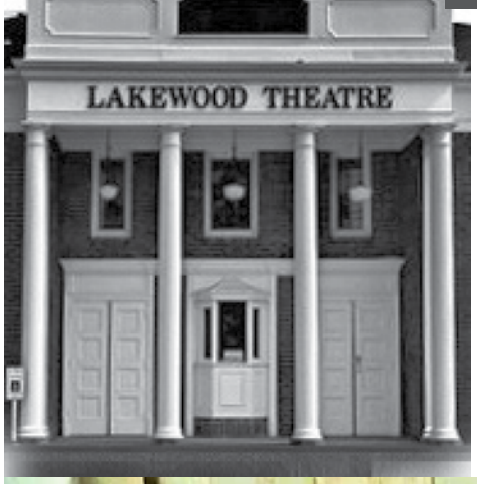
Summer • 2026 •
Prairie Gazette
Official Publication, Lakewood Historical Society



Part II: What's Under the Historic Lakewood Colonial Theater?

Story and photos by Phil Raschke

Adjacent to the well area we explored in the last issue is a large electrical distribution center that uses spring-loaded flip handles to control power to the Theatre, Dining Room, former Beauty Shop and more.

Farther down the passageway is a massive looking 1937 coal furnace that used to heat the entire complex. In front of the furnace is what looks like an oil conversion unit that was installed to upgrade the Center from coal to oil heating, prior to the days of HVAC systems.

Master electrical panel with large, hand-flip control switches.

Also, painted on the floor in the downstairs dining, night club area is a large, decorative "**N**". There were no obvious clues as to why the "N" was on the floor. Might it have been to honor the Colonial Center builder, **Norton Clapp**? The museum would love to know the answer. If you or someone you know has an answer, please call the museum. Also, please call if you have any old photos taken downstairs circa 1937 to 1957.

Be advised: this area is under lock and key and strictly **"Off Limits"** to all but needed repair personnel who brave the narrow passageways with flashlights constantly alert for strange creatures and more.

Hope you enjoyed the story and photos of a world that once was!

N for...Norton?

Original 1937 coal furnace with oil converter add-on?

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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 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

Glen Spieth

STARTED NEW YEAR IN 2026 with a lot of changes. *HAPPENING NOW:* We added a number of great programs at the museum. Past and upcoming programs for this year are detailed below.

- **April 25** Speaker Series: The 737 Max Airplane History with Jetliner Fact, Fiction, and More.
- **May 19** Film honoring Memorial Day: *Beneath Hill 60* takes place in WWI, south of the Western Front, during a crucial battle.
- **May 29** NEW EXHIBIT OPENED at the Museum. Lakewood Fire Department history, including display of old equipment
- **June 23** Speaker Series: "History in Pieces: Fact, Flukes, Fiction—Why Nobody Tells you the Truth" with local author Susanne Bacon. Doors open at 6:30 PM, Program starts at 7:00 PM.
- **July 18** Speaker Tom Rhodes: "Washington's Quiet Path to the Moon" Doors open at 1:30 PM, Program starts at 2:00 PM
- **September 22** Speakers Series: "Northem Pacific Railroad Labor War of 1872-1873" with Russell Holter. Doors Open at 6:30, Program Starts at 7:00 PM.
- **October 20** Speakers Series: "Notorious Tacoma" with Patty Mannie. Doors open at 1:30 PM, Program starts at 2:00

Interested in Local History? Become a Museum Docent! Greet visitors one or two days a month on a Friday or Saturday, from 12 to 4 pm (for now.) LHS needs your help. Our goal is to be open five to six days a week. Learn about local and not-so-local history and help guide visitors into this wonderland of the past.

The museum needs financial and physical ***HELP!*** Get a new membership or renew an existing one and become an active member of the Lakewood Historical Society & Museum (LHS&M). Your help is desperately needed to sustain operation in this location.

The Museum has about 6,000 sq feet of exhibit space, plus a movie/program room *and* the Colonial Center Theater Lobby.

NEW EXHIBITS are coming or being expanded.

See the famous *Ulster County Gazette* detailing the death and funeral of George Washington. Published on January 4, 1800, it includes an eulogy by an unknown author that introduced the famous phrase, "First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen."

Learn about the Tacoma Speedway, located in the Lakes District of Lakewood from 1912 thru 1923. Airplanes found that the inner grasslands of the racetrack made a fine landing field in the post-World War I years. Eventually, the airstrip was improved and hangars were built as part of the Mueller-Harkins Airport.

The City of Tacoma used the airstrip as its commercial field for a time, and national air shows were held at the site until World War II. Jenny JN-4's, Ford Trimotors, Boeing 247's (passenger airliners) used by United Airlines, were among the many airplanes seen here in the 1920's through the 1940's.

— Glen

Hurray! Museum Has New Overhead Projector

After years of using a tabletop film projector for our special movie events, the Museum has now installed a new, state of the art overhead projection system, thanks to **Bob Warfield** and a donation from **Lakewood Community Foundation**.

A great big "Thank You" goes to Board Members **Glen Spieth** and **Don Meeker** and to Museum AV Coordinator **Tink Kinney** who donated their time and effort to install the new system.

◀ *Don Meeker secures mounting bolts for overhead projector with assistance from Glen Spieth.*

Prairie Gazette Visits Mexico

by Phil Raschke

Museum member **Jack Mason** recently traveled to Mazatlán, Mexico for a little R&R. Jack also took along copies of the ***Prairie Gazette*** newsletter. While in Mazatlán, Jack shared a copy of the Gazette with friend **Linda Sigler** of Owatonna, Minnesota.

When you travel about, take a photo with your copy of the *Prairie Gazette* and text it to us at **253-682-3480**.

Be sure to include the name of the photographer, photo location, and the names of people in photo.

Museum 737 MAX Program Drew a Crowd

Story By Phil Raschke

On Saturday afternoon, 25 April, **Dave Carbaugh**, former Boeing Chief Test Pilot for Flight Operations and Safety, put on a fascinating program on the 737 MAX jetliner. Dave, who has over 30,000 flight hours, took time to drive to the Museum from Port Ludlow to present 42 attendees with the facts on the 737 MAX development, accidents, Alaska Airlines in-flight door separation and more.

Following the program, several attendees joined in a photo with presenter ***Dave Carbaugh*** *(3rd person from the right)*

Today, over 2,200 MAX aircraft are currently in service with airlines around the world. Over 3,000 more are on order.

Following the presentation, several attendees took time for a photo-op with Dave.

Also, **Don Watts** was the lucky winner of the drawing for a free **Classy Chassis** car wash.

Lakewood Historical Society
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Lakewood History Museum Presents

Northern Pacific Railroad labor war of 1872-1873

Special Guest Speaker

Russell Holter

Russell specializes in Pacific Northwest history, specifically railroads and industrial history.

September 22, 2026

LAKEWOOD HISTORY MUSEUM
DOORS WILL OPEN AT 6:30 PM,
PROGRAM STARTS AT 7:00 PM.
ADMISSION IS FREE.
253 – 682 - 3480

MUSEUM LOCATED AT 6114 MOTOR AVE SW, LAKEWOOD, WASHINGTON.

Check www.lakewoodhistorical.org for notices about upcoming programs