw Valley Institute and the Squaw Valley Community of Writers and even the Cadillac Ball. The idea is that this is for the entire community, and it's meant to be a venue that can host those events that are such an important part of the social fabric here. It would be the perfect place for a film festival, for music, arts and guest speaker series. There are so many possibilities and the goal is to really have a place with ongoing annual events and other special presentations. There is also going to be a café, which will help establish the museum as a gathering place that you come back to again and again.

QT: Where do things stand currently?

JM: We are so busy! We've been working with Keith Design Group to refine and focus the branding and marketing strategy so that it truly reflects the overall mission and vision of the museum. The architects are deep into the permit process, and we look to have new concept renderings soon.

QT: The Placer Co. Board of Supervisors awarded a \$125,000 matching funds grant to the museum foundation - what's next?

JM: The museum has received over \$80,000 and we need to raise an additional \$45,000 by June 30, 2018. This is the first big push and we really need support from the community, so we can take the next step. To donate go to olympicskimuseum.org or send a check to PO Box 2697, Olympic Valley, CA 96146 and your donation will be doubled thanks to the Placer Co. grant.

QT: What is the projected timeline?

JM: The Capital Campaign will launch in 2019 and look to break ground in 2021. Our goal is to host the Grand Opening in 2023.

QT: What are people surprised to learn about the museum project?

JM: I meet people on a regular basis who really didn't understand the scope of this project. Simply put, our mission is to preserve the Olympic and winter sports history of the Sierra Nevada Region, to share stories of the legends of winter, and to inspire generations to experience the wonder and passion of our unique mountain spirit. I also find so many people who are surprised to learn about the unique stories that really haven't been told.

QT: How can people follow the museum's progress? Is there a newsletter?

JM: Go to the website olympicskimuseum.org for news and updates and to sign up for the newsletter. Once we finalize our marketing and branding strategies, we'll also be posting our progress via social media. You can look for those updates on the website as well.

QT: How can people get involved?

JM: Contact me! You can reach me via email: Jill@OlympicSkiMuseum.org or call me at 415/254-5868