

# It's a 'many-layered thing'

## How would you tell Roslyn's unique story?

by Lyn Derrick | tribune@nkctribune.com

ROSLYN – In the outlying area, closer to Ronald, the biggest moonshine still in the state blew up in 1928.

In another incident, a fight broke out between two men standing in line waiting for their paychecks – and only one man lived to collect another week's pay.

And on April 22, 1893, Roslyn sent a huge lump of coal to the World's Fair in Chicago. The net weight of the block was 50,000 pounds.

Reading stories like these from the local history book, *Spawn of Coal Dust* kept Jim Nicholls entertained on his first night's stay in Roslyn on Sunday, Feb. 15.

The next day, in a meeting with the mayor, business owners, members of Roslyn Revitalization and other community members, Nicholls said, "It would be nice to try to tell some of those stories."

But, exactly which stories to tell will be up to the community itself said Nicholls, a University of Washington Architecture professor and Director of the university's Storefront Studio Project.

The Storefront Studio brings UW architecture students to individual communities to listen to people, do research and come up with targeted ideas to revitalize

each community.

Nicholls was in town for a preliminary group discussion about the Studio's upcoming project in Roslyn, beginning Friday and Saturday, April 3 and 4.

Those two dates cover the first of four open houses planned for the Roslyn project, which is a 'first' for the Storefront Studio said Nicholls. "This is the most historic community we've been involved with," he explained. "Usually what we do is more along the lines of a main street beautification project."

In Roslyn's case, the goal is to create a vital community where people can find jobs, while respecting the local history.

Everyone at the meeting seemed to agree that preserving area history is key to this project – but what history?

"What is the snapshot in time that we'll be working with here?" asked business owner Theresa Alexander. "There's been so many incarnations, it's hard to get all the generations to agree on what is the appropriate vision."

Selecting one vision probably isn't the answer stated Nicholls. "I don't think you'd want one period to reign," he said. "It's kind of like Thanksgiving dinner, what generation would you want to exclude from the table?"

"I see it as a many layered thing," said Jim Dawson of Dawson and Associates, "that's what makes it unique."

"My worry isn't whether we should tell this person's story or that person's story," said Nicholls, "but whether we can tell all the stories."

See **STOREFRONT STUDIO...**, page A2

## STOREFRONT STUDIO...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

Everyone agreed whatever plan develops it has to start with mining. "That's what made the town," said Nicholls, "It was a company town, more than any other

community we've been involved with, there's a real rich history to tell here."

Rich enough to move Roslyn ahead of other communities on the Storefront Studio waiting list. "It's a long

list," said Mayor Jeri Porter. "He [Nicholls] moved Roslyn right to the top."

Besides the first open house, the Storefront Studio students will set up shop on April 17 and 18, and May 15 and 16, – with a final presentation on June 8 – at 101 E. Pennsylvania Ave, Suite 2 (in the Northwest Improvement Building),

This storefront space is vital to the project. Located in the downtown, the idea is to invite members of the community to drop in, share stories and ideas, and see

what's developing as the project moves along.

Inside the studio, those stopping in will encounter students at work mapping the physical and social assets of the community, researching the history and listening to visitors.

Posted on the walls those visitors will find photography exhibits and digitized proposals of "makeovers" for buildings and streetscapes.

Besides the history of the area, students will look at other challenges like storm drainage, parking, signage, and a public art master plan – among others.

"Can you look at zoning?" Jennifer Basterrechea of Roslyn Revitalization asked Nicholls. Another challenge

according to Basterrechea is the incorporation of cottage or light industry opportunities.

Once the discussion got going, there was no lack of ideas tossed around among the group. And, that will continue to be a valued part of the process at the open houses.

"Voices like all of yours," said Nicholls, "That's what's really important."

"This is a great opportunity," said Mayor Porter. "It'll be exciting to see what our community comes up with."

For more information on the Storefront Studio Project in Roslyn contact Roslyn Revitalization at [www.roslynrevitalization.org](http://www.roslynrevitalization.org) or 509-649-3650.