

# Brairie Gazette

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER, 2007



## “The Big One”

The story behind Lakewood Library's giant tree.

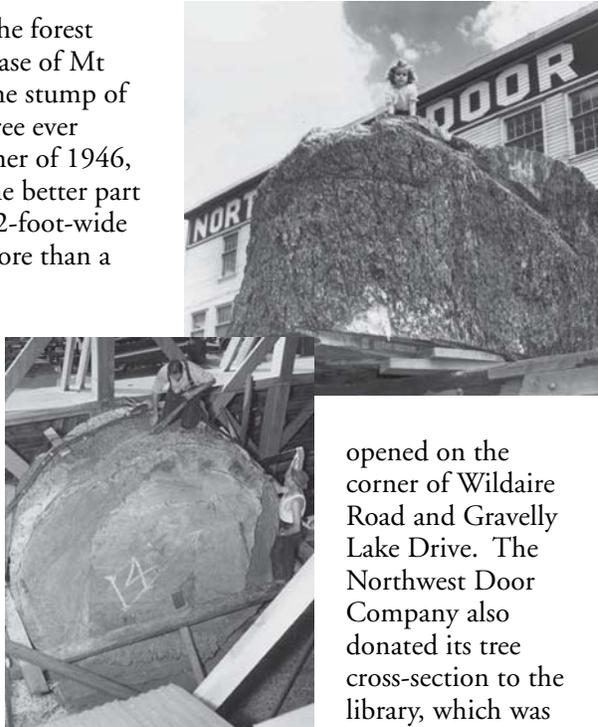
By Hayden Mackley

Somewhere out in the forest near Packwood, at the base of Mt Rainier, there remains the stump of the largest Douglas fir tree ever logged. In the hot summer of 1946, three men worked for the better part of two days to fell the 12-foot-wide giant, with not much more than a standard 8-foot power saw. They had to notch in 3 feet on four sides with their axes before they could move in with their saw. The loggers named the tree simply “The Big One.”

The massive cut stump of the tree quickly became a minor celebrity in the area, as it was trucked to the Northwest Door

Company plant at 1203 East D Street in Tacoma. The company's president, Herman E. Tenzler, decided that something of the tree should be on display to the public, and so a cross section was cut. With great fanfare, it was unveiled to the public, complete with signs showing the age of the tree and famous events during its lifetime.

In the early 1960's Tenzler, through the Tenzler Foundation, became the principal donor for a new building for the Lakewood Library, which had previously existed in temporary shop-spaces and basements. In 1963, the Flora B. Tenzler Memorial Library, named in memory of Tenzler's late wife,



opened on the corner of Wildaire Road and Gravelly Lake Drive. The Northwest Door Company also donated its tree cross-section to the library, which was installed beside the

library's doors in July 1965.

The log continues to impress library-goers to this day, standing as a testimonial to the history of the area. The rings of the trunk tell the tree's life story, recording bitter winters, summer droughts, fires and lightning strikes. Close inspection of tree's rings reveal that it was 586 years old when felled, first breaking through the forest floor as a seedling in the year 1359. It was already a large tree in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century when a forest fire ravaged the woods. The scars show that the tree was injured but lived on, while a neighboring tree collapsed against it, presumably during the fire.

Please see “Big One on Page 3

## Lakewood Library's Checkered History

By Hayden Mackley

When the community icon now known as Lakewood Library first opened its doors in 1963, the *Suburban Times* ran a story titled “Lakewood's Library a Dream Come True.” The article described the history of efforts to obtain a separate building for a Lakewood branch library as “one of disappointing struggle and bitter frustration.” And yet, the struggle for library service in Lakewood did not end there.

The roots of the Lakewood Library story begin in 1944, when residents of Pierce County approved a measure to establish a rural library district in the unincorporated areas of the county. A two-mill levy on property tax was authorized to finance the district, with the law stipulating that county taxes could cover only books and staff, not library housing.

Through the cooperation of the Lakewood Community Club and PTA, the first Lakewood Library was opened in 1947, but it took some time before it had a permanent home. Over the years, it moved from one location to another, from hobby shop to gift shop to the basement of Park Lodge School.

The struggle for housing pursued the Lakewood Library until the Friends of the Lakes District Library was incorporated as a nonprofit organization in 1960 for the purpose of raising funds for a building and purchasing land. The

Please see Library on Page 4



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## Prairie Gazette

Prairie Gazette is the official publication of the Lakewood Historical Society. The newsletter is published six times a year. Distribution is directly to members and available at the Lakewood History Museum at the address listed below.

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](http://www.lakewoodhistorical.org)

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## President's Message

I hope everyone has been enjoying our beautiful fall colors this year. I can't believe that the holidays are upon us, where did the summer go?

Not only is this the time to reflect on our accomplishments made this past year, as stated in the "Highlights of the Annual Meeting" elsewhere in this newsletter, but it also the time to set new goals for next year. We can be especially proud of what we have accomplished with our Museum and we couldn't have done it without the loyalty and support of our members

I am excited about having such highly qualified Board members who will ensure our success in pursuing our endeavors. None of our goals can be accomplished without the support and generosity of our members. Please take the time to renew your membership with the form enclosed so that you can continue to be kept informed of our progress.

I'd like to give a big round of applause to Hayden Mackley and Ed Kane for producing a newsletter that we all can be proud of. Because this is our main avenue of communication with all of our members, they have made sure that the content and layout are interesting and informative. Positive first impressions of our Society are made by citizens of our community and potential donors when they read the newsletter. I wish Hayden well in his new job and I know that Ed will not be too far away. Dave Sclair, our new Editor, will carry on in his own unique way and we look forward to seeing his contributions in the next issue.

Not only are we celebrating the first anniversary of our Museum it is also the first year of my presidency. There are so many things I have learned and accomplished but I am most grateful for the new friends I have made and the support I have received from you. This is what will keep me going in the rough spots in the road ahead.

So in closing, I wish you and yours Happy Holidays. May they be full of joy and happiness and be thankful for the small blessings we receive.

Becky Huber  
President, LHS



## Lakewood History Museum

6211 Mount Tacoma Drive SW

253-682-3480

[www.lakewoodhistorical.org/](http://www.lakewoodhistorical.org/)

### Museum Hours:

12 to 4 pm, Wednesday through Saturday

Group tours arranged by appointment

## The Big One, from page 1

Over the next 70 years the tree compensated for its leaning companion by adding fat rings to one side of its trunk and narrower ones to the other. In this manner the tree straightened and grew vertically once more.

After several hundred years more, the Douglas Fir had outgrown all of its neighbors. Such height provided abundant sunlight, but also made the tree vulnerable to lightning. It was struck by a bolt when it was about 420 years old, the same time as the Revolutionary War was being waged on the east coast. A large top section, at least 40 feet, broke off as a result of the lightning strike and the massive electrical charge burned through the inside of the bark to the ground. The tree grew no taller than that, but continued to live and widen its base for another century and a half before it was logged.

According to news reports of the tree's logging at the time, it was harvested because it was damaged and already beginning to rot. While the logging of old growth forests nowadays is a more controversial issue than in 1946, the Northwest Door Company used the display outside its plant to promote "wise forest management" and published a leaflet to tell the tree's story in the first person. The company went to great lengths to assure the public that this is how the tree would have wanted to go: "In my 586<sup>th</sup> year... as the song of the saw and the shouts of the logging crew grew closer, I knew my destiny was to be fulfilled... Because of [forest management] provisions, I leave my forest friends with no regrets. Under the guiding hand of man, there will be many others to take my place. It is my destiny that I go into a new and varied service. I am about to be fashioned into a thousand useful items."

## History of the "Big One"

Species: Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)

Age: 586 years when felled in 1946

Size: Largest Douglas Fir tree ever cut.

Diameter: 12'9", Circumference: 40'

Height: 238'. Height to the first limb: 98'

Weight of the log section displayed: 9¼ tons.

1359: Birth of tree.

1492: Columbus crossed the Atlantic.  
Tree Age: 133 years.

1535: Bible first printed in English.  
Tree Age: 176 years.

1620: Pilgrims land at Plymouth Rock.  
Tree Age: 261 years.

1776: Declaration of Independence.  
Tree Age: 417 years.

1805: Lewis and Clark Expedition.  
Tree Age: 446 years.

1833: Fort Nisqually established.  
Tree Age: 502 years.

1889: Washington became 42<sup>nd</sup> state.  
Tree Age: 530 years.

### Other large Douglas Firs?

- At the time of logging in 1946, two larger trees had been sighted in Washington and Oregon, but were left to die a natural death.
- Today, the tallest Douglas Fir is thought to be one 329 feet tall near Coquille, Oregon, estimated to weigh more than a fully-loaded 747.
- A Douglas Fir in the Olympic National Park is only 205 feet tall with a broken top, but has a circumference of 45½ feet.

## Local Author Donates Books for LHS Research Library

Cecelia Svinth Carpenter recently donated five titles of her popular books for the Museum's research library. This was an unexpected and welcomed gift and will be put to good use. The books are: "Remembering Medicine Creek: The Story of the First Treaty Signed in Washington" written with Maria Pascualy; Fort Nisqually, A documented History of Indian and British Interaction;" "They Walked Before, Indians of Washington State;" Leschi, Last Chief of the Nisqually;" and The Nisqually, My People."

Cecelia was born in 1924 and raised on the family farm near Harts Lake. Her Nisqually heritage is matrilineal; her father was an ordained Lutheran pastor. She is an actively enrolled member of the Nisqually Indian Tribe.

Cecelia earned her B.A. and M.A. in Education at Pacific Lutheran University and spent her teaching career in the Tacoma Public Schools teaching Washington State History. Her serious writing career began in 1971 with her Masters' Thesis. Since her retirement from teaching, she has worked full time as an Indian historian, researcher and writer. She owns and operates the Tahoma Research Service.

It is the small donations such as this that will eventually fill the bookshelves to create a fine working library for the History Museum. It is an honor to receive this gift directly from the author. Thank you, Cecelia.

**Note: The Lakewood History Museum will be closed Thanksgiving day, November 22**

## Library, from page 1

Friends group collected annual pledges from citizens, with the average pledge being around \$12. The Lakes District Improvement Council and the Tenzler Foundation also provided funding to purchase a property at Gravelly Lake Drive and Wildaire Road.

In 1963 the library opened its doors as the Flora B. Tenzler Memorial Library, named in memory of the wife of Herman E. Tenzler, local lumber magnate and primary backer of the building. The final cost of the 8,000 sq.ft. building was \$400,000. Lakewood locals loved their new library and swarmed in to borrow 74,763 books in its first year.

The funding arrangements of the new library were a delicate balancing act, with the Friends group responsible for building maintenance and repairs, and Pierce County Library (PCL) providing the books, staff and service. Within a few years, it became apparent that the library's popularity was overwhelming for its size, and an expansion was needed. While the Friends group raised funds, a bond issue put on the ballot for the library district failed to pass. Mr. Tenzler came to the rescue again, providing the major funds for an addition completed in 1975, almost quadrupling the floor space, and adding an AV center, public meeting rooms, a 16mm film service distribution center and the county library's reference center. While the possibility of giving the title of the building to the library district was considered, Mr. Tenzler preferred to leave it in the hands of the volunteer operating board.

The library prospered, however the building's roof did not. Each year as the Washington rain set in, the roof leaked continuously and the repair job was estimated at \$100,000. Herman Tenzler came to the aid of the library again, by funding the repairs and leaving the Friends group a major gift to help

## The Mole Patrol

Go into Lakewood Library on any given day and you'll find a quiet buzz of activity with patrons browsing the shelves and scouring the internet. What you might not guess however, is what goes on under ground at the library. A giant basement, packed with shelves and trolleys full of many thousands of donated books, is home to faithful group of library volunteers fondly known as the "mole patrol", otherwise known as the Friends of Lakewood Library.

Every Thursday, 15-20 'moles' work tirelessly at cataloguing and shelving the latest donations, in preparation for their twice-yearly sales in March and October.

Those sales not only attract many hundreds of locals in search of a bargain, but also book dealers from as far away as Vancouver B.C. and Portland hunting for rarities.

Members of the society, including those eagle-eyed book dealers, get the first chance at the bargains

the night before the sale, when the basement turns into a stampede. Money raised from the sales, as well as the Friends' year-round 'Book Nook' go towards funding extra library services not covered by the Pierce County Library System, such as the bookmobile. The Friends group also hosts special events, as well as rotating art exhibits in the Friends Gallery.



Millie Hamilton (L) and Nancy Catton are among those whose chosen volunteer task for the library is to categorize and shelve the thousands of used books donated by the public for the twice annual book sale. Catton focuses her efforts in the historical category, here in the Northwest section. Hamilton is the longest serving volunteer "mole," with service starting in 1985, after retiring as a Clover Park school teacher. This year's final sale, organized by the Friends of the Lakewood Library, earned \$14,000.

fund future repairs as needed. Mr. Tenzler then gradually dissolved his foundation, and asked that the Tenzler name be quietly removed in 1982, as with other Tenzler-named projects, in an effort to avoid receiving unsolicited requests for funds. A similar request was made to the University of Puget Sound, with 'Tenzler Hall' becoming 'University Hall'.

While the Friends and the PCL managed to coexist as joint stakeholders in the newly-named Lakewood Library, the relationship had its problems. The Friends, with members numbering around 300 and an often-changing board, found their activities oriented around facilities maintenance, rather than programs and support of artwork in the building. In turn, the PCL often found it difficult operating in a building that they didn't own.

When it was found in 1989 that there was a considerable amount of asbestos in the ceiling that would need to be removed in any remodeling work, at a cost of \$100,000, the issue was brought to a head. Funds that the Friends had available for remodeling could not extend that far, while the PCL had some funds but could not by law spend any of their money on property they did not own. After consultation with attorneys and a favorable vote by members of the Friends' corporation, the library property and \$300,000 remaining from the 1982 Tenzler donation were transferred to the PCL District.

The remodeling finally came in 1993, closing the library for ten months, with a small branch operating out of the old Park Lodge school building. When the

## Special Lakewood Museum Exhibit

# When Washington was Oregon: 1843-1853, Empire and Colony in the Northwest

Before the United States Congress created the Washington Territory in 1853, the newly formed Oregon Provisional Government established eight pioneering counties north of the Columbia River. As Americans rushed into Oregon Country, Great Britain's influence gradually diminished. This exhibit tells the story of clashing empires struggling to dominate a rich and fertile region. It looks at the lasting

effects on the Native people and the settlers that made Washington a territory.

**Reproductions of fascinating maps and images of rare documents and artifacts illustrate this explosive period of Washington history. This exhibit, presented by the Washington State Historical Society, was part of the Washington State 2003 Territorial Sesquicentennial commemoration.**

## "Faces of Lakewood" will document Lakewood's cultural richness

Lakewood History Museum has been awarded a \$7,500 grant from Humanities Washington for a Multicultural Exhibit and Programs.

*The Faces of Lakewood: Our Cultural Crossroads* will explore historical and cultural successes and challenges of Lakewood's large multicultural population through an interpretive exhibit and video in the Lakewood History Museum; living history performances with a public forum; and several community book reading-discussions. Project partners are Pierce College, Ft. Steilacoom and Lakewood-Pierce County Library.

The Lakewood Historical Society is honored to have been chosen as one of the Humanities Washington grant recipients. We look forward to our partnership with Pierce College, Ft. Steilacoom, Lakewood-Pierce County Library, and with the diverse cultural, ethnic and racial communities in Lakewood. We welcome and encourage broad participation in this project. Stay tuned for future announcements.

To learn more or to become involved, please call Janda Volkmer, 253.222.7941 or email [jandavolkmer@msn.com](mailto:jandavolkmer@msn.com)

Lakewood Library reopened in 1994, the Friends were given a larger space on the main floor for ongoing sales and continued to have use of the basement for storing donated books and magazines.

The prospect of incorporation of Lakewood, or even annexation by Tacoma called the library's future into doubt. After incorporation eventuated in 1995, the question arose whether library services would be provided by the new city, or whether the library would be 'annexed' by the existing operator, PCL District. The issue went to a vote in 1996, with the 'pro' side arguing that annexation would

guarantee that library service could continue uninterrupted, and the 'no' side advocating more time to decide the issue. The vote was 5,991 'yes' and 1,373 'no', thus ensuring that Pierce County Library District would continue to operate the Lakewood Library.

The latest chapter in the history of Lakewood's Library ends with its remodeling during 2006. The Library reopened its doors in December with new self-service check-out, a teen center and a Wi-Fi hotspot, allowing wireless Internet access for personal laptops, adapting the library yet again to the needs of the latest generation.

## Winter 2007 – Spring 2008 Exhibit Plans

New exhibits underway for this winter include a 1930s-1940s post office, ongoing development of our early Lakewood business scene and additions to the prairie cabin. Exhibits being planned for 2008 include a new traveling display from the Washington State Historical Society on the Northwest Treaty Trail: 1854-1856, and a spring display on early schools of the region. Later in the year, we will see an exhibit featuring our South Sound natural history and the history of our Inland Salish Indian peoples.

## Donations of Artifacts Appreciated

The Lakewood  
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is a nonprofit  
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zation; gifts are  
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the extent allow-  
able by law.

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**LAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM**  
**2007 YTD MUSEUM FUND CONTRIBUTORS (\*New contributors since last issue )**



**Lakewood History Museum**

*Thank You, Museum Fund Donors and Sponsors*

**Gifts: (5/15 - 10/31): \$21,705**

**Goal: \$100,000 by July 31, 2009**

for Operations, Education, Exhibits, Programs and Community Outreach

**City of Lakewood Lodging Tax**  
(funding for museum promotions)

**SPONSORS**

- Comcast
- Water Rights Inc.
- Freelance Graphics (In-Kind)
- Paktex, Inc (In-Kind)
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**LAKWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
FINANCIAL REPORT  
October and Ten (10) Months YTD 2007  
October 31, 2007**

<b>Cash on Hand</b>	<b>9/30/2007</b>	<b>12/31/2006</b>
Checking	\$ 764.20	\$ 5417.72
Money Market	\$9263.36	\$ 1061.35
Certificate of Deposit	<u>\$ 0.00</u>	<u>\$10,701.60</u> (a)
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,027.56</b>	<b>\$17,180.67</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>October 2007</b>	<b>10Months YTD</b>
Grants	\$ 0.00	\$37,966.95 (b)
Memberships	\$ 170.00	\$ 4630.00
Donations - Museum Fund	\$1246.34	\$21,101.39
Sponsorships	\$ 0.00	\$ 1000.00
Special Fund Raisers	\$ 44.00	\$ 2710.00
Bank Interest	\$ 25.90	\$ 369.00
Other	<u>\$ 0.00</u>	<u>\$ 190.26</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1486.24</b>	<b>\$67,967.60</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Operations & Administration	\$ 338.67	\$ 2417.30
Web site	\$ 30.00	\$ 345.00
Contract Services	\$ 0.00	\$42,363.00 (c)
Insurance	\$ 0.00	\$ 1927.00
Museum lease	\$2000.00	\$19,600.00
Museum exhibits	\$ 188.22	\$ 2137.84
Postage, copies & printing	\$ 142.71	\$ 3016.48
Fund Raising	\$ 0.00	\$ 2275.00
Raffle (Airline Tickets)	\$ 0.00	\$ 920.58
Marketing/Publicity	\$ 50.00	\$ 1222.50
Other	<u>\$ 0.00</u>	<u>\$ 159.37</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$2749.60</b>	<b>\$76,384.07</b>
<b>Closing Cash on Hand 10/31/2007</b>		
Checking	\$1474.94	\$ 1474.94
Money Market	\$7289.26	\$ 7289.26
Certificate of Deposit	<u>\$ 0.00</u>	<u>\$ 0.00</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8764.20</b>	<b>\$ 8764.20</b>

- (a) \$5756.57 transferred to Money Market account 2/13/07  
\$5105.98 transferred to Money Market account 7/14/07  
(b) Includes \$18,722.53 received from 2006 City of Lakewood Grant  
(c) Includes \$28,077.00 paid for 2006 Contract Services

Prepared 11/03/2007

## Highlights of 2007 Annual Meeting

On Oct 18<sup>th</sup> over 50 members of the Lakewood Historical Society met in Prairie Hall of Little Church on the Prairie to celebrate the First Anniversary of the Opening of the Lakewood History Museum. After being served refreshments by the church Youth Club the group was entertained with a medley of songs by the Memorie Singers.

The Annual Meeting was conducted with reports from Becky Huber, President; Janda Volkmer, Executive Director; Stephanie Walsh, Membership and Shannon Krueger, Programs. The highlights of the reports included the revision of the "Prairie Gazette" newsletter, presentation of a wide breath of programs and reaching the goal of 200 members.

The Society has also launched several fund raising efforts including the Hawaii Raffle and the Annual Museum Fund Drive that has brought in over \$21,000 that will be applied to the operational expenses. Several grant requests were submitted by Janda this year for 2008 funding; one has been awarded and others are pending after a favorable review.

Other accomplishments relating to the Museum include training over 30 Docents that support expanded hours, obtaining used display cases, receiving new artifacts and adding new exhibits.

A slate of new Board members was presented by Walter Neary, Nominating Committee Chairman and elected by the membership. The new members are Natalie Humphrey-Vice President; Sue Scott-Secretary; Directors-Sandra Glasse, Doug Babbitt, John Simpson and Johnnie Williams.

Retiring Board members Jane Whitney-Vice President; TD Imholt-Secretary; and Stephanie Walsh and Barbara Wyatt. Directors were recognized for their service with Certificates of Appreciation.

Cy Happy and Elizabeth Poinsett were awarded the title of Director Emeritus for their dedication and service to the Society. Edie Brewer, Docent Coordinator was given special recognition for her work with the docents. Hayden Mackley, Newsletter Editor who is leaving at the end of the year, was thanked for his efforts.

### Lakewood Historical Society New Members Since the last Newsletter

Flor Acuff  
Sally Atwood  
Douglas and Janet Babbit  
Scott and Kathy Buser  
John and Marilyn Dimmer  
Sandra R. Glasse  
Sandra Godfrey  
Esther M. Grant

George and Geneva Hamill  
Donald Hirte  
Margaret J. Johnson  
Clyde and Jean Kalahan  
Dave and Lindy O'Keefe  
Mac and Bette Kirk  
Karen MacAnally  
Irene Mazer

H. W. "Howie" Meadowcroft  
Gene and Margaret Pankey  
Ray Richardson  
Marc and Brenda Rix  
Adele Stevens  
Linda Van Dyk  
Johnny and Lucinda Williams

**NOTE: The Lakewood History Museum will be closed from  
December 23, 2007 to January 8, 2008**

## **Upcoming Program Topics**

### **Thornewood Castle Revisited**

**Tues, Nov 13<sup>th</sup>, 6-8p.m.**

The members of the LHS have been invited by Wayne and Deanna Robinson for a personal tour of Thornewood Castle. Refreshments will be served after the tour. This premier estate home on American Lake was built in 1911 by Chester Thorne for his wife Anna. The Robinsons are anxious for us to see their new acquisitions since our last visit in 2001. At that time the building was completely remodeled in its original style for the filming of Steven King's movie "Rose Red." The tour is limited to members and guests only. Because of limited parking, please carpool. For more information on Thornewood Castle please visit [www.thornewoodcastle.com](http://www.thornewoodcastle.com) or [www.historylink.org](http://www.historylink.org). **Directions:** Take exit "Thorne Lane" exit, # 123 off I-5, follow signs to the Castle, 8601 N Thorne Lane SW. Call Becky at 253-582-8682 for questions.

### **Holiday Open House**

**Sat, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>, 1:30-4p.m, at the Lakewood History Museum**

Come celebrate the holidays by joining us for refreshments, see new exhibits and sing Christmas carols.

### **LHS Sponsors another Command Performance**

The performance of the "Sound of Music" on Sat, Jan 5th, 2008 at 2 PM at the Lakewood Playhouse has been chosen for a Command Performance sponsored by the Lakewood Historical Society. Tickets will be \$20, proceeds going to the Museum Fund, and available for sale on Nov 13th and at the Museum. This is a perfect Christmas gift. We know this will be a sellout. Call Becky @253-582-8682 for questions.

## **Help the Lakewood Historical Society**

Volunteers needed in many areas. Please call today: 253.682.3480. Your experience and willingness to help is needed

Lakewood Historical Society  
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### **Inside This Issue**

"The Big One" ..... page 1  
President's Message ..... page 2  
Annual Meeting Highlights page 7  
Financial Report ..... page 7  
Face of Lakewood Grant ... page 5