



Prairie Gazette



THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WINTER 2012

Historic Lakewood Home Has New Owner

By Becky Huber

The Boatman-Ainsworth home is the oldest house in Lakewood and is named for its first two owners, Willis Boatman and John Ainsworth. It dates back to 1858 when Willis Boatman arrived on the South Puget Sound prairie and built a log cabin on 160 acres. He and his pregnant wife Mary Ann made the arduous overland trek on the Oregon Trail in 1852, the year with the largest migration that included settlers looking for a better life as well as those who were seeking their fortunes in the gold fields of California.

Captain John Ainsworth purchased the home from the Boatmans in 1878. He arrived in the Northwest in the 1850's as an experienced Mississippi River steamboat pilot. In 1860, he started the Oregon Steam Navigation Company and sold the business for five million dollars in 1881. He was also a prominent investor in Tacoma and was identified with bringing the Northern Pacific Railway Company to the city in 1873. He is known to have entertained the famed Civil War generals William Tecumseh Sherman and Ulysses Grant as well as other area prominent citizens. He made major changes to the home ex-

panding it to its present day appearance. The original log cabin is part of what is now the present day kitchen and dining area.

The forty-acre property was purchased by Craig and Margaret Gunter in 1971 from the family of Dwight Orr, Sr. The Gunters raised their three daughters in the home. After Craig died in 2005,



Historic Boatman-Ainsworth home

the Lakewood Historical Society was given the opportunity to consider the home as a permanent museum. However, we were in no position financially to purchase the home. Reluctantly, the offer was turned down.

When Margaret died in 2010, the daughters made the difficult decision to sell the home which the family had owned for over 40 years. On November 4th, 2011, Marjorie Thomas-Candau from Medford, New Jersey, became the sixth owner of the 2,800 sq ft

home now on the remaining one and a quarter acre property.

Even though Mrs. Thomas-Candau has yet to visit the area and see the home in person, she relied on the information provided by local family and friends to buy the home. Her current home was built in 1860 and she has developed a keen appreciation for what an older

home can offer. She plans to move to the area in the next year or two. "It's very hard to find an old home and one that's not so expensive you have to be a millionaire to be able to afford it," Thomas-Candau said. "That's something that I thought was pretty lucky."

The Boatman-Ainsworth House was placed on the State Historic Home Registry in 1974, the National Registry of Historic Places in 1982 and the City of Lakewood's Registry in 2003.

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PRAIRIE GAZETTE

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The staff of Prairie Gazette actively encourages input from the Society's members as well as the general public regarding story ideas or 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 our website for information on events and activities:

www.LakewoodHistorical.org

Newsletter Editor: **Stephen Neufeld**

President's Message

I hope everyone had a great holiday season. If this month is any indication, there are some great things in store this year for the Society. Some of the details of the events and activities are discussed elsewhere in the newsletter.

1912 was the year quite a few prominent people were born to include: Danny Thomas, Jose Ferrer, First Ladies Pat Nixon and Lady Bird Johnson, Sonja Henie, Studs Terkel, Perry Como, Sam Snead, Henry "Scoop" Jackson, Woodie Guthrie, Art Linkletter, Julia Child, Gene Kelly, Pope John Paul and Minnie Pearl. Now, if you don't know who these people are, look them up!

This is a hallmark year for quite a few events that have occurred in the nation and the world. The Mayor of Tokyo, Japan gave 3,000 cherry blossom trees to be planted in Washington, D.C. Visiting the area in April is still one of the most popular tourist seasons for the D.C. area. New Mexico became the 47th state in January and Arizona the 48th in February; on April 15th the *RMS Titanic* collided with an iceberg and sank with 1,500 people on board; the Republic of China was established; the first Bay to Breakers was run in San Francisco, CA (I "ran" the race in 1988); the first eastbound US transcontinental flight landed in Jacksonville, FL; Edgar Rice Burroughs published "Tarzan of the Apes"; and the Boston Red Sox opened Fenway Park and the Detroit Tigers opened Tiger Stadium.

In the Puget Sound region, not the least of which, was the opening of Century 21 Exposition, better known as the Seattle World's Fair,

in April, 1962. In the six months it was open over five million people visited. Because it is the 50th anniversary of the site, it will be prominently featured in the next issue of the *Prairie Gazette* and celebrated in the area. My husband, John, has his own unique memories of the Fair. He and his five friends from Elgin, Illinois traveled in a 1959 two door Chevy Impala pulling a pop-up camper. They arrived in the area in record time because all of them took turns driving the 2000 mile journey. We want to hear your personal stories and display your souvenirs from the Fair to be featured in the museum. Contact:

Becky Huber at 253-582-8682, or: craftyhubers@comcast.net

Most significant to Lakewood was the opening of the Tacoma Speedway in 1912. It started out as a five-mile road race that later became a two-mile board track where the campus of the Clover Park Technical College is currently located. The Speedway closed in 1922 when the track wore out and financial sponsorships stopped. The centennial celebration of this event will be the focus for our major fund raising event in July this year. Details coming soon!

Be sure to stop in the Lakewood History Museum in the next month if you haven't seen the Clover Park School District exhibit. It will be taken down in order to install the new exhibit.

As always, I am forever grateful for your loyalty and support. I look forward to your participation as we embark on new adventures this year.

Yours Gratefully,

Becky Huber

New Museum Exhibit Will Debut in Feb 2012

The new space in the Lakewood History Museum will display its new exhibit in February. It will tell the story of how Lakewood became a city, covering the efforts of very dedicated volunteers that finally completed a successful campaign for incorporation in 1995.

The exhibit called "**City of Lakewood: The Long Road to Incorporation**" will explore the process taken since 1971 when the first failed attempt occurred, losing by a wide margin in our community of 17,000 at that time.

The second attempt was held in 1991 and also failed. The third attempt in 1994 lost by a small margin which qualified the community to hold the election the following year rather than wait three more years.

With the population now at 37,000, the final election in 1995 proved to be successful. It was primarily due to the very organized and concerted efforts of a transition team that was able to provide a vision for what cityhood could offer its citizens. Upon incorporation, Lakewood became the second largest city in Pierce County and the seventh largest in the State of Washington.

On Feb 28th, 1996 the City of Lakewood celebrated its birth with an outside ceremony at the new City Hall that had been established in People's Plaza on Gravelly Lake Drive. It included comments from various dignitaries, performances of various groups and the introduction of the first City Council with Bill Harrison elected as Mayor and Claudia Thomas as Deputy Mayor.

Meg Justus, the museum consultant who did the school district exhibit, was hired to do the new exhibit. Over the last four months, she has interviewed over 15 people and gone through boxes and boxes of records, clippings and brochures saved and donated by a number of people. T-shirts with the new city logo were provided and a number of new items have been donated.

It may seem unusual that the 17th birthday of a city would be marked by any ceremony or recognition but the Lakewood Historical Society is marking the occasion with an **Open House on Feb 25th at 1 pm** to debut the new exhibit. The decision to do it now was in large part due to the immediacy in obtaining the oral histories from the witnesses of the event before any more time had passed.

The attainment of cityhood will also be the topic covered for the regularly scheduled **Society program on February 21st at 7 pm at St Mary's Episcopal Church, 10630 Gravelly Lake Drive SW**. Presenters will include Bill Harrison, Claudia Thomas, Andie Gemon and others who played a part in the process. They will also highlight the accomplishments and



Lakewood History Museum

6211 Mount Tacoma Drive SW
253.682.3480

www.LakewoodHistorical.org

Museum Hours:
12 to 4 pm

Wednesday thru Saturday
*Group Tours arranged
by appointment*

successes that the city has attained in the last 16 years. It is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

*Thanks to all of you who
made cityhood
possible for Lakewood!*

**LAKWOOD HISTORICAL
SOCIETY AND MUSEUM
2011 MUSEUM FUND
CONTRIBUTORS**



*Lakewood History
Museum*

2011 Goal: \$25,000

for Operations, Education, Exhibits,
Programs and Community Outreach

**Actual: \$20,412 plus,
\$2,545 in Memorial gifts for
\$22,957 total from 203 donors**

City of Lakewood Lodging Tax
helps support history museum
promotions, displays & exhibits.

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*Thank You,
 Museum Fund
 Donors and Sponsors*



**LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL
 SOCIETY 2011
 FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

Beginning Cash on Hand:

Checking	\$ 1,902.28
Money Market	\$ <u>11,973.51</u>
Total	\$ 13,875.79

Income—

Grants	\$ 46,000.00
Memberships	\$ 7,545.00
Donations	\$ 13,253.00
Sponsorships	\$ 1,250.00
Memorials	\$ 2,570.00
Special Fund Raisers	\$ 8,430.00
Bank Interest	\$ 99.13
Other	\$ <u>185.00</u>
Total Income	\$ 79,332.13

Expenses—

Operations & Administration	\$ 5,912.57
Web Site	\$ 2,545.00
Contract Services	\$ 6,618.50
Insurance	\$ 1,780.00
Museum Lease	\$ 18,000.00
Museum Exhibits	\$ 4,949.61
Postage & Printing	\$ 1,784.33
Museum Annual Fund	\$ 4,444.12
Special Events	\$ 9,654.04
Marketing/Publicity	\$ <u>15,087.42</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 70,775.59

Ending Cash on Hand:

Checking	\$ 1,402.56
Money Market	\$ <u>21,029.77</u>
Total	\$ 22,432.33

Lakewood's Historic Boatman-Ainsworth Home Photographs



Top Left: The Boatman-Ainsworth Home is a
“Federal Style” farmhouse

Bottom Left: Entryway with staircase

Top Right: Front Parlor

Bottom Right: View of Mount Rainier and
backyard

Special Thanks to Steve Sloboda for photos!

Puget Sound History Hits the Air Waves

A new history segment covering local and regional history began airing on Monday, January 2nd at 9:30 am on **KLAY Radio 1180 AM**. It will broadcast Monday through Friday at 9:30 am as well as 6:30 pm on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday.

The three-minute program is narrated by "Historical Phil", better known as Phil Raschke from the Lakewood Playhouse. "They are kind of like mini history lessons," Raschke said. "To research, write it down and edit it to be three minutes has been challenging."



Phil Raschke is "On Air"

The program is sponsored by the Lakewood Historical Society as part of their expanded marketing campaign. According to Becky Huber, President of the Society, "It is exciting to use this media to promote local history. It is even more special that we are using a business right here in Lakewood. It is a great way to get people interested in local history to encourage them to visit our museums and attend our programs."

The opening show delved into some history about Fort Steilacoom. Future episodes will feature people who have played a big part in local history such as

Puyallup's Ezra Meeker and Steilacoom's Laura Belle Downey Bartlett; local sites such as the Lakewood Ice Arena and the Lakewood Theatre and local events such as the first Independence Day celebration in 1841. Ten different topics will be rotated on a random basis over the next three months.

We welcome program topic ideas to cover in a future program. Contact:

Becky Huber at 253-582-8682, or: craftyhubers@comcast.net

Phil Raschke at 253-861-1366, or: praschke@comcast.net

Pierce County Reads 2012

The Pierce County Library system will launch its fifth Pierce County READS on Feb 19th. The community one-book program will run through Friday, April 13, where the selected New York Times best selling and prize-winning author will give a free talk and book signing at Clover Park Technical College in Lakewood, at 7 p.m.

The program is premised on thousands of people in the county—mostly adults, with some high school students—reading the same book, at the same time, sharing and discussing the book, and coming together as a community.

For the fifth year, Key Bank Foundation is the major corporate sponsor of Pierce County READS. The **Lakewood Historical Society** will again be one of 19 community partners to reach individuals throughout the county to gain their involvement and engagement in this community event. Specific activities will be announced at a later date.

50th Anniversary Celebration of the Century 21 Exposition (Seattle World's Fair)

Did you attend the Century 21 Exposition, commonly known as the Seattle World's Fair on the grounds of what is the Seattle Center? Do you have old movie film or photos to share? Do you have souvenirs from that event? We want to hear from you.



The Space Needle in 1962

We would appreciate you loaning us the items for a special display at the Lakewood History Museum. We can scan photos and digitize film to share with others. Contact:

Becky Huber at 253-582-8682, or: craftyhubers@comcast.net

*Remember, the
Future becomes...
History!*



Lakewood Historical Society
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~ Programs and Events ~
Winter 2012

NO PROGRAM IN JANUARY.

Tues, Feb 18th, 7 pm-*History of the Incorporation of the City of Lakewood*, St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 10630 Gravelly Lake Dr SW, presented by former Mayor and Councilwoman, Claudia Thomas and others involved with the process.

Sat, Feb 25th, 1 pm- Debut of new exhibit, *City of Lakewood: The Long Road to Incorporation*, Lakewood History Museum, 6211 Mt Tacoma Dr SW.

Tues, Mar 20th, 7 pm-*History of the 62nd Airlift Wing at McChord Field*, presented by Dr. Robert Allen, the unit historian.

Remember, monthly meetings are held in our new location in the Parish Hall at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, 10630 Gravelly Lake Drive SW, next to the Lakewood Library.

*******Check out our website for more information and current events*****
www.LakewoodHistorical.org**