

# Rainier Valley HERITAGE NEWS

Spring 2013

## Celebrate our 20 year anniversary at our annual meeting for members and friends:

We are very excited to have noted Public Historian Lorraine McConaghy present Territorial Voices: A Civil War Reader's Theater. This is an interactive, living theater piece revealing varied opinions on race and slavery from our state's own Civil War History sponsored by Humanities Washington's Speakers Bureau.



Lorraine McConaghy

We'll also update you on our 2012 project, Remembering Garlic Gulch, recent donations to the collection, Mt Baker Community Club's 100 year anniversary and celebrate our 20 year anniversary!

As always, lunch will follow the presentation and business meeting. We will also have a Gift Shoppe and historic displays. Note the new location this year: we look forward to seeing you at the Mt Baker Community Club. This event is free and open to the public.



- Saturday, May 4, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Mt Baker Community Club**  
**2811 Mount Rainier Drive South, Seattle**
- 9:00 am Doors open for coffee, snacks and socializing**
- 10:00 am Business Meeting:**
- Board Elections
  - Finance Report
  - By Laws Amendment Vote – Banking Signatures
  - Projects & Collections Updates
  - Mt. Baker Community Club 100 year anniversary
  - RVHS 20 Year Anniversary
- 10:30 am Program:**
- Lorraine McConaghy – Territorial Voices: A Civil War Reader's Theater
- 11:30 am Lunch & Raffle**



Mount Baker Community Club



## News & Notes

**Seward Park Torii Project Meeting**  
 Tuesday, April 23 6:30-8:30 pm  
 Lakewood Seward Park Community Club – 4916 S Angeline

**Guided Walking Tours:**  
 This year's guided walking tours are scheduled for first Sundays at 11:00am, June through August. No charge for RVHS members; \$5.00 for others. Keep an eye on our website for details.

**Rainier Valley Summer Streets:**  
 Saturday, August 17 is a Picnic in the Street along Rainier! This free event opens the city's largest public space - its streets - so people can walk, bike, roll, run, skip and shop - without having to watch out for cars!

**Office Hours:**  
 Tuesday 1:00pm - 4:00pm  
 Friday 10:00am - 1:00pm  
 Sunday 10:00am - 1:00pm  
 or by appointment

**E-News:**  
 Opt-in to our monthly E-News, "Past is Present." Send your email address to news@rainiervalleyhistory.org.

Follow the latest news, announcements, and photos on our Facebook page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/rainiervalleyhistorical>

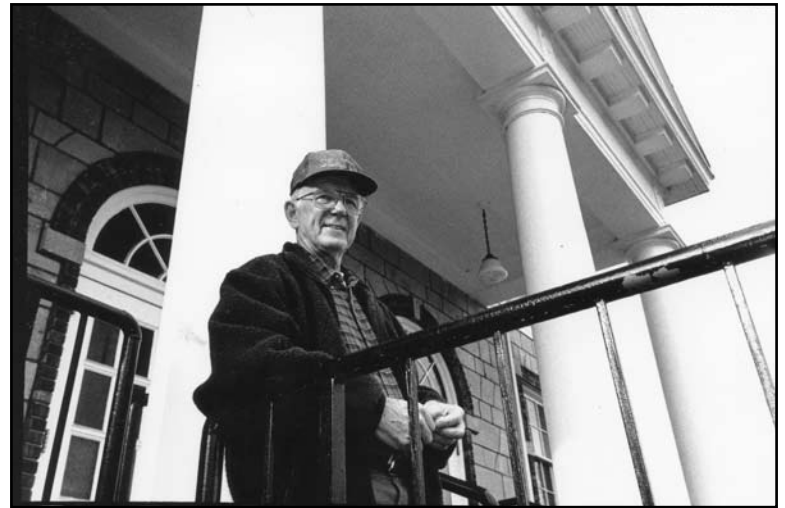
## RVHS Board of Directors

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**Emeritus Members:**  
 Marvin "Buzz" Anderson  
 Norm Chamberlain  
 Lou DeFranco  
 Claude Forward

## Buzz Anderson, Founder of RVHS

In 1891, D.W. "Will" Brown walked over Beacon Hill to the future site of Columbia City and became the first person to purchase one of the lots cleared by J. K. Edmiston. Will Brown eventually owned several lots in Columbia City and built a new brick building at 4860 Rainier Avenue in 1907. Ed Grayson rented space from Will for his funeral and furniture business. The two formed a partnership in 1916 thus establishing Grayson & Brown Hardware and Furniture business. Will's daughter Leora, the first Rainier Valley Fiesta Queen, married Arthur Anderson who quickly went to work in the family business. Arthur took over the business with a partner in the late 30s before partnering with his son, Marvin Arthur "Buzz" Anderson in the 1960s. Buzz was very active in the community including starting the Rainier District Little League in the 1950s, served as President of the Rainier Valley Chamber of Commerce, was a driving force in the Franklin High School Alumni Association, and was named a Paul Harris Fellow for Rotary International. Buzz also played a pivotal role in getting Columbia City on the National Historic Registry.



*Buzz Anderson at the Rainier Valley Cultural Center*

In 2004 Buzz was awarded Association of King County Historical Organization's Willard Jue Memorial Award, an honor given to individuals who have made outstanding contributions, provided exceptional leadership, and demonstrated excellence in duration, quality, or spirit of service.

But for Rainier Valley Historical Society, it all began with a typed memo sent out to "Anyone interested in the fascinating history of Rainier Valley" in January 1993. The first organizational meeting for the "Rainier Valley Historical Association" was scheduled by Buzz for January 9, 1993 at the Ark Temple. By the first "Charter" Annual Meeting held on May 22, 1993 we are renamed Rainier Valley Historical Society and Buzz was elected to be our first President. The rest, as they say, is history.

Buzz Anderson passed away on December 8, 2012.

**Bernice Sisson** volunteered with RVHS from the very beginning in March, 1993 as the Assistant Secretary and Committee Chair. She joined the Board in 1995 and held the office of Secretary from 1996 until 2010. She worked tirelessly for the organization on everything from membership recruitment, creating our collection database and keeping accurate records of countless Board meetings. Bernice passed away October 19, 2012. Her dedication and sparkling smile will be sorely missed.



*Bernice Sisson received the Volunteer of the Year award in 2011.*

## What does RVHS Membership mean to you?

Newsletters? Annual Meeting? Special Program Invitation? Let us tell you what your membership contributions mean to us – storage of our collection, sharing of our collection, educational programs and frankly, keeping the lights on. In summer of 2013 we are being forced to take on the substantial project of relocating the offsite portion of our collection to an alternative storage facility as we have lost the lease in our existing storage location at Columbia School.

Rainier Valley Historical Society's annual budget is currently comprised of five revenue sources: a sustaining grant from 4 Culture, memberships, donations, merchandise sales and interest & dividends earned from our endowment. We need to rely more than ever on the contributions from our members to grow.

In late 2012, RVHS embarked upon a membership drive targeted to bring 50 new members in 50 days. The campaign was moderately successful bringing in around 20 new members – we

are very grateful both to those new members receiving this newsletter for the first time and to those of you who are longtime supporters.

In 2013 RVHS will need to continue the focus on fundraising. We would ask, if you haven't already, please renew your membership with us. Your tax deductible contribution means a lot to us and allows us to continue our mission. We thank you in advance for your contributions.

In fall of 2013 we are also planning our first ever event dedicated to fundraising. Please be on the lookout for an announcement.

Many corporations have matching programs for donations to 501(3)(c) organizations. Let us know if we can help you with the paperwork.

**Trivia: As of May 23, 1923, the "Salpiglossis" was named the official flower of Rainier Valley. An annual flowering plant native to southern Chile is also known as the Painted Tongue.**

## Collections Update

### Recent additions to our Archives include:

Souvenir program of an Italian Dinner at St. Edward's Church, Kiwanis Club, 1971. Donor, Dorothy & Arthur Oberto.

Collection of original letters in support of the proposed redevelopment of the Sick Stadium site by CX Corporation, 1978. Letters signed by local businesses. Donor, Dorothy & Arthur Oberto.

Christmas greeting poster of the Seattle Rainiers from Emil Sick, undated. Donor, Lucy Salle.

Photos of Frank Orrico Barbershop; newspaper clippings about Frank Orrico, Italian chef; June 1954 edition of Lakebridge News; photo of the ribbon cutting opening of the Rainier Avenue overpass in May 1954. Donor, Eugene & Bette Orrico.

Photos of the May 1923 Rainier Valley Pageant "witnessed by approximately four thousand persons at Columbia playfield" sponsored by Rainier Valley P.T.A. Donor, Seattle Public Schools.

### Recent donations to our Research Collection include:

Vacca Family Tree: Seattle, Montreal & Calore, Italy, 2011. Donor, Sal Vacca.

## 4Culture Grants

RVHS was awarded a grant for \$1,030.00 from 4Culture's 2012 Heritage Collections Care funding program to digitize and house a portion of the recently donated Denis Law Collection and Garlic Gulch Project acquisitions. We will be working on this important project through the end of 2013.

We are also pleased to announce that 4Culture has awarded us \$5,000 for 2013 and 2014 as part of the Heritage Sustained Support program for our general operating fund.

## Highlights

The Seattle Rainiers' 1949 Christmas card included a note from owner Emil G. Sick (pictured in top circle): "With my Cordial Best Wishes for the Holidays." Also pictured (top circle to bottom) are Torchy Torrance, business manager, Earl Sheely, general manager, and Paul Richards, manager. Solid centerfielder Bill Lawrence is seated front row, fourth from left, and Hillis Layne sits middle row, third player from left, 1947 lead hitter for the Pacific Coast League with a .367 average.



Seattle Rainiers Christmas Card, 1949



Orrico Barber Shop, circa 1933

Italian-born Frank Orrico was well known in the local Italian community as barber, chef and community leader.

Orrico Barber Shop at Rainier Avenue and Atlantic Street operated for 33 years. He began cooking for family, friends and church groups in the 1930s and was known to serve 120 lbs. of pasta and 3,000 meatballs at

a single banquet. He served as president of both the Atlantic Street Community Club and Atlantic Street Businessmen's Association and was elected Grand Venerable of the Sons of Italy's Grand Lodge of the Northwest in 1959.

## Collection Moves in June

Approximately half of the RVHS collection has been stored in the former projector room in Columbia School for the past 3 years. Torah Day School has notified us that they will be unable to renew our lease, as Seattle Public Schools plans to upgrade and reopen the school in 2014 to provide an interim location for the Meany Middle School program. We plan to move the artifact, newspaper, and map collections to a temperature controlled space. The Public Storage units on MLK look promising; however, we are interested in the closest space in proximity to the RVHS office. If you have any leads to approximately 150 square feet in Columbia City, please contact Virginia, [director@rainiervalleyhistory.org](mailto:director@rainiervalleyhistory.org). Thank you.



## 2012 Treasurer's Annual Report Summary

### Operations Income

Member Dues.....	\$3,960
Sales & Fees.....	5,685
Endowment Interest.....	3,560
Annual Donations .....	5,069
King County 4Culture Sustained Support.....	9,000

**Operations Income Total..... \$27,274**

### Operations Expense

Personnel.....	\$11,120
Programs .....	1,710
Marketing/Fundraising .....	4,431
Facility .....	4,485
Administration .....	1,769

**Operations Expense Total..... \$23,515**

**Endowment Value 12/31/12 .... \$188,034**

## Facilities Update

We were pleased to accept an extensive donation of office furniture from Motricity. Their generous donation of new desks, fire proof filing cabinets, large flat screen TV, conference table and chairs provided us with an opportunity to give our office a much needed facelift! The walls have a fresh coat of paint and we created a second display window. We have also updated our equipment by purchasing a new laptop, color printer/copier and a professional grade wide format photo scanner. **Many thanks again to Motricity!**



Many thanks to **John Hirasawa** for hanging our "new" flat screen and to **Marvin Schmierer** for giving our office a fresh coat of paint!

## We have a new Executive Director!

As the newly hired Executive Director of RVHS I would like to introduce myself to all of you. My background consists of a lifelong involvement in arts, cultural history, and technology, and includes serving as Chair of the Burien Arts Commission, Technology Manager and Board President for IGNITE Worldwide, and President of the Pat Graney Company Board of Directors. In addition to my work in the nonprofit world, I have done IT support, online and offline design and development, and editorial work in the corporate world, including for Encore Media Group, publishers of the programs for all of the major performing arts organizations in Seattle, as well as City Arts Magazine.



Virginia Wright

In my new role here at RVHS I have been familiarizing myself with the collection, upgrading key components of technology in the office, clarifying policies and procedures, and re-invigorating communications and social media.

Over the next few months I will be working with the Board of Directors on several major initiatives, including relocating a large part of the collection to a different storage facility, gearing up for the Annual Meeting in May, and a project digitizing and cataloguing some significant recent acquisitions.

I am thrilled to be given this opportunity to take the helm of RVHS, and I look forward to connecting with many of you in our shared commitment to the history of this exciting collection of Seattle neighborhoods.

**Check Rainier Valley Post for a new series featuring historical photographs of buildings from our archives and photographs of the same buildings now. [www.rainiervalleypost.com](http://www.rainiervalleypost.com)**

Would you rent from these guys? We do! Many thanks to the **Rainier Lions Insight Center** for being outstanding landlords.



## Rainier Valley Heritage News

Editor and Layout .....Virginia H. Wright

## Rainier Valley Historical Society

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Website.....[www.rainiervalleyhistory.org](http://www.rainiervalleyhistory.org)

Office Hours..... Tuesday 1:00pm - 4:00pm  
Friday & Sunday 10:00am - 1:00pm

RVHS Executive Director .....Virginia H. Wright

\*The Rainier Valley Historical Society office is an accessible facility. Auxiliary aids and assistance are provided upon request to persons with disabilities.



**CULTURE**  
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**Thanks to King County for their operating support.**

**HONOR ROLL**

Many thanks to our members and supporters who make our work possible! Below are those whose gifts we received between September 1, 2012 and February 28, 2013. Contact us with any corrections or omissions: 206-723-1663 or [director@rainiervalleyhistory.org](mailto:director@rainiervalleyhistory.org).

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## Support History

If you haven't joined the Rainier Valley Historical Society this year, we urge you to do so now.  
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**

Books and memberships can also be purchased on our website: [www.rainiervalleyhistory.org](http://www.rainiervalleyhistory.org).

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