

# Rainier Valley HERITAGE NEWS



Volume 19, Issue 2

Fall 2010

## First Annual Buzz Anderson Volunteer of the Year Award

At the annual meeting of the Rainier Valley Historical Society, held on April 24, the first annual Buzz Anderson Volunteer of the Year award was presented to two deserving volunteers, **Jean Bates** and **Gladys Rash**, for their long years (at least 15!) of service supporting the collections work of the society, finally "retiring" in 2009. If only we could give the award to all of our wonderful volunteers!

We were happy to recognize the following 2009 volunteers at our annual meeting: Debra Bartram, Jean Bates, Anna Bergman, Sam Carpenter, Natasha Crider, Jon Frank, Alan Humphrey, Alida Humphrey, Judy Lee, Yamile Molina, Tri Nguyen, Gladys Rash, Chelsea Rodriguez, Daniel Schirmer, Donna Schubert, John Unangst, Mikala Woodward, and Connie Yun. Those in attendance were given an RVHS lapel pin.

*Photos: Evelyn Fairchild.*



Jean Bates



Gladys Rash

## Lifetime Achievement Award



Buzz Anderson

Our founder, **Buzz Anderson** was, himself, honored this past summer with the Rainier Chamber of Commerce "John L. O'Brien Lifetime Achievement Award." This award focuses on a community member who has devoted a lifetime to the community with outstanding vision and leadership.

The award was presented to Buzz by Jeannie and Karen O'Brien at the Rainier Chamber Annual President's Lunch on June 3.

Congratulations, Buzz!

## News and Notes

### *The Back Alley Tour*

*Saturday, October 2, 11:00 a.m.  
RVHS office*

Join us for the last walking tour of the year – the Back Alleys of Columbia City! We'll look at history and architecture from a new perspective. No charge for RVHS members; \$5.00 for all others. No reservations necessary.

### *Collections Volunteer Group*

*Saturday, October 16, 10:00 a.m.–noon  
RVHS office*

Help us kick off a new year of collections projects. Our monthly work group will inventory, house, and organize our collection of photos, pamphlets and newspapers. First project: Franklin Memories! (see page 5).

### *The Sam Simone Collection*

*Saturday, October 23  
11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.*

Tour the collection of Americana amassed by Board Member Sam Simone at his Rainier Beach home. Limited to 8 RVHS members only! See page 5 for details.

### *Holiday Open House*

*Saturday, December 4, 4:00–6:00 p.m.  
RVHS office*

Join us for light refreshments, conversation, and a close-up look at our Heritage Education Project and Exhibit: Windows on Religion. All welcome.

### *Window Exhibit:*

*Franklin Memories – Sept / Oct  
Windows on Religion – Nov / Dec  
The Heart of the Valley – Jan / Feb*

### *Annual Campaign coming up November through December!*

### *Office Hours:*

*Wednesday, 2:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.  
Friday, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.  
Sunday, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.  
3710 South Ferdinand Street  
Check our voice mail (206-723-1663) for last minute changes to this schedule.*

**HONOR ROLL**

Many thanks to our members and supporters whose make our work possible! Below are those who gifts we received between March 16, 2010 and August 31, 2010. Help us keep the record straight. Send corrections or omissions to us at 206-723-1663 or [rvhsoffice@aol.com](mailto:rvhsoffice@aol.com).

**History Makers\***

Bonnie Duncan Peters  
Sara Thompson

\*History Makers are those making donations of \$250 or more in any category.

**Sponsor Memberships**

Boyd Pickrell and Ann Melone plus matching gift from US Bank

**Family and Individual Memberships**

Dennis Batt  
Frederick Brown  
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Stephen and Nancy Olsen  
Sharon Richards and Terrance Christ  
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**Donations to Operating Fund**

Dennis Batt  
Jim Creevey  
Carla Huntting  
Joanne Chetlain Johnson  
Kirsten Olsen and Greg Stumph  
Bonnie L. Riach  
Mrs. Thomas J. Sisson *in honor of her husband, Tom Sisson*

**Donations to Franklin Memories Campaign**

Franklin High Class of "'49"  
Donald E. Auker  
Gloria R. Cauble  
David Eskenazi  
Vern Farrow  
Gary Gibbon  
Nancy Hevly  
Beverly D. Huntington  
Robert and Dorothy Lee  
Mr. and Mrs. James Louvier  
Eleanor McCallum  
Barbara Ohnick  
Bonnie Duncan Peters  
Evelyn Runyan  
Helen R. Stusser  
Sara Thompson, lead gift

**In Memory of Harold Rector, Jr. (1932-2010)**

Long time RHVS board member Harold Rector, Jr. passed away on July 9, 2010. Harold was a devoted member of both our society and the Rainier Lions and will be missed by all who knew him. Grover Haynes (VP) and I attended the memorial service at the Rainier Yacht Club on Saturday, July 24, and spoke on behalf of the historical society. Board members Karen O'Brien and Teresa Anderson also attended.



Harold Rector stirring chili at Columbia City BBQ Cook-Off, August 2001. Photo: RVHS.

For many years Harold's father operated a women's clothing store on the east side of Rainier Avenue in the building that is now occupied by the Columbia City Gallery. Harold Rector, Jr. operated the men's store known as Rector's on the southwest corner of Rainier and Edmunds beginning in 1955.

I remember shopping at Rector's and appreciated that Harold offered quality merchandise and alterations. I loved not having to go downtown for everyday men's clothing and formalwear. Harold often did the alterations himself. When you saw the lights on in the room above the store, you knew Harold was there making each customer look his best with precise fitting of jackets, coats, and slacks.

Harold had an inviting store that was a pleasure to visit and he was knowledgeable in every aspect of men's fashion. His pride in his marketing savvy is

revealed in an oral history we have in which he tells many stories of the apparel business. A favorite is the tale of Harold and the Franklin High School football team:

*"I offered to take a picture of the team. I got a photographer to take a group shot and individual portraits. I put the pictures up in the window of the store with a bench, streamers, etc. Of course, all the girlfriends came to see the pictures; they were getting lipstick all over the glass. Then the parents and grandparents came in to say hello and then automatically they came back. From then on the football players all shopped there."*

Rector's continued in business for more than three decades, finally closing in 1988.

At the time of Harold's passing his family was building a retaining wall at Harold and Irene's home on Genesee Street. Harold was pleased with the wall as it beautified the hard-to-maintain steep hillside. Whenever I drive by on Genesee, I think of Harold and have, in my mind, designated the wall as Harold's Wall.

Brian Fairchild  
President, RVHS

<p><b>Rainier Valley Heritage News</b> Editor and Layout..... Teresa A. Anderson</p>	
<p><b>Rainier Valley Historical Society</b> Office location* .....3710 South Ferdinand Street Mailing address ..... PO Box 18143, Seattle, WA 98118 ..... 3710 South Ferdinand St., Seattle, WA 98118 Phone and fax..... 206-723-1663 Email ..... <a href="mailto:rvhsoffice@aol.com">rvhsoffice@aol.com</a> Website ..... <a href="http://www.rainiervalleyhistory.org">www.rainiervalleyhistory.org</a> Office hours..... Wed 2-5pm, Fri &amp; Sunday 10am-1pm RVHS Executive Director ..... Eleanor Boba  *The Rainier Valley Historical Society office is an accessible facility. Auxiliary aids and assistance are provided upon request to persons with disabilities.</p>	
<p><b>Thanks to King County for their operating support</b></p>	

## Days Gone By: Rector's Men's Shop

*Excerpts from an oral history interview with Harold Rector, conducted by Mikala Woodward, March 2, 2004.*

**Levi's, leather jackets, beachers—  
oh yes!**

It is June 1955. Harold Rector, Jr., barely in his 20s, opens Rector's Men's Shop in Columbia City. Previously owned by Gladys Koehler, the menswear business, located at 4851 Rainier Avenue, included a huge inventory of both men's and boys' clothes. Top coats, suits, sport coats, dress slacks... Shirts, shoes, hats... Enough socks to last 10 years!

Harold opened the store with a huge sale and made enough money to pay for the business in one month—and he still had a store full of merchandise. He sold off all of the shoes because he didn't intend to carry them. He sold men's shorts dating back to WWII—with drawstrings instead of elastic—for 10 cents a piece for dishcloths. He had three brands of dress shirts.



*The building that would become Rector's was constructed in the spring of 1912 at a cost of \$4,000. Photo: RVHS.*

Leather jackets? Yes, Rector's sold leather jackets, sometimes 6-8 dozen a day! \$29.95 for short, \$35 for long. Rector's was the only store in Washington and Oregon selling the jackets. When Levi's ran a full-page ad in Sports Illustrated, people came from Portland to buy them.

Rector's was an institution in Columbia City for decades. The Men's Shop survived the big transition in the 1970s and 1980s, when other businesses didn't. In 1972, Harold opened a second store in Renton. In the late 1980s, after more than 30 years in business in Columbia City, Harold closed the original store and moved everything to the Renton location.

**Best Dressed Man  
at Franklin**

**He Shops at Rector's**

**Rector's  
MEN'S SHOP**

**4851 Rainier Ave. So.**

*"I buy all my clothes  
at Rector's"*

**Fashions for  
Young Men**

**4851 Rainier Ave.  
South**

Columbia City was the hub of the district and was looked up to as the main stopping area—it was quite the "going thing." Customers were from the neighborhood and they were very devoted to Harold—once there, nothing would take them away. Because the high school football players shopped there, so did everyone else!

Rector's was a big outlet for Levi's, even though it was a smaller store. A group of similar men's stores in Seattle formed the Independent Men's Apparel Group (IMAGE) and did things as a unit. That way they could buy together and get better advertising.

Levi's were \$2.97 a pair—501s. Levi's said, "We will not sell to anyone but 'first class' establishments." Only the best department stores, like Frederick & Nelson and The Bon Marche. They wouldn't sell to Sears or J.C. Penney; they wouldn't sell to Chubby & Tubby, even though Woody wanted to carry Levi's in the worst way. The IMAGE guys were considered first class. Rector's became known as "the Levi's shop."

Harold was young enough, had young ideas, and jumped on clothing trends. His dad would often say, "What'd you buy that for?" and Harold would say, "I'll sell 'em!" The first of these were beachers. They were like Capri pants. They were a hot item, but nobody had them. Harold found them in California.

**Correction:** The proprietors of Richard's Lunch Counter, as pictured in our spring 2010 *Days Gone By*, were Ed and Elsie Richards. Elsie was misidentified.

# Windows on Religion

*"I see myself right in front of the synagogue waiting, just waiting. The doors open and I see thousands of different pictures, statues, metal plates for death and birth. The synagogue is a beautiful place for worship." — Jordan, 6th grader*



Synagogue Bikur Cholim–Machzikay Hadath

In the fall of 2008, fifty 6th grade students from the New School explored the rich tapestry of faith traditions in the Rainier Valley.

They visited houses of worship, interviewed faith leaders, took photos and video, and wrote of their experiences. The project, *Bringing World Religion Home*, was a collaboration of the Rainier Valley Historical Society, under then-director Mikala Woodward, and teachers at the New School. Its purpose was both to help children learn about the cultural history of their community and to teach techniques for gathering information in a community setting. Funding was provided by a Heritage Cultural Education grant from King County 4Culture.



Blaine Japanese Methodist Church

Bringing World Religion Home became a part of a larger curriculum piece designed by New School teacher Chris Quigley on *World Religions and Spirituality*. In the classroom, students learned about monotheism and animism, reincarnation and evangelism — the basic beliefs and historical origins of different faith traditions. Their field trips into the community allowed them to experience different religions as practiced by real people, to see how traditions from far away have been

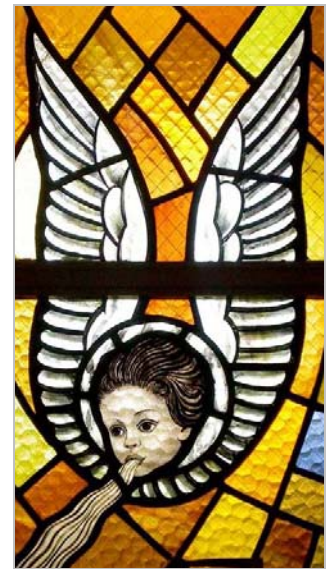
adapted in a new home, and to hear about each faith group's hope for the future.

Altogether the students visited seven faith groups throughout the Rainier Valley. In addition, they received a personal visit by members of a Haida Christian group who explained how their Native American spirituality has blended with the Christian tradition.



Buddhist Temple, Chua Duoc Su

In recent months we have posted reports from the project on our website under the title *Windows on Religion*. Here you may see photos from the field trips, read snippets of the children's work, and even download the entire curriculum. Look for it under the Sidebar heading "What We Do."



St. Edward's Catholic Church

This fall we will be bringing *Windows on Religion* to a wider audience by featuring it as our window display for the months of November and December. Our December 4 Holiday Open House will focus on the project, as well.

*All photos, New School Students.*

*Many thanks to King County 4Culture for major funding of this project.*



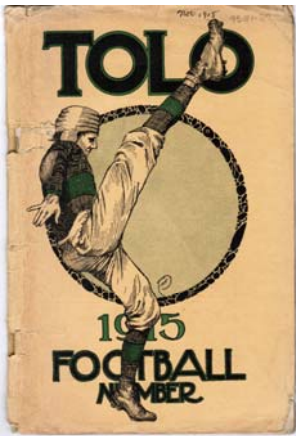
## Report from the Collection

### Collections Committee

Our Collections Committee has seen some changes in the past six months. We are now led by co-chairs Teresa Anderson and Sam Simone, while Karen O'Brien takes the third board member spot on the panel. After reviewing our collections procedures, we are now committed to growing the collection with items specific to the history of Rainier Valley as well as filling gaps in the collection including the post-WWII period and the people and communities outside Columbia City.

We also accept donations to our research and display collections. While not officially accessioned, these books, articles, and pictures are valuable aids to our ability to research and interpret the history of the valley.

### Franklin HS Memories



Over the summer a generous group of Franklin High School alumni and friends raised over \$1,000 for our Franklin Memories drive, allowing us to purchase archival supplies for our large collection of Quaker artifacts and ephemeral materials. This unique collection, much of it in a fragile state, can now be protected for posterity.

Please see the list of contributors under Honor Roll, on page 2.

### Work Group Re-grouped

We are reconvening our Collections Volunteer Work Group as a monthly event, beginning Saturday, October 16, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Our first task will be to re-house our collection of Franklin High School memorabilia in archivally-appropriate materials. If you would like to join us, please contact us at [rvhsoffice@aol.com](mailto:rvhsoffice@aol.com) or 206-723-1663.

### Additions to Archives

Recent additions to our archives:

Photos of Columbia City, Franklin High School commencement and reunion programs. Donor, Bonnie Duncan Peters.

John Muir Elementary School letter patches. Donor, Jean Bates.

Photo of Rainiers' pitcher Hal Turpin in retirement. Research Collection. Donor, Darrell and Violet Anderson.



*"The Mess Hall Girls," Woodmen Hall?, circa 1915. Photo donated by Bonnie Duncan Peters.*

### Special Event: The Sam Simone Collection

Board Member and Collections Co-Chair Sam Simone is opening his Rainier Beach home to a small group of RVHS members:

Saturday, October 23  
11:00 – 12:30

This is a chance to view Sam's extraordinary collection of Americana, amassed during a lifetime! These artifacts include political buttons, military uniforms, collectable toys and popular culture memorabilia.

*This event is limited to eight adult RVHS members.* No charge. To reserve your spot, please email [rvhsoffice@aol.com](mailto:rvhsoffice@aol.com) or phone 206-723-1663.

### Trivia Question

*"What lay beneath the sidewalk on the north side of the Toby Bldg. until the restoration of the 1970s?"*



For the answer, see our website [rainiervalleyhistory.org](http://rainiervalleyhistory.org) or join our "Back Alley Walking Tour" on Saturday, October 2.

### Rainier Beach HS Memories



Rainier Beach Junior-Senior High School opened its doors on September 7, 1960 — 50 years ago.

Today we are asking alumni and friends to unearth their artifacts, photos, yearbooks and memorabilia to expand the RVHS collection.

Don't let the Franklin Quakers take over the bookshelves and storeroom.

*Show us your Viking Spirit!*

### Support History

If you haven't joined the Rainier Valley Historical Society this year, we urge you to do so now. New memberships will run through the end of 2011. All membership dues and donations are tax-deductible within the limits of the law.

Please fill in this form and mail it with a check to:

**Rainier Valley Historical Society**  
P.O. Box 18143  
Seattle, WA 98118

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- History Maker! \$250
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\*Be sure to provide your email to receive our E-News, *Past is Present*.

We welcome additional donations to our Operating Fund.

I'd like to volunteer for:  
 Collections Work Group  
 Community Outreach  
 Special Office Projects  
 Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\*Donation in honor/memory of (please circle one): \_\_\_\_\_

[Name] \_\_\_\_\_

\*If you provide us with an address, we will be happy to send an acknowledgement of your gift.

#### Cook up some fun with our home-grown Rainier Valley Food Stories Cookbook

Books are \$15.00, including tax.  
To have your order mailed to you, add \$2.00.  
Total cookbook order: \$ \_\_\_\_\_



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