

Rainier Valley HERITAGE NEWS



Volume 19, Issue 1

Spring 2010

The Annual Meeting of the Rainier Valley Historical Society

Saturday morning, April 24, we will hold our annual meeting for members and friends, our chance to share with you our efforts and programs and to learn about your interests.

This year we will meet again at the **Lions Club Charles Lamb Memorial Hall**, next door to our Ferdinand Street office. We will hear from **former RVHS Executive Director Mikala Woodward** on the **Bringing World Religion Home** education project, which she is completing in partnership with the students and teachers of The New School. We will present updates on our collection, including new acquisitions and plans for the future.

We also look forward to hearing from **garden historian Kathy Mendelson** on the **Gardens of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition**. Designed by the Olmsted Brothers landscape firm, the 1909 AYPE gardens combined brilliant design with the best plants known at the time to create everything from lavish flower displays to an orange grove and a rice paddy. The gardens also showcased native plants of the Northwest.

This year we will present the **first annual Buzz Anderson Volunteer of the Year award**. If only we could give it to all our wonderful volunteers!

A light **lunch buffet** will follow the presentations—a chance for us to get to know each other and to hear what's on your mind!

If you have not received your personal invitation to the Annual Meeting, please contact us at 206-723-1663 or rvhsoffice@aol.com or just come on down!

Saturday, April 24, 2010
10:00 a.m. to Noon, Lunch Follows
Lions Club Charles Lamb Memorial Hall
3712 South Ferdinand Street

News and Notes

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.

E-News:

Opt-in to our E-News, Past is Present. Just send your email address to rvhsoffice@aol.com.

Volunteer Opportunities:

Community Outreach

Do you love to talk and meet new people? With summer coming up, we will have many opportunities to get out in the community. Help us represent RVHS at community events, including fairs and the Wednesday Columbia City Farmers Market. Contact Eleanor at 206-723-1663 or rvhsoffice@aol.com to discuss your interests.

Trivia Question

Test your knowledge of Rainier Valley History!

“Who are these fellows, and what is wrong with this picture?”

Find the answer on our website:
rainiervalleyhistory.org



Photo, University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, UW 15733.

Rainier Valley Days

In addition to our **Days Gone By** series of articles, we occasionally like to feature the words of citizen historians whose memories or personal research enrich the trove of historical information on the Rainier Valley.

Sharon Richards recalls growing up in the Rainier Valley in the 1940s:

When I was about four years old, my grandparents opened Richard's Lunch Counter and Donut Shop at 4903½ Rainier Avenue. Grandma fixed home-made soups and sandwiches and Grampa ran the donut machine and decorated the donuts. Once in a while my mother would come down and help the Grandparents, too. The shop was a long, narrow room with a counter and bar stools. The food preparation area I do not remember anything about, except when Grandpa put his



Ed and Lillian Richards, Richard's Lunch Counter and Donut Shop. Photo, RVHS.

donut machine in the front window and I'd stand out on the sidewalk and watch the donuts drop into the oil to cook. They would "swim" around until they were a wonderful golden brown; the smell of donuts takes me back yet today.

Today the little donut shop is Roy's BBQ.

Sal Vacca remembers the fun he had hanging out at Sick's Stadium as a lad:

[When I was 13] I took a Post Intelligencer paper route, covering from Atlantic Street all the way down to McClellan, Between Rainier Avenue and Empire Way (Now MLK Jr. Way). The last stop was Sick's Stadium; this made it mandatory for me to go collect whenever there was a game on...so the routine was "collect in the office, then stay and watch the game."

During one of those games, I ran into a neighbor boy who was working in the press box. He wanted to know if I could help him take some stuff up to the press box...why not?!

Have any of you ever been in the Seattle Rainiers press box? It was a steel ladder against the back wall, almost straight up. The box was under the roof: what a view! And then I got to meet [baseball announcer] Leo Lassen; I can still hear him... "Back, back, back..." Before long I was working every home game (I said working, but we didn't get paid). Our job was to get pop, snacks, hot dogs and buns up to the press box. We also worked the scoreboard out at centerfield and also had someone on the roof getting the balls that came up there and throwing them back behind the counter. The pay was all you could eat.

That was 1955 and some of you know that was the year the Rainiers won the Pacific Coast League championship. Fred Hutchinson had come back to Seattle as a manager. The stands were always full.

Read more from these memoirs...and others...at our Ferdinand Street office. Or tell us your own story! One way to do that is online at rainiervalleyhistory.org/stories/tell-a-story.

The Heart of the Valley

The Atlantic Street Center is celebrating its 100th anniversary serving families of the Rainier Valley and beyond. This youth-focused social service agency began life as a settlement house serving mostly Italian immigrant families in North Rainier. Over the years, ASC has expanded and refined its mission as times and peoples changed.

Today ASC serves low-income families and children at its main Atlantic Street location and at its Rainier Beach and New Holly Family Centers. Its administrative offices are located in a striking red brick building constructed in 1927.

Atlantic Street Center is just one of a number of organized charities that make the Rainier Valley their home. The valley has a long tradition of charity work, from early fraternal organizations and women's clubs, to the service clubs, churches, and large organizations that provide help for men, women, and children in need.

This spring RVHS is embarking on a project to chronicle and document the history of charity in the Rainier Valley. Watch this newsletter and our website for dispatches from "The Heart of the Valley."



Legendary Seattle Indians and Rainiers announcer Leo Lassen, "The Great Gabbo," early 1950s. Photo, David Eskenazi Collection.

Days Gone By: The Lakewood Seward Park Community Club, 100 Years Strong

Note: This month marks the 100th year of operation for the Lakewood Seward Park Community Club. Following is an excerpt of its history. To find out more about the Club's centennial, visit our website at rainiervalleyhistory.org.



Lakewood Clubhouse, 50th and Angeline St., 1930s (remodeled 1948). Photo, Washington State Archives, Puget Sound Branch, King County Assessor Property Record Cards.

Take a look at the Seward Park peninsula today and imagine what the terrain across Andrews Bay looked like 120 years ago. The woods along the west side of Lake Washington between Hudson Street on the south and what is now the Stan Sayres Pitts, and bounded by 42nd Avenue on the west, formed a triangular piece of land called Lakewood.

Guy Phinney, a wealthy lumber mill owner, purchased and platted Lakewood in 1883. By 1903, the area was booming, thanks largely to its proximity to the Seattle, Renton, and Southern Railway which ran through neighboring Columbia City. It wasn't long before the "clearings in the wilderness" were sold and pioneers from Canada, England, Sweden, Norway, and Iceland, as well as the U.S. Midwest, began removing trees for their new homes.

It soon became clear that road and trail improvements were of utmost concern. Few Lakewood residents owned automobiles at the turn of the century, and walking or traveling

by cart and horse over the hill to the city, especially at night, was less than desirable. Such transportation issues spurred the formation of an improvement club.

Canadian real estate broker Albert George Corbett presided over the first meeting of the male-only Lakewood Improvement Club in 1910; meanwhile, Henrietta McCloy called to order the first meeting of 30 women, the Lakewood Civic Improvement Club.

The groups met twice monthly; the women in the parlor of the McCloy home, and the men in a chicken coop and the Lakewood boathouse. Civic improvements included the installation of three plank sidewalks (instead of the standard two) to accommodate young families with baby carriages, the 48th Street overpass that crossed Genesee Street, and the grading of Genesee Street in 1912.

A major success was the campaign to install a shuttle streetcar line for Lakewood residents—the Genesee streetcar named the "Galloping Goose" ran on a one-track line from Hudson Street along 50th to Genesee and Rainier Avenue and back again.

Civic improvements were just one aspect of the clubs' goals. Having a social and meeting hall to host a variety of occasions was another. To that end, the "Lakewood Club House Company" sold \$5.00 shares of stock to purchase land and building materials. With volunteer power from the Lakewood and Genesee Boat Club members, the

first clubhouse in Seattle was built in 1914 at 50th and Angeline Street.

In 1929, the name of the club changed to the Lakewood Community Club to include both the men's and women's groups. The mission statement, "To unite all those whose homes and interests are in this vicinity and to work together for the development and common welfare of the community," still holds today. Seward Park neighbors joined this effort in 1979, consolidating the two neighborhoods of 6,700 residents, and the club name became the Lakewood Seward Park Community Club.

Over the past 100 years, the Club has served the welfare of its community. It has provided a meeting space for hundreds of organizations and events, including Scouts, Little League, Food Co-Op, and Candidates Night, as well as private groups. Regular events hosted by members, such as the monthly dances, the New Year's Eve Ball, picnics, potlucks, bingo, and bazaars, are remembered by many.



Lakewood Community Club members at a monthly dance 1940s (do you recognize anyone?) Photo, RVHS.

In the past year, neighbors have secured the continuation of the Club for the next generation through a membership drive, the refurbishment of the clubhouse, and the official adoption of not-for-profit 501(c)(3) status.

Stop by one of the centennial events this year; you may have a memory or two to share!

—Karen O'Brien

HONOR ROLL

Many thanks to our members and supporters who make our work possible! Below are those who gifts we received between October 1, 2009 and March 15, 2010. Help us keep the record straight. Send corrections or omissions to us at 206-723-1663 or rvhsoffice@aol.com.

History Makers*

Columbia City Revitalization Committee
Gloria Cauble
Mr. and Mrs. Brian Fairchild
Mark Hannum
King County 4Culture
Gerald Razwick
**History Makers are those who have given \$250 or more in any category.*

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DONATIONS OF GOODS AND SERVICES

Teresa A. Anderson
Burdick Security Company
DESC-Rainier House
Einstein Signs
Soreano's Plumbing

**RAINIER VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2009 TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY**

Operations Income		Operations Expense	
Member Dues	\$5,020	Personnel	\$12,271
Sales & Fees	1,416	Programs	2,516
Endowment Interest	5,000	Marketing/Fundraising	540
Annual Donations	6,057	Facility	3,445
King County 4Culture Sustained Support	9,000	Administration	4,955
Income Total	\$26,493	Expense Total	\$23,727
 2009 Donations to Endowment			
Endowment Value 12/31/09	\$1,215		
	\$176,925		
 Special Project Income		Special Project Expense	
King Co 4Culture <i>Bringing World Religion Home</i>	\$0	<i>Bringing World Religion Home</i>	\$580
King Co 4Culture <i>Everybody In</i>	2,500	<i>Everybody In</i>	2,500
King Co 4Culture Collections	2,000	Collections	1,039
King Co 4Culture Website	4,500	Website	4,800
King Co 4Culture <i>Double Exposures</i>	0	<i>Double Exposures</i>	300
Income Total	\$9,000	Expense Total	\$9,219

Note: Special Projects may run more than one year.

Thank you CCRC!

Some of you may remember the neighborhood group Columbia City Revitalization Committee. They formed in the mid 1990s and organized BeatWalk and the Columbia City Farmers Market and steered the Neighborhood Planning process. They disbanded several years ago and recently decided to donate their remaining funds to RVHS. Their \$1,400 donation will allow us to print additional copies of the Columbia City Historic Walking Tour. Thank you CCRC!

REPORT FROM THE COLLECTION


We are pleased to report that we have completed our review of collection procedures and are now actively seeking donations of photographs, documents, and artifacts relevant to the history of the Rainier Valley. In addition, they must be items we can store and steward responsibly. Our Collections Committee meets monthly to review items offered for accession and makes the hard decisions.

Additions to Archives

- Recent additions to our archives:
- SESCO Collection: Documents and slides related to the South East Seattle Community Organization. Donor, Rodney Herold.
- Franklin High School Annuals, 2008 and 2009. Donor, Franklin High School.
- Photos of Columbia City. Donor, Sharon Richards.
- Documents related to the Rainier Beach Women's Club. Donor, Rainier Beach Women's Club.

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. In this category we thank Florita Skov for a beautiful historic 1907 advertising calendar, Dorothy Allen for a copy of the History of the Rainier Beach Women's Club, and Ray Akers for two mounted Hitt's Fireworks posters.

A special thanks to member Sal Vacca, whose financial support of our work allows us to purchase items for our collection.

<p>Rainier Valley Heritage News Editor and LayoutTeresa A. Anderson</p> <p>Rainier Valley Historical Society Office location* 3710 South Ferdinand Street Mailing address.....PO Box 18143, Seattle, WA 98118 OR3710 South Ferdinand St., Seattle, WA 98118 Phone and fax 206-723-1663 Email..... rvhsoffice@aol.com Website www.rainiervalleyhistory.org Office hoursWed 2-5pm, Fri & Sunday 10am-1pm RVHS Executive Director Eleanor Boba</p> <p>*The Rainier Valley Historical Society office is an accessible facility. Auxiliary aids and assistance are provided upon request to persons with disabilities.</p>	 <p>Thanks to King County for their operating support</p>
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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. New memberships will run through the end of 2010. 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

Name _____

Address _____

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*Email _____

- History Maker! \$250
- Lifetime Member \$150
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*Be sure to provide your email to receive our new 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):

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

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To have your order mailed to you, add \$2.00.

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