

A STORIED HISTORY

Rocky time capsule had shades of '85

By James B. Meadow
ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

The present met the past on a day when there was suddenly no future.

That's a fancy way of saying that with the death knell of the *Rocky* tolling through the newsroom Thursday, the powers that be decided it might be a good time to extract the time capsule that had been sealed inside a wall when the paper moved into its new headquarters in 2005.

Just what was in that time capsule was anyone's guess — or at least anyone who cared to make a guess.

Let's just say that there wasn't exactly a throng holding its collective breath.

Good thing, too, because it took Hortencio Oregon, the building's chief engineer, about 20 minutes — and a pint of sweat — to cut the capsule from the wall and then bang, chisel, pry and bang some more before the lid of the aluminum container was popped off.

"That was the most strange job I've ever done in 25 years of doing this work," said Oregon, adding, "Before this, I didn't exactly know what a time capsule was."

Well, in the case of the *Rocky's* — anti-climactic.

Compared to what was exhumed from the *Rocky* time capsule, Geraldo Rivera's infamous opening of Al Capone's vault was like unearthing the tomb of Tutankhamen. Not that things didn't start out with hope.

Mysterious Sprinks 'was here'

Inscribed on the top of the capsule was "To be opened in April 2059 on the RMN's 200th anniversary."

Ok, it wasn't inscribed. It was scrawled with a laundry pen.

Also inked on was "Sprinks was here 669. 4-20-06." Who was this mysterious Sprinks? No one knew, but that was the last interesting thing about the capsule.

So what did Administration Editor Randall Roberts pluck from the capsule? Well, not the "dinosaur egg" he had quipped about.

First, out came some padding that looked suspiciously like wax paper.

Then a copy of the Jan. 28, 1986, *Rocky* with the Shuttle disaster. Then an unmarked videocassette on which was written "Dec. 85." It might have been a tape from Sprinks, but no one knew.

Next came a bunch of photos from November 1985, when the paper's addition at 400 W. Colfax Ave. was opened.

Along with the photos were a proclamation from then-Mayor Federico Pena declaring Nov. 20, 1985, as "RMN Headquarters Dedication Day."

Yowza.

After that, the pickings got slimmer than Nicole Ritchie. More newspapers from 1985, including a copy of the 125th anniversary edition from 1984. A *Rocky Mountain News* paper carrier's bag. A bunch of *Rocky* shirts and caps.

A copy of the Oct. 12, 1985, program from the University of Colorado-University of Missouri football game.

Be still beating heart.

Not that there weren't a few worthwhile items.

Take for instance the copies of *Stein's Way*, a collection of cartoonist Ed Stein's work, and *Morning*, columns from the late Gene Amole.



WES POPE/ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Hortencio Oregon, left, and Glenn Hansen, both from Cushman & Wakefield, open a *Rocky Mountain News* time capsule that was buried in a wall on the fifth floor of the Denver Newspaper Agency building in 2006. The time capsule was from 1985 and took about 20 minutes to remove from the wall.



JUDY DEHAAS/ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Rocky Mountain News Administration Editor Randall Roberts opens an album from the time capsule dating back to 1985 that had been buried in one of the walls of the newspaper's offices.

'I was expecting to see gold'

Oh, yeah, there was also a *Rocky* coffee mug and pen, coasters and golf balls.

There wasn't much more than that.

At least, the mystery of when the capsule had been so expertly sealed was cleared up

— 1985. Any mystery about how much money and imagination had been invested in the capsule's contents were also cleared up — not much and very little.

As the few onlookers dispersed and Oregon was cleaning up the small mess, he seemed a little bit amused by the whole ex-

perience. Turning to co-worker Glen Hanson, he said, "I was expecting to see gold come out of it."

But sometimes instead of gold what you get is lead. Especially on a day when there is suddenly no future. Probably Sprinks would have understood.