A decade of service to Lakewood history

Come help us celebrate 10 years in our Colonial Center home

2006—the fledgling Lakewood Historical Society, founded by Cy Happy eight years earlier, leases a storefront in historic Lakewood Colonial Center, finally acquiring enough space to exhibit a few of the treasures donated by generous and historically-minded Lakes District residents.

Some of these are incorporated into our permanent exhibits—reproductions of an early schoolroom, pioneer cabin, post office, the 1930’s newsroom of the Lakewood Log, etc.

Others have played a part in one or more of our featured exhibits—examinations of local history ranging from the rise and fall of local shopping centers to the impact of the military presence in our community to a look at the sports and leisure activities engaged in by visitors to what was once Pierce County’s favorite vacation spot.

In short, it’s been a busy 10 years at the Colonial Center for your Society. Please join us as we toast both the past and an ever more vital and relevant future!
President’s Message

It is hard to believe but this is my last missive as President of the Lakewood Historical Society.

I will continue to remain on the Board as the Past President and stay actively involved with programs and marketing.

As I have been reviewing our successes of the Society and the Museum during my tenure, I have been amazed by how much we have accomplished. The most significant is our “storefront” museum that opened in October, 2006. Be sure to attend our Museum’s 10th Anniversary on October 22nd.

Your fearless leader,

Becky Huber

Answers to last issue’s swingin’ quiz.

The Summer 2016 Prairie Gazette contained photos of nine Lakewood-area gates. How many did you correctly identify? Be sure to check out the clocks of Lakewood in this issue (pg. 11).

Answers:

1. On the road to Holly Hedge
2. On the far side of Gravelly Lake Drive, beyond Veteran’s Drive.
3. Gates to Rhodesleigh
4. Decorative piece on gate, Little Church on the Prairie
5. Antique gate at Western State Hospital, off Stellaacoom Blvd.
6. Another view of Little Church on the Prairie gate
7. Entry gates to the Veteran’s Administration Hospital.
8. Gateway to Lakewold Towne Center.
9. Lakewood Garden’s Gazebo—the historic structure provides access to many of the garden’s rooms.

B

Between 1923-1956, the Catholic Girl’s Day School was located on the site of present-day Lakewold Towne Center.

Your curious historian/writer gleaned more information about the school after visiting with Kathy Spencer, a Stellicocom resident, who recently retired as Director of Development for St. Francis Cabrini School. The school and church were built on property that once was part of Visitation Villa. Mrs. Spencer shared copies of some of the school’s history.

We greet you, lovely Lakewood land! We love you! Our tow’ring firs and oak trees grand, Encircling lakes of blue. Your brilliant coat of emerald green, Flower-bejeweled meadows, too, Combine to make a charming scene. Oh Lakewood, we love you!

(A verse from a song composed by one of the early Visitation Sisters, published in the 1954 V.V. Diamond Jubilee commemorative booklet).

The Visitation Order

From Europe to the United States, from Tacoma to Federal Way…

Our community traces its origins to the first and only foundation established in the United States by Vislindines from a European House of our Order, that of Montiuel, France.

Eventually the Visitation Academy in Tacoma was outgrown, and because the Sisters do not engage in parochial projects, it was deemed advisable to transfer the primary and grammar grades to St. Leo Parochial School.

After 30 years on 18th and Yakima Avenue, the Community found that the site had become unsuitable for a resident school. Seattle’s Bishop Edward J. O’Dea, accompanied by the Very Reverend Daniel Hanly, V.G., visited a site in the Lakes District, called “Richmore,” as the Richardson property was then known, and that land—200 acres—was deeded over to the Community on May 24, 1918. The Sisters’ original Tacoma property was then known, and that land—200 acres—was deeded over to the Community.

During the next three decades sections of the Lakewood property were sold off to pay the outstanding debt, until the original 200 acres had decreased to 100 acres.

Becky Huber • 253-582-8682
Kim Curley • 253-584-8731
Sue Scott • 253-588-6354
Dick Meier
Glen Spleith
Vacant
Vacant
Sue Scott • 253-588-6354
Vacant
Kris Kaufman
Mary Bowlby
Chuck Mathias
Ed Voie
Glen Spleith
Vacant
Mary Bowlby
Chuck Mathias
Ed Voie
Glen Spleith
Vacant
Kris Kaufman
Mary Bowlby
 murdered 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
Custer’s Last Stand was one such instance. Another, less famous, less violent—but with much greater significance in the long run—played out on the banks of the Nisqually River over 40 years ago.

It was the climactic outcome of a drama that had begun more than a century earlier—but scarcely a mile away—on the banks of what was then known as Medicine (now McAllister) Creek in the Nisqually Delta. There, in 1855, Territorial Governor Isaac Stevens signed a treaty with the Nisqually Indians, leading to the ceding of two and a quarter million acres of land, in return for promises and “guarantees” that were eroded, without any provision for future tribal fishing rights. By the mid-20th century, the Nisqually harvest was but a tiny fraction of what it should have been under the terms of the treaty.

Acknowledging the importance of publicity in the growing media circus of the times, various celebrities were solicited to take part in the protests—most famously, actor Marlon Brando, who, having lost his net in troubled local waters, escaped a jail in just one because the Pierce County prosecutor refused to file charges. Then, on June 4, 1975 all the long, grueling effort paid off spectacularly when the Ninth District Court of Appeals upheld a 1974 decision by Judge George Boldt holding the state responsible for all future salmon harvests to the Nisqually and other tribes covered by the treaty.

Many would have been content to rest on their laurels after so long a victory. But not Billy Frank, Jr. Knowing their victory would endure only so long as the fisheries themselves endured, Billy turned his attention—and that of his tribe—to the preservation and enrichment of natural habitat, in particular the fertile stretch of the banks of the Nisqually. There, in 1996, the park property was absorbed into the city. The trolley stop was near Bona’s (coming up from Highway 99). Bona gave the park land in the Nisqually Delta in the ‘60s, with the provision that it could not be sold or used for anything other than a park.

The park was, according to longtime resident Jim Taylor, a swimming area for about forty years before it was renamed as Harry Todd Park. It was composed of Tillicum’s swimming area and land donated by Mr. Bona. Mr. Todd paid for construction of the park, and the park was transferred to the city’s ownership.

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And the honors didn’t end there. The one-time “law-breaker” and “villain” in the eyes of local sport and commercial fishermen, Billy Frank, Jr., was awarded America’s highest civilian honor, the Medal of Honor. President Barack Obama. Sadly, since he died in 2014, it had to be awarded posthumously, on November 24, 2015.

Harry Todd’s lasting gift to the people of Tillicum.

Harry Todd cleaned and maintained the area behind his IGA store, land absorbed years earlier when what became known as the Harry Todd Park—named for a Tacoma businessman who contributed three hundred feet of waterfront—and $100,000—to Tacoma’s Metro Parks District. When Lakewold became a city in 1996, the park property was absorbed into the city. The trolley stop was near Bona’s (coming up from Highway 99). Bona gave the park land in the Nisqually Delta in the ‘60s, with the provision that it could not be sold or used for anything other than a park. Mr. Bona.

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GRAND scenes from our OPENING

November 9, 2006—the dream of a museum home for the Lakewood Historical Society comes true.

1. Among those helping Mayor Claudia Thomas cut the ribbon: current (Glen Spieth, second from left) and future (Becky Huber, second from right) presidents of LHS. 2. Mayor Thomas becomes one of the first to sign the museum’s guest book. 3. Just a few weeks before opening the question is: can exhibits like the pioneer cabin (here, under construction) possibly be ready in time? 4. Answer: Yes, like this timeline of Lakewood events, the cabin and other displays were ready for visitors. 5. No event complete without a tempting table of treats.

6. What a museum’s all about: visitors learning an aspect of local history. 7. Becky Huber with Elizabeth Poinsett, artist, board member and daughter of Iva Alice Mann, iconic figure in the history of Lakewood education. 8. Museum Director Janda Volkmer (center) points out items of interest to first-day visitors. 9. Long-time friends of the Society (and distinguished co-authors of books on Lakewood’s history) Steve Dunkelberger (seated) and Walter Neary. 10. Mayor Thomas and LHS Board Member John Huber.
Some property went toward establishing Clover Park High School, a Lakewood Clinic, and establishing St. Francis Cabrini Parish. In 1955 the remaining land was sold to developers of the Villa Plaza shopping center.

From the Order’s beginning spiritually-minded women were permitted to enter Visitation monasteries, there to spend a few days in thoughtful, prayerful reflection.

From that beginning, the custom of retreats spread, until in 1954, the Lakewood school closed, and the Order relocated to Federal Way. From 1956-1993 it operated as a retreat center until being sold to the City of Federal Way. Mrs. Spencer said that a young man, named Joe M. Schiller, tended a small garden at the Visitation Lakewood property. When the Order moved to Federal Way, he went along and continued to maintain the grounds until his death. He lived in the woods in a trailer next to their Dash Point property, and even had a root cellar that he had dug into the side of the mountain.

Today the Dumas Bay Retreat Center still operates, while Center Stage Theatre occupies the site originally used as the convent. As mentioned in the LHS summer newsletter, the school’s marble altar now resides in Fife at St. Martin of Tours’ church.

Further information about the Visitation Sisters is available for review at the Lakewood History Museum. There also is a small desk included in the exhibit.

The grotto originally on the site was removed, first to Oakbrook, then to its current location on Raft Island, near Gig Harbor.

The remaining Sisters dispersed to other Visitation Monasteries on the East Coast. Engraved plaques, inscribed with the Sisters’ names, have been placed along the Dumas Bay walkway.

Dumas Bay Center is located at 3200 SW Dash Point Road, Federal Way, 98023, Phone 253-835-2000, or visit www.dumasbaycentre.com

THANK YOU, BUSINESS MEMBERS AND SPONSORS
City of Lakewood Lodging Tax Funds help support and promote the Lakewood Historical Society and Museum operations, educational programs and events, historical markers, community outreach programs and Museum display/exhibits.

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Best Burgers of Lakewood, Inc
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City of Lakewood
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Edward Jones Investments
Gertie's Grille
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Hawthorne Credit Union
Heritage Bank
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Lakewood Villa Realty
Lakewood Water District
LeMay Family Collection
LeMay Pierce County Refuge
Lowe’s
Mandarin Gallery
Moon Rise Café
Mountain View Funeral Home
and Memorial Park
Museum Antiques
Nisqually Indian Tribe
Northwest Properties Agency Inc

FINANCIAL STATEMENT
8 Months YTD thru August 2016

OPENING CASH ON HAND – January 1, 2016
Checking
$  6,621
Money Market
$27,838
Total
$34,459

INCOME
Grants
$28,014
Individual & Family Memberships
$  4,750
Business Memberships
$  255
Business Sponsorships
$  1,250
Donations—Museum Fund
$ 7,842
Memorial Gifts
$  520
Bank Interest
$  71
Other
$ 640
Total Income
$43,372

EXPENSES
Operations & Administration
$  4,362
Museum Lease
$12,800
Equipment/Software/Furnishings
$  503
Professional Develop/Recognition
$  318
Contract Services & Support
$ 1,975
Insurance
$  1,792
Marketing/Publications/Advertising
$10,935
Newsletter Printing/Mailing
$ 2,893
Graphic Design Services
$ 4,275
Website Hosting/Maintenance
$  337
Educational Programs/Events
$   90
Museum Exhibits/Displays
$ 2,005
Historical Markers
$10,496
Total Expenses
$52,782

CLOSING CASH ON HAND – August 31, 2016
Checking
$  2,189
Money Market
$22,861
Total Ending Cash
$25,049

Original House of Donuts
Paktek Inc
Parkwood Property Management
Pierce County Council
Pierce County Landmarks Commission
Radcliffe Hardwood Floors
Raney Family Trust
Robi’s Camera Center
Rolf’s Import Auto Service
Ed Selden Floor Coverings
Sound Tax and Bookkeeping Inc
Tacoma Country and Golf Club
Tacoma Public Library
Tacoma Trophy
Truck and Sons
Vogt Foundation
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West Pierce Fire Fighters

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Student life at Visitation Villa
Former Steilacoom resident Susan Small, now living in San Antonio, Texas, shares memories of her days at Visitation Villa.

The altar is quite beautiful—the Last Supper bas relief is lovely and the marble positively glows. Thank you so much for the happy memory.

I loved Visitation Villa and it was so wonderful to wander through the lands surrounding it. I vividly remember the Reynolds family who had a farm on the property. Sister Francis Xavier was my teacher, and she was the most wonderful, warm teacher I ever had—among other things, she loved to play Rover, Rover with us, jumped rope and took us up to the Reynolds’ farm to see the baby chicks and wandered around the farm lands with us. She was the only teacher I ever had who read from a novel to us each day —Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates.

When Visitation Villa was sold and the nuns, who had been decloistered in order to teach, all returned to the cloister—except Sister Francis, and she transferred to a teaching order. Visitation Villa was an idyllic experience. Thank you so much for asking me about it and reminding me of how very much I loved it there.

Oh, and I was going to mention the truly fascinating, slightly strange, Infant of Prague statue at the entrance to the chapel—he was dressed in elaborate velvets and brocades. I was fascinated!

First Rectory for St. Francis Cabrini Parish, painted by Sister Mary Consolata in 1952.

The Lakewood Historical Society also placed a commemorative plaque at the entryway of Lakewood Towne Center’s Safeway Store showing the original school site.
These Presses Still Operate
By Nancy Covert

During the past 30 years changing technology has affected many businesses, including small print shops.

At one time there were more than half a dozen printing businesses in the area.

One of them—a small print shop, at 6111 Steilacoom Boulevard, S. W., tucked into a corner of businesses (such as Lakewood Ironworks and a TV and Appliance business) just east of Burs Restaurant, has operated in the area for about 40 years, since 1977 at its current location.

Formerly known as Lakewood Printing, a few years ago it was renamed Print Shop of Lakewood, and it’s the place where the Lakewood Historical Society newsletter is printed throughout the year.

“About 2,500 copies,” according to Becky Huber, LHS president.

40 years, since 1977 at its current location.

There are many prominent public timepieces! Pay them a visit—if you’ve got (or need!) the time, of course…

The carillon bell tower tolls the hour to all living within hearing of St. Francis School on 108th Street…

Lakewood’s most iconic timepiece, the four-sided clock tower of the old Lakewood Theater.

Nobody seems to know where this beautiful old jeweler’s clock, now in front of the old Kinko’s location on Gravelly Lake Drive, originally came from.

Let us know if you do!

Have a hankering for a memorable timepiece of your own? There are more like these three (left)—shown courtesy of designer Michael Clark—available at his shop in historic Lakewood Colonial Center.

Your friendly Print Shop crew: Jim, Sherry and Dan.

Besides the membership, extra copies are printed to distribute to interested patrons.

Jim Barber is the owner. Originally he employed 10 printers. Nowadays his staff includes Sherry (40 years) who handles pre-press and color copy printing, while Dan (14 years) does press, bindery and copy work. Born in New York, Jim and his parents moved to California—“pretty much anything printed,” Barber says. “A lot of the work we once did, though, isn’t done any more.”

While the shop’s output has declined during the past few years, “fall is still our busiest time” since they print school directories (largely for private schools) as well as for Clover Park Technical College and other school-related materials. They also publish materials for a medical society.

A condensed printing history:

While many people prefer the traditional style of printing—hard copies—a younger generation has switched to on-line publications. The art of printing blossomed in the 15th century in Germany when Johannes Gutenberg developed a moveable type printing press.

Until that time most books and documents were hand-written—i.e., manuscripts—using carved wooden blocks to print images and words.

Around 1457-1500 it was estimated that there were about 1,700 presses operating in about 300 towns, producing about 15 million volumes by that time. The word “press” acquired a new meaning after the Reformation ignited a religious controversy between Catholics and Protestants.

During the following centuries, a variety of printing styles evolved: from wood carvings to etchings, to mezzotints—each successive change taking “printing” to the present day where images produced on screen, or film—using increasingly elaborate styles—lasers, etc.—create images where the viewer may be confused about whether what he sees is “real” or not.

You should—if you live in Lakewood, that is. So many prominently placed public timepieces! Pay them a visit—if you’ve got (or need!) the time, of course…

Got the time?

First to San Francisco, then Los Angeles, back to SF, and then back to LA where they operated a check printing business, before moving to Lakewood, where Jim became the fourth owner of the print shop.

Besides newsletters, the Print Shop produces brochures, posters, business cards, letterhead stationery, special order books, color copies...
Fall 2016 Programs & Activities

Sat, October 8, 12 noon-5 pm-Washington State Historical Society’s 125th Anniversary, Washington State History Museum, 1911 Pacific Ave, Tacoma, WA. Come by and visit the Lakewood Historical Society’s table to enter free drawing.

Wed, October 12th, 1 pm- City of Lakewood’s 20th Anniversary Celebration. As part of “Let’s Enjoy History Together” at the Lakewood Senior Activity Center, 9112 Lakewood Dr SW. Free, but call 253-798-4090 to register.

Wed, October 19th, 4:30-7 pm- Boo Bash; Lakewood Chamber’s fall event at Great American Casino, 10117 South Tacoma Way, Lakewood. Visit Society’s booth, door prizes, free food, must be 21 to attend.

Sat, October 22nd, 1-4 pm- Lakewood History Museum’s 10th Anniversary Celebration, 6211 Mt Tacoma Dr SW, raffle prize drawing, special refreshments, dedication of Colonial Center Historic Marker.

Tues, November 22nd, 7-9 pm- Annual Meeting, St Mary’s Episcopal Church, 10630 Gravelly Lake Drive SW. Program on Honor Flights, all expenses paid trips to Washington DC for WWII veterans; year-end reports, elections of board members, recognition of achievements. Refreshments served.

Sat, December 3rd 2-4 pm, Holiday Open House, Lakewood History Museum, 6211 Mt Tacoma Dr SW, enjoy vintage holiday decorations and refreshments.

Find us on Facebook (Lakewood-Historical-Society-Washington-State) or check our website for more information and current events: www.LakewoodHistorical.org