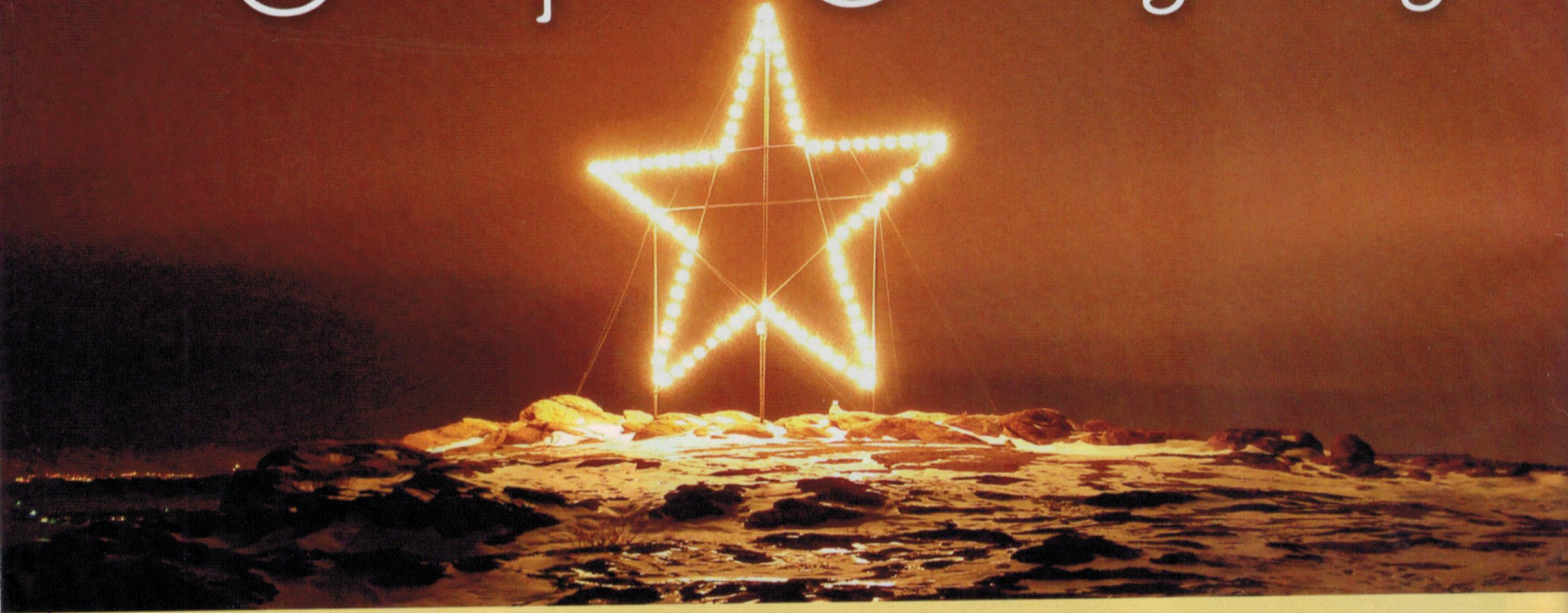


THE Story OF THE Starlighting



Eighty years ago, the country was still in the grapples of the Great Depression, morale was low and hope was fleeting. Many were out of work, the Dust Bowl saw farming communities wither and there wasn't much for people to look to for inspiration. In Castle Rock, even the beloved County Fair had only been held sporadically since 1930. The Town leaders knew people needed a boost and heard about plans in nearby Palmer Lake of building a giant star to shine over the town. Castle Rock didn't waste any time and jumped on this idea, hoping the site of the larger than life star would draw in visitors, and commerce, to Castle Rock. Once inspiration struck, things happened fairly quickly. In 1936, the owner of "The Rock", George P. Stewart, donated the land and men from the Works Progress Administration got to work designing the star. Forty foot steel rods were ordered and paid for by donations from Town Council then carried up the great rock, on foot, by volunteer Fireman. The rods were welded together with gas donated by two local businesses and the manager of a local electric company donated poles and helped string electricity to the star with wire donated by Mountain States Telephone Company. The forty foot tall masterpiece was lit with one hundred bulbs nightly from 5pm-midnight throughout the holiday season with the exception of both Christmas and New Year's Eves; when it remained illuminated throughout the night.

This tradition continued until 1941, when all available resources were being funneled into the war effort. Electric-

ity rationing didn't allow for the luxury of lighting the Star, but the structure remained as a symbol of hope. It was lit as a "V" for Victory in August of 1945, then again that Christmas and every Christmas since. Even through the energy crisis during the 1970's, the Star shone on and tradition was upheld. Just like it did during WWII, the Star was again a symbol of strength, hope and unity decades later in the weeks following September 11th; the star remained illuminated, providing a source of hope and unity over the entire community.

The tradition of a Star Lighting Ceremony has changed a bit over the years, but it always remains one of the "not-to-be-missed" events in town. 2016's Star Lighting Ceremony will include strolling entertainers, live entertainment, booths from several non-profits and of course, lots of hot chocolate. Don't forget to come ready to get in the first skate of the season at the Rink at the Rock!

Festivities will begin at 2pm with visits with Santa, Santa's Workshop and

Puppet Show at the County Building and Philip S. Miller Library. Hot Chocolate and Starlighting Ornament sales will open at the County Lawn. The Star Lighting Ceremony will start promptly at 5pm, culminating with the Star being lit at approximately 5:30pm.

Whether it's already a family tradition or you're starting a family tradition, plan on heading downtown for a holiday event unlike any other and be a part of Castle Rock's amazing history.

