

# Prairie Gazette



Summer 2017 The Official Publication of the Lakewood Historical Society

Museum: 6211 Mt. Tacoma Drive SW, Lakewood WA 98499 OPEN Wed-Sat, 12 Noon-4 pm (253) 682-3480

## One Athletic Field—Three Names

**T**hompson Field. Lakewood Stadium. Harry Lang Stadium. The name may have changed over the years—but not the fighting spirit of the Warriors of Lakewood’s Clover Park High School!

First, a bit of background: The Clover Park School District was created in 1928. Ten years later, due to the rapid expansion of Fort Lewis, Clover Park High School was established with the cornerstone of the original school laid June 28, 1938.

A photo (below) taken in 1939 on the Clover Park campus shows, from left to right, District Superintendent **Arthur Hudtloff**, **Walter J. Thompson**, **Mrs. A. S. Black**, and Thompson’s son, **Ray**.

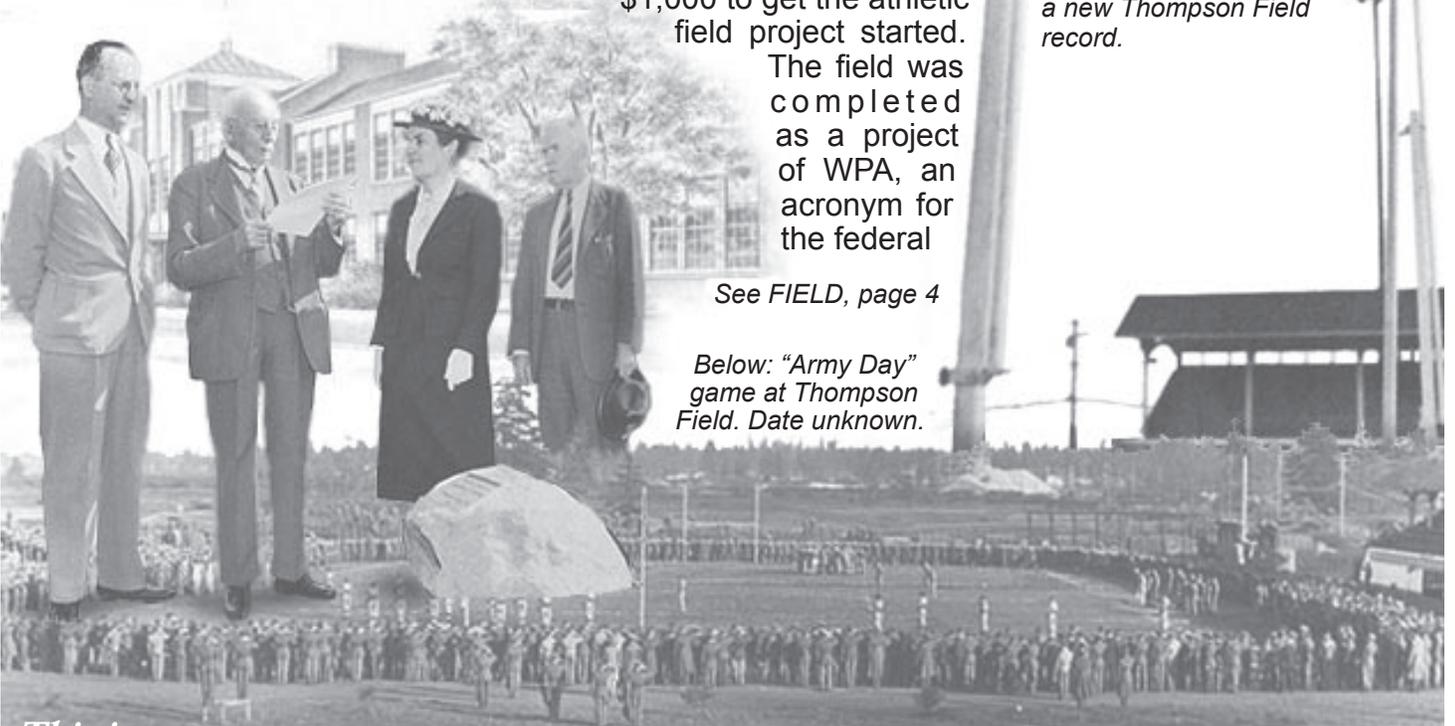
Mr. Thompson holds a copy of the notes he would use to deliver a speech on May 17, 1939, when the athletic field at Clover Park High School was to be dedicated in his name.

According to the photo’s caption, Thompson donated the initial \$1,000 to get the athletic field project started.

The field was completed as a project of WPA, an acronym for the federal

See *FIELD*, page 4

Below: “Army Day” game at Thompson Field. Date unknown.



**1957:** CPHS student athlete **Al Urbon** beats—by a quarter inch—his own pole vaulting record of 12 ft, 1 1/2”, setting a new Thompson Field record.

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### **PRAIRIE GAZETTE**

Prairie Gazette is the official publication of the Lakewood Historical Society. The newsletter is published four times a year. Distribution is directly to members and available at the Lakewood History Museum, 6211 Mt Tacoma Drive SW, Lakewood, WA 98499 • 253-682-3480

The staff of Prairie Gazette actively encourages input from the Society's members as well as the general public regarding story ideas of any other aspects of this newsletter, and the Lakewood Historical Society.

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### **MEETINGS**

The Lakewood Historical Society formed in 1998 to preserve and share Lakewood's rich history through programs, displays and publications. The Society offers frequent programs on topics of historical interest. Most programs are free and open to the public. Visit us on Facebook or our website for information on events and activities:

www.LakewoodHistorical.org

## *President's Message*

Welcome summer—nice to have some sun and warm weather after our wet winter! Lots of events going on in the area. Emma Pierce and I staffed the Lakewood Historical Society booth recently at the Lakewood Senior Center open house and enjoyed meeting lots of wonderful senior citizens. I hope you have gotten to the Lakewood Farmer's Market on Tuesdays. Look for our booth on June 20, July 11, August 15, and September 12. And we look forward to seeing everyone at SummerFest on Saturday, July 8 at Fort Steilacoom Park!

We are working on programs for the fall and winter already. If you have any ideas for a program, please contact Becky Huber or me. We do appreciate your input.

Thanks to all of those who have renewed their membership for 2017—and it is still not too late to renew! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at 253.588.6354.



*Sue Scott*

## *Manager's Musings*

Happy summer, readers! Since the last issue of the *Prairie Gazette* things have been quite busy over at the museum. There are some new updates to the museum, so be sure to stop by and check them out! We have a new exhibit called "The Flett Family's Northwest Saga," located in the Pioneer House area of the museum (see page 5). The exhibit discusses the members of the Flett family, and how they came to settle in Lakewood, and finishes with explaining how they made their livelihood.

Also this Spring, I was responsible for presenting at our April Program. My presentation outlined what I have accomplished so far at the museum, and what my plans and goals for the future entail (see page 6). If you missed out on attending the program, I would be happy to send you a copy of the presentation to keep you in the loop!

As for our upcoming events, I am thoroughly looking forward to our "Afternoon Tea" being held at Thornewood Castle later this month. It has been such a fun experience to be a part of the planning committee for this event, and I am excited to see it all put together. Stay tuned for our next issue to see pictures of the occasion. It will be a once-in-a-lifetime experience for sure!



*Emma Pierce*

# The *Prairie Gazette* Visits Colorful Mazatlan

Excited friends of the Lakewood *Prairie Gazette* “braved” the sunny skies and warm weather of Mexico to carry the latest edition of our *Prairie Gazette* newsletter to beautiful Mazatlan for the city’s annual “Carnaval” celebration.

Carnaval was officially inaugurated in Mazatlan in 1898. Although our current newsletter is not that old, it was honored to be present at the event. In other worldly locations, Carnaval is known as Mardi Gras and sometimes spelled Car-

by Phil Raschke entertainment positioned along the beautiful Mazatlan ocean front, or Malecon, and along the streets of the colorful central historic district leading to the famous Plaza Machado. And yes, it is true, Mazatlan is the shrimp and tomato capital of Mexico, so come prepared to feast on some great food.

Each Carnaval has its own

claim. Angeles’s work is now prominently displayed in the Smithsonian and numerous galleries throughout the world. Alebrijes art can be large like a parade float or



See MAZATLAN, page 10 3



Photos by Phil, Fidel and Judy.

Parkland residents Jeanie Kotrba and Doug Kotrba join Lakewood residents Beverly Raschke, Lonnie Lai, Barbara Vest, Judy Lawrence, Bob Lawrence and Phil Raschke as they proudly show off the latest issue of the *Prairie Gazette*.

nival. A key element of Carnaval is the wearing of colorful masks and costumes by both performers and guests alike.

Mazatlan’s celebration this year was held 23 - 28 February and over 500,000 Mexicanos and guests from around the world attended this colorful, festive affair which makes the event the third largest Carnaval celebration in the world.

This year’s event featured huge parades, fireworks, art walk, live music, and truly dazzling

theme and for 2017 the theme was “**Alebrijes and Dragons**”. Alebrijes is colorful Mexican folk art composed using imaginary images as well as real animal images such as bat wings, wolf teeth, cat eyes and whatever the artist wishes to use.

This popular art form was created by **Pedro Linares** of Mexico City in 1936 following an illness that caused him to hallucinate and see wild, unnatural, multi-colored creatures. Linares died in 1992, but **Jacobo Angeles** continued Linares’ work to worldwide ac-

FIELD from page 1

Works Progress Administration, a Depression era work-relief program.

One source says the field was a memorial to Thompson. In reality, it was dedicated in honor of Thompson, not in memory of him. He was still alive. However, just a bit more than 14 months after the dedication, on Aug. 3, 1940, he died at age 87 in Lakewood.

### Who was Walter James Thompson?

He was a social and civic leader, Lakewood visionary, Tacoma banker, financier, Gravelly Lake pioneer, philanthropist, and, according to *Legendary Locals of Lakewood*, an “audacious businessman.”

Born in Spring Prairie, Wisconsin, in 1853, he was a successful banker and attorney in Nebraska before coming to Tacoma in 1884. He bought the Bank of New Tacoma and changed its name to Merchants National Bank. He also founded Tacoma Savings Bank.

He had a home in Tacoma and homes in Lakewood. One source says he eventually moved out of the Tacoma house to one on Gravelly Lake.

According to the *History of Tacoma*, the Tacoma home of Thompson and his wife, **Amaryllis Thompson** (1850-1933), was frequented by intellectuals and progressives including **Julia Ward Howe**, who wrote the “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” and **Susan B. Anthony**, social reformer and women’s rights advocate.

The Thompsons were known for their personal library and collection of paintings. Thompson owned the Boatman–Ainsworth house from 1889-1939. He donated a portion of the property on which the house was located to Clover Park. That portion is the location of Thompson Field, today’s Harry Lang Stadium.

A historical marker – placed by the Lakewood Historical Society, the Lakewood Landmarks and Heritage Board and the City of Lakewood—is  
4 near the house which is across the street from

Harry Lang Stadium.

Thompson served in a variety of social and civic roles. He was a benefactor and key player in the newly established Tacoma Public Library and, in the 1880s, its president for several years.

In 1888, he was a delegate to the Republican national convention and went on to serve in the Washington Territorial lower house and Senate, where he was an active promoter of progressive agenda items including women’s suffrage.

In 1912, he quit the Republican party and joined the Progressive Party—nicknamed the “Bull

Moose Party”—created by former U.S. President **Theodore Roosevelt**.

*The Spokane Chronicle* in 1916 said he was a “well-known Bull Moose” of Pierce County. In that year, he ran for the U.S. Senate as the Progressive candidate.

In 1939 Thompson Field was built and dedicated at Clover Park High School. It was the home venue of Clover Park varsity football games. When Lakes High School opened in 1962, it became the venue of Lakes varsity football home games, too.

But time marched on and eventually there was need for a modernized stadium. That resulted in the upgrading in about 1984-1985 of Thompson Field and renaming it Lakewood Stadium.

On Aug. 21, 2001, **Harry E. Lang** died at age 83. He was a dedicated coach, teacher, principal, administrator and later a school-board member and board president in the Clover Park School District. He served the community for more than 50 years.

In September 2001, the Clover Park School Board approved a resolution to rename the facility Harry E. Lang Stadium, according to the *Tacoma News Tribune*.

On Oct. 26, 2001, before a Clover Park vs. Lakes football game, Lakewood Stadium was renamed and dedicated in honor of Lang.



*Bring it on: Harry Lang Stadium stands ready today for another exciting season of intermural combat.*

## FOOTNOTES:

Thompson's business dealings included selling homes on Lake Steilacoom and Gravelly Lake.

According to the *Seattle Times*, the change of the stadium name from Lakewood to Harry Lang "reduced confusion with the 2A school north of Everett named Lakewood." In the late 1950s or early 1960s, Pacific Northwest Bell Telephone changed Lakewood's telephone prefix from LAKewood to JUniper. One of the reasons? Because there was sometimes confusion between Lakewood (Pierce County) and Lakewood (north of Everett in Snohomish County)

Before Clover Park High School existed, students from Lakewood attended Tacoma's Stadium High School.

This story focuses on football. But the field has been and is the home of track and field, too. Thompson Field (with real grass) had a five laps to a mile cinder track. Today's Harry Lang Stadium has an artificial turf football field and a four laps to 1600 meters synthetic all-weather track.

During the author's years (1963-1966) as a Lakes High student, when the Lancers initially played football on Clover Park's Thompson Field, scoreboard signage proclaimed the field "Home of the Warriors." Thanks to a sign-maker grandfather of a Lakes student, a "Home of the Lancers" sign was made. It was displayed over the Warriors sign during Lakes home football games.

Sources for this story include, first and foremost, the amazing Lakewood history books by **Steve Dunkelberger** and **Walter Neary: *Images of America: Lakewood*** (2005) and *Legendary Locals of Lakewood* (2014). Other sources include, but are not limited to, liquidsearch.com, *Seattle Times*, *Seattle P-I*, gridironbeez.proboards.com, Wikipedia, historylink.com, *Longview Daily News*, *TNT/Tacoma News Tribune*, Southsoundtalk.com and *Spokane Daily Chronicle*, Tacoma Public Library, the *Lakewood Log*, a National Register of Historic Places nomination form, *History of Tacoma* and politicalgraveyard.com

Errors in story? If so, please send corrections to the author at [wildcatville@gmail.com](mailto:wildcatville@gmail.com)

## Come See Our New Exhibit **THE FLETT FAMILY'S NORTHWEST SAGA**



Museum Manager **Emma Pierce** adjusts photo of **John Flett** that presides over the new exhibit for which he was ultimately responsible more than 150 years ago. Words, pictures, artifacts tell the story of a pioneer dairyman, his family, and the life they led.



Not a member—or not taking *advantage* of your membership? Well...

# LOOK WHAT YOU'VE BEEN MISSING!

A few of our offerings—some public, some members only—from the past few months.

**March 28th:**

**The Life and Times of Dr. Elizabeth Drake,** Lakewood City Hall. Living historian **Karen Haas** masterfully inhabited the role of this pioneering female physician.



Right: After the performance, Karen poses with members of the “official” Lakewood Historical Society family (board members, officers, etc)—every one of whom would be delighted to see you at our next monthly program (see Calendar, pg. 12)



**Plus a real first:** Never before seen in public—photos and artifacts from the basement of Dr Drake’s Lakewood home, discovered and shared by its current owner.



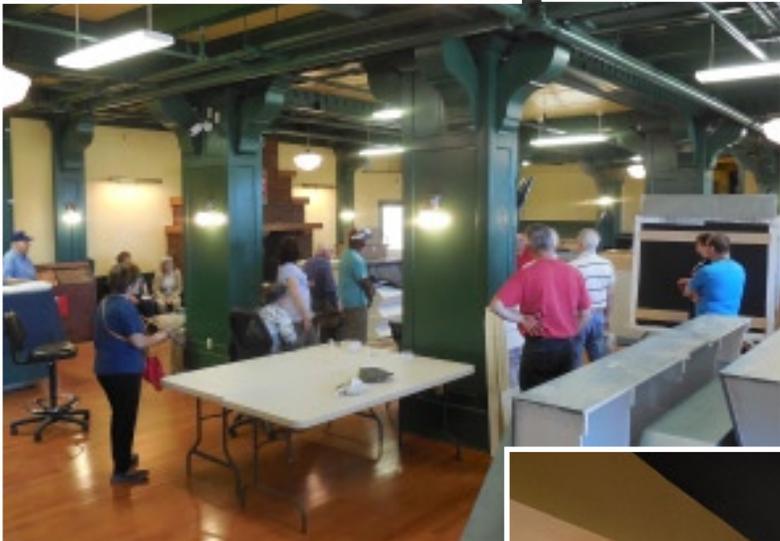
**April 25th:**

**Update on New Exhibits Planned for Lakewood History Museum,** St. Mary’s Episcopal Church. **Emma Pierce**, LHS’s first professional museum manager, filled members in on what she’s been up to in the months since her hiring. It runs the gamut—from beefing up our online presence, to pursuing sponsorships, to constructing a new exhibit (see pg 5), to...you name it.

Coming soon: “Planes, Trains, and Automobiles”, a major exhibit focusing on various modes of transportation in Lakewood over the years. **We’re looking for photos and artifacts related to the topic—if you have any, please contact Emma: 253-682-3480 or museummusings253@gmail.com**

# TOUR OF LEWIS ARMY MUSEUM

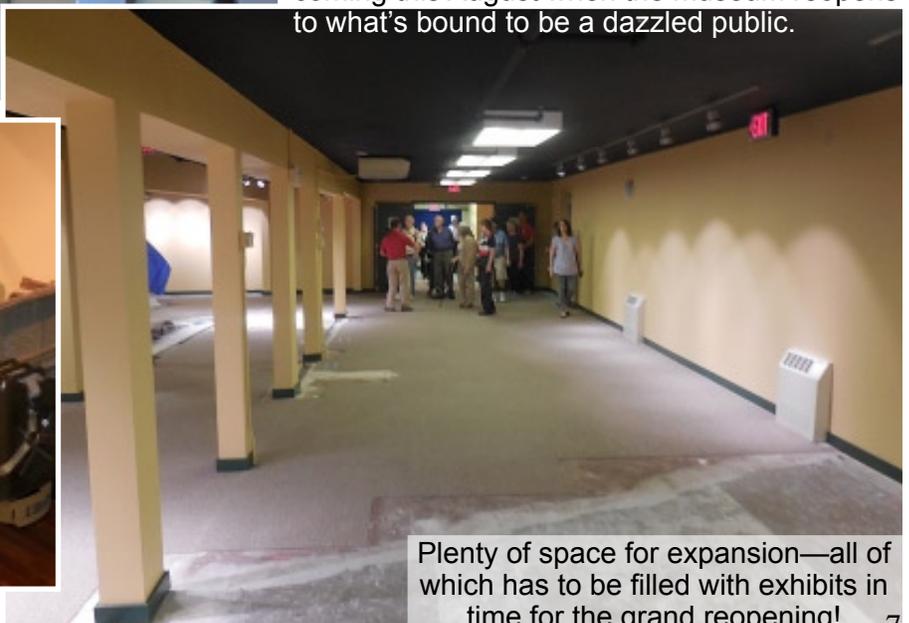
THE RED SHIELD INN  
BUILT 1918-1919  
HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE  
NATIONAL REGISTER  
OF HISTORIC PLACES  
BY THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PLAQUE DONATED BY FORT LEWIS CHAPTER  
SOCIETY OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY



LHS members got a rare treat on May 23rd—an exclusive peek at a work in progress: the complete renovation and massive expansion of Lewis Army Museum. Our tour guide, **Erik Flint** (above, standing by cannon in the “Pig War” exhibit) shared the history of the building (originally a hotel built by the Salvation Army to house family members visiting World War I-era soldiers), its days as a sometimes-neglected depository of miscellaneous military artifacts, and its bright future, coming this August when the museum reopens to what’s bound to be a dazzled public.



Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf's Jeep.



Plenty of space for expansion—all of which has to be filled with exhibits in time for the grand reopening!

# Motor Avenue—*On the Move!*



## *An Urban Design Project With Some Big Changes In Mind for Lakewood ...*

Adapted From the City of Lakewood's Website: [cityoflakewood.us](http://cityoflakewood.us)

**THE PROJECT:** The City of Lakewood is embarking on an urban design project to develop a new street corridor plan for Motor Ave SW between Whitman Ave SW and the intersection of Gravelly Lake Dr SW and Bridgeport Way SW. The project includes a "complete street" plan to create a vibrant and welcoming public space within the City's central business district.

**PROJECT GOALS:** To provide vibrant, welcoming public spaces that encourage community building and accommodate persons of all ages and demographics throughout the City's Central Business District. The overall goal is an urban design/streetscape plan that will achieve the vision of Project stakeholders and provides the following:

- ◆ Attractive, welcoming and increasingly accessible spaces that serve as public gathering places and complement a diversity of surrounding land uses
- ◆ Streetscape and public space that fosters an active pedestrian environment and serves a diversity of uses, including possible retail, office, entertainment, dining, nightlife, and/or public parks
- ◆ A functional streetscape that preserves and highlights Lakewood's history
- ◆ Streetscape designs and amenities incorporating materials that can easily be kept clean and looking like new through routine maintenance practices
- ◆ Sustainable design methods and practices that reflect a commitment to principles of environmental stewardship
- ◆ A plan that can be implemented cost-effectively and in phases



*Sketch of affected area. The **Prairie Gazette** will keep you posted on timelines and future developments.*

In addition to a broad review of streetscape conditions and associated plans, the City notes several areas of emphasis, including:

- ◆ The redesign of Motor Avenue SW into a flexible gathering space on evenings and weekends, including considering the site as an alternate location for a farmer's market
- ◆ Inclusion of the existing oak grove located on adjoining private property
- ◆ Impacts on traffic flow and vehicle access to adjoining businesses should the Motor Ave SW right-of-way be used, in whole or in part, as a public gathering space
- ◆ Community informational signage, including banners
- ◆ Trees and tree wells, including stormwater management features
- ◆ Improved lighting design and light poles
- ◆ Sidewalk improvements, both aesthetically and in the managing of stormwater
- ◆ Amenities such as benches, garbage and recycling receptacles

## Business Members/Sponsors

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Lakewood Hardware & Paint  
Lakewood Playhouse  
Lakewood Water District  
Mandarin Gallery  
Moon Rise Café  
Mountain View Funeral Home/  
Memorial Park  
Museum Antiques  
Northwest Properties  
Original House of Donuts  
Parkwood Property Management Inc  
Pearson Consulting  
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Print Shop of Lakewood Inc  
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Rolf's Import Auto Service  
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Sound Tax & Bookkeeping Inc  
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## Donors Since March 2017

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LTG (Ret) Bill Harrison	William & Dorothy Wickline
	Ellie Wilson
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## Welcome! New Members Since April 2017

Joan Cook	Lorna Simmons
Debbie Crawford	Linda Storer
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Welcome to  
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Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to **Lakewood Historical Society** whenever you shop on AmazonSmile.

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Spectacular dragon float.

small like a gift for a child.

On the other hand, Dragons are, well, like dragons. Check out the photos of the parade floats and you'll get the idea.

Naturally, a big feature of Carnival is the crowning of the queen and her court plus the coronation of the "King of Joy" and the traditional late afternoon bull fight featuring colorful mounted matadors on horseback.



Typically whimsical Alebrijes float

A special feature at the end of the parade is open-air buses carrying senior citizens who are delighted to wave at the huge crowds as they are escorted down the Malecon by personnel of the Mexican Navy who maintain a base in the harbor.

Next year's Carnival is set for 7-13 February and the *Prairie Gazette* hopes to make a return visit to this enchanting and historic city.



Lively Mexican bands warm up the crowd



Masked young ladies in Plaza Machaco



The Lakewood Arts Commission proudly presents the 5th annual

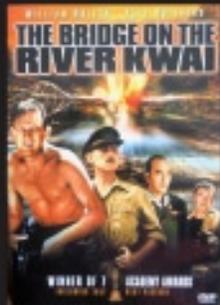
# ASIAN FILM FEST

AUGUST 11-12-13

**5 GREAT FILMS**

FREE ADMISSION

**Pierce College at Fort Steilacoom**  
 Cascade Bldg 4th Floor  
 More info: 253-861-1366  
 praschke@comcast.net  
 Music by Jeannie Hill  
 Amazing Bonsai Display  
 Juried Art and Photo Exhibit



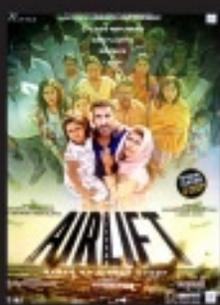
Fri August 11, 7 pm



Sat August 12, 2 pm



Sun August 13, 2 pm



Sat August 12, 7 pm

**Bridge on the River Kwai**  
 UK • Winner of Best Picture & 6 other Academy Awards

**Rabbit Proof Fence**  
 Australia • True story of aboriginal removal program

**Airlift**  
 India • Thriller based on true story of Kuwait evacuation

**Like Father, Like Son**  
 Japan • Winner Cannes, New York Film Festivals

**Neerja**  
 India • Flight attendant risks life to save passengers



Sun August 13, 7 pm

## Phil Says: “Now It’s YOUR Turn!”



Phil Raschke and his copy of the roaming *Prairie Gazette*: Today Mexico, tomorrow—up to you!

You gotta wonder—is there any place our peripatetic pal **Phil Raschke** *hasn't* been?

You probably know Phil as the host of the popular and enlightening **Historical Phil** features on KLAY radio (1180 AM on your dial)—or you may have seen his profile in the Spring 2016 issue of this newsletter, available online at lakewoodhistorical.org.

And, on the previous page, you've read Phil's most recent report from south of the border.

But did you know Phil takes a copy of the *Prairie Gazette* with him *wherever* he goes? It's true—thanks to Phil, your humble newsletter has been to more places than a fleet of tramp steamers—from the Great Wall to the Grand Tour—and beyond!

Believe it or not, though, there *are* a few locations Phil has yet to set foot in. Which brings us to our challenge to *you*, Dear Reader.

Next time you scratch that itch to travel, make sure you've got a copy of the *Gazette* tucked away in your luggage. When you reach your destination, take a photo of yourself or a companion proudly holding it up, just like Phil's doing to the left there. Make sure you include some exotic scenery in the background (or heck, doesn't have to be all *that* exotic. Who knows? Maybe Phil's never made it to, say, Missoula.)

Then send us your best shots. Post them to our Facebook page, or attach them in an email to museummusings253@gmail.com, or mail them as prints to the Lakewood Historical Society, PO Box 98014, Lakewood WA 98496.

If we like them (and it's a pretty safe bet we will) we'll feature at least one in a future issue of the *Gazette*—along with as many details about the time, place, people, etc. as you'd like to include. Not only that, but...if we *really* like it you *might* win a prize...

## COMING September 26th

### PERSHING'S LAST PATRIOT

**Frank Woodruff Buckles was the very last American witness to World War I.**

He passed away in 2011 at the age of 110—the lone survivor of the Great War from the United States. To the end of his life, Frank was an advocate for a National World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C. Sadly, Frank did not live to see the fruit of his efforts, though his supporters continue to fight for his cause.

The Lakewood Historical Society is partnering with the Lakewood Library for a **free** showing of *Pershing's Last Patriot*, a feature-length documentary film telling the full story of Buckles' fascinating life.

Join us—**6 pm, Tuesday, Sept. 26 at the Lakewood Library**—to view the 96-minute film. A discussion of the movie, World War I and the history of Camp Lewis (precursor to today's Joint Base Lewis McChord) will follow, led by noted local historian and author **Alan Archambault**.



**Lakewood  
Historical  
Society**

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## Summer 2017 Programs & Activities

**Sat, July 8th, 11 am-6 pm, SummerFEST**, Ft Steilacoom Park, Visit Society's booth, enjoy lots of activities for families and kids, food and crafts. Visit this link to learn more. [cityoflakewood.us/parks-and-recreation/summerfest](http://cityoflakewood.us/parks-and-recreation/summerfest)

**Tues. July 18th, 10 am-3 pm- Lakewood Farmers Market**, Lakewood City Hall, 6000 Main St SW. Be sure to stop by the Society booth to participate in the trivia contest and drawing.

**Tues. August 15th, 10 am-3 pm- Lakewood Farmers Market**, Lakewood City Hall, 6000 Main St SW. Be sure to stop by the Society booth to participate in the trivia contest and drawing.

**Tues. August 22nd, 4-6 pm- Picnic in the Park**, North American Lake Park. Come join the Society for a potluck, come enjoy great food and fellowship, learn more about the history of the Lake City community.

**Tues, September 12th , 10 am-3 pm- Lakewood Farmers Market**, Lakewood City Hall, 6000 Main St SW. Be sure to stop by the Society booth to participate in the trivia contest and drawing.

**Tues, September 26th, 6-8 pm- "Pershing's Last Patriot"**, Lakewood Pierce County Library, 6300 Wildaire Rd SW, viewing of documentary about Frank Woodruff Buckles, the last American veteran of WW1. Discussion following movie led by Alan Archambault, military historian.

*Find us on Facebook (Lakewood-Historical-Society-Washington-State)  
Or check our website for more information and current events: [www.lakewoodhistorical.org](http://www.lakewoodhistorical.org)*