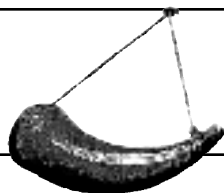


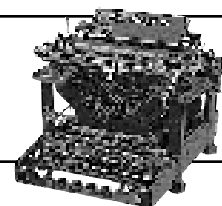
BECAUSE OUR HISTORY MATTERS



Brairie Gazette

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING 2010



Fundraiser 'Max is Back' vaudeville show set May 1

The Special Events Committee has been hard at work for the last six months working on all of the details for the Society's first major fundraising event. Why are we spending all of this time on an event? Because we need to prove to ourselves and the City that we can be self-sufficient and meet the operating expenses for our museum. It is important that we establish an annual event that has the potential to make some serious money, appeal to a broad audience, be unique to our organization and provide something special to our community.

The idea of a variety show seemed to meet all of the requirements. It would be a modern version of the old vaudeville shows that were so popular in the early 20th century and the early TV shows in the 1950's that showcased a variety of talent.

The venue for this event was the first consideration. It needed to be someplace that had all of the high tech sound and lighting facilities and the capacity for a large audience of at least 300-400 people. After touring the new Lakes High School Performing Arts Center, the committee realized this facility was ideal. Because we have a limited budget we couldn't afford to pay for performers. Rather, it was important to give new or little known talent a chance to

perform to a larger audience. The selection process quickly gravitated to the talented young people in our community such as Lakes and Clover Park High Schools. Other community groups quickly agreed to participate and our list was complete.

Now that the venue and performers were selected, we still needed an MC to introduce the acts. Who better than Marcus Walker, the artistic director of the Lakewood Playhouse. To keep with the historic theme,



Marcus needed to portray a character from the past whose connections included vaudeville and Lakewood.

That person was Max Frolic. Not only was he a musician and vaudeville entertainer, he was the band leader for the Pantages Theater for 12 years

and the producer of the Tacoma Elks Lodge Extravaganzas in the 1950's. In 1938 he built a restaurant on Pacific Highway



that later became known as Maxie's. Fortunately, we had access to images and documents to develop the role.

The stage is set for "Max is Back" will debut on May 1, at 2 pm. Now we only need an audience. Tickets will go on sale April 1, Orchestra seating - \$20 each and Auditorium seating - \$15 each.

They can be ordered by calling Becky Huber at 253-682-3480; e-mailing her at crafthubers@comcast.net; visiting the Lakewood History Museum at 6211 Mt Tacoma Dr SW across from Columbia Bank, Wed-Sat, 12-4 pm or going to our website at www.lakewoodhistorical.org and click on "Tickets". We are also looking for businesses to sponsor the event starting at \$100. If you are interested, please contact Becky.



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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 Historical Museum, 6211 Mt Tacoma Dr. SW, Lakewood, WA 98499

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 the website for information on events and activities.

www.lakewoodhistorical.org

EDITOR

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President's Message

Rather than writing my regular message I am using this space to make a personal appeal to all of you. Last year we survived museum closure and our funding is more secure this year. But it is not enough to have money in the bank to pay the rent. We need people to put time and effort into the organization so we can grow our membership, improve the museum exhibits and accomplish our goals. We must have a cadre of loyal volunteers to fill various roles and perform certain tasks. It is very unfair to keep asking the same small number of people to keep adding to their responsibilities. We need an "army" of members who fill the vital roles that any healthy organization needs. We already have a general or leader and several colonels but we need a lot of "foot soldiers" and "sergeants" to get the work done. We are not asking you to do something that you are unfamiliar with unless you want to learn something new. All of you have unique skills and abilities that would add greatly and meet the needs of the organization.

If you have been a business owner, you could help revise our business plan or solicit business members to sponsor the Museum.

If you are handy or crafty, you could help with museum exhibits.

If you have computer skills, you can enter data on the computer. It can be done anytime and not just when the museum is open.

If you like doing research, we need to develop a manual for the docents so they can be better informed when talking with visitors. We also need researchers to obtain background information for our exhibits. This can be done at home at your convenience.

If you like people, you would be perfect as a docent in the museum for a two or four hour shift. We also need volunteers to staff a table at community events such as the Chamber Showcase, the Senior Center Open House and SummerFEST.

If you enjoy public speaking, we need people to make presentations to various groups to tell them about our Society and Museum.

If you are a grandmother, teacher or enjoy kids, we need to develop our education program. If we don't teach and inspire young people about our history, who is going to carry on the future of our organization?

If you have planned a wedding or party, you can help with special events such as the "Max is Back" variety show.

If you have leadership skills, we need you to consider being chair of a committee or on the board.

If you are unable to get out, we even have jobs for you such as writing Thank Yous and calling members to remind them about programs and events.

So please contact me at 253-582-8682 or e-mail – craftyhubers@comcast.net . I would be happy to discuss with you in more detail about any of the jobs listed. I welcome your suggestions but I need a commitment from each of you to be involved and dedicate whatever amount of time you can carve out of your crazy life to meet the needs of the Society.

Thank you for your support.

Becky Huber



Lakewood Historical markers

The historical markers in Lakewood mark much of our early history. The monument at left with its marker enlarged below pays homage to the graveyard at Western State Hospital. It is located east of the red barn in Fort Steilacoom Park and was created by the Graves Concern Association in 2003.

Prior to that time, the hospital graves were unmarked other than for numbered identities of the buried.

The Bradley Blockhouse and Flett House marker is mounted on a rock at the corner of Bridgeport and Custer Road in front of a gas station. The Bradley and Flett houses stood on the site of where the gas station is located currently.

Additional photos of historical markers will be published in future issues of the Prairie Gazette.



A November afternoon with Elizabeth Poinsett

It's a rainy November afternoon (in 2006) when Elizabeth Poinsett invites me in for a chat. As we sit down to tea, Elizabeth takes me back to when her family first moved to the prairie land around Lake Steilacoom, now called Lakewood. The year was 1918 and she was 7 years old. Sheep outnumbered trees on the prairie then, and Elizabeth and her sister Katharine would put their dolls in a tiny makeshift covered wagons made of shoeboxes and set off across the prairie like pioneers. Other entertainment would be devising plays and circuses with their neighbors (complete with rope-swinging trapezes), or hurling balls to each other over the roof of the house in games of "Annie-Over".

When Elizabeth was growing up, her father was teaching at Lincoln High School in Tacoma, and he later turned his hand to inventing. His most successful invention was the "Slam-Bang", a high frequency blue light process that shortened the time for drying glue on timber from one week to one minute. The invention took him all over the country, including to California to help put together eccentric movie director Howard Hughes' giant wooden plane, the "Spruce Goose".

Also amongst the 35 patents Elizabeth's father invented was a diathermy machine that used a vacuum tube and pads to help activate the bloodstream, helping to cure colds and all sorts of ailments. When Elizabeth came down with scarlet fever in her early twenties, the doctors had given up on her and she was ready to die. The diathermy machine saved her and she "opened up like a flower". The machine never sold so well with the doctors, however. When Elizabeth's father went to pick up an unwanted machine from a doctor's office, a nurse whispered in his ear that the

real reason it wasn't being bought was that with the diathermy machine around, "the doctors couldn't peddle their pills."

When Elizabeth reached high school age she had to go to Stadium High School in Tacoma. She often got a ride with her father, and sometimes took the streetcar from a stop just north of where the Colonial Center now stands. However, her mother wasn't happy about young girls having to wait at the station in Tacoma with its unsavory cast of characters. After Elizabeth left home, her mother, Iva Alice Mann, began a quiet crusade to form a unified school district in the Lakes District.

Elizabeth went off to study at the College of Puget Sound and graduated with a BS in 1933. She obtained a teaching certificate for the University of Washington in 1937. She became a teacher of home economics, and her first job was in the small town of Peshastin over near Leavenworth. As was the common practice then for a young new teacher in a new town, Elizabeth lived with a local family, boarding in the attic of their farmhouse. In the wintertime heavy snows fell and like everyone else, she used cross-country skis to get to school. That first year she really thought she would quit teaching - an experience for new teachers that seems to cross the ages. The small school wanted to do all the things that big city schools did, and loaded her up with the school newspaper, being a senior advisor, teaching science, home economics and civics, co-director of plays and on top of all that, having to put on school banquets.

Experience of farm life stood Elizabeth in good stead for her next job in Rochester, where she was teaching a class of boys to cook. One morning the boys thought they'd show up the young Miss Mann and

brought a whole chicken, feathers and all. By the end of the morning, the chicken was plucked, cooked and eaten. The boys bewildered at their new young teacher's expertise.

After teaching at other schools in Bothell and Everett, Elizabeth returned home to Lakewood during the war and worked at the Mount Rainier Ordinance Depot to get some business experience. She helped to organize a dinner dance there, where she caught the eye of a young soldier recently returned from a lonely two-year posting in the Aleutian Islands. Ray Poinsett turned to his friend and whispered as he nodded towards Elizabeth, "That's the woman I'm going to marry". Ray didn't waste any time, and every night after that he hitchhiked or took the bus up to Lakewood to propose to her. Every night she told him "I think we'd better wait a little while" before finally being won over in November 1944.

They were married a month later in her parents home, shortly before Ray was posted to the Philippines. Her grandmother said it would never last, and her parents were also skeptical. On the foggy night of the wedding, she came down the stairs in her wedding dress, to where her father waited on that last step, and he whispered in her ear, "Are you sure you want to go through with this?" Elizabeth stepped off that last step into 57 years of marriage, and as she puts it, being "showered with love every year."

After the war Ray returned home and they started a family. When their sons, John and Joel, born in the late 40's, were old enough, Elizabeth returned to teaching. At first substituting and then taught for the Fife School District for ten years. Her love of teaching has continued as a tutor in reading for students at

Continued on Page 6

Elizabeth Poinsett-Ninety nine and counting!



99-Year-old Elizabeth Poinsett with sons Joel (left) and John.

By Becky Huber

The halls of Thornewood Castle rang with laughter, lively conversation and music on February 17, 2010 as a host of family and friends celebrated Elizabeth Poinsett's 99th birthday. I'm sure this was a momentous event for the Lakewood landmark that has hosted countless celebrations in its 100 year history. Current owners, Wayne and Deanna Robinson, have lovingly restored and decorated the estate to its original condition, operating it as a bed and breakfast and hosting special occasions such as this one.

Generous measures of hugs and kisses were freely dispensed to "Betty" as she greeted her numerous well-wishers. She "held court" attired in a royal purple pantsuit, wearing an exotic orchid corsage and a pink flashing "Birthday Girl" tiara. After everyone

was assembled a digital photo slide show was presented highlighting her life concluding with the singing of "Happy Birthday." Cake and punch were served by Snuffin's Catering. Entertainment followed with a lively rendition of the hula to the music of "Pearly Shells" with Elizabeth at the center of the group, reminiscent of her trips to Hawaii.

Her regular activities include gardening, travel and attending plays, concerts and baseball games. She entertains frequent guests by serving them tea or a home cooked meal. Health concerns have "slowed her down" necessitating bringing Sandra Godfrey into her life as her caregiver but these "minor" setbacks don't keep her from remaining active in her community.

When asked what has contributed to her longevity, she quickly responds that "living in the moment" and squeezing out the most enjoyment from each activity is what keeps her "young at heart". Her indomitable spirit is an inspiration to everyone she meets, her zest for life is palatable and her winning smile will make any stranger a fast friend.

Elizabeth, may you have many, many, many more "moments" to cherish. As one of your devoted friends who attended this special event, I will treasure it for the rest of my life.

More about Elizabeth Poinsett

Continued from page 4

Park Lodge Elementary School.

In 1999 Ray's health began to deteriorate and Elizabeth had to stay home to care for him. He died in 2002 after 57 years of marriage. Elizabeth joined the Little Church on the Prairie and renewed many of her hobbies and activities that had been curtailed while caring for Ray.

Elizabeth Poinsett has seen more changes in Lakewood than most people. The prairie has gradually been taken over, and the view of Mt Rainier is now obscured in many places by trees and housing developments. She has seen the Colonial Center open and close, and in its heyday she remembers going to the movie theatre there, stopping in at the soda fountain for a milkshake afterwards.

Elizabeth, like her mother was particularly fond of the Ponce de Leon Springs and the creek that flowed through a clover-filled park. Her mother decided that same park should lend its name to the new Clover Park School District

she welded together in 1928. She describes a beautiful creek running through the trees that was later paved over by the Lakewood Mall. The stream got its own back though, flooding the basement of one new store as it was pushed underground beneath the new development. "I think mother could've shot the man who put in that mall." Elizabeth tells me as we're talking about her love of the area.

There are a few downsides to reaching the age of 95. Elizabeth has seen all of her high school friends pass away, and all of her college friends but one are now gone. Did she ever expect that she'd outlive all of her friends? "No, I didn't" she tells me. "But I just keep going and doing new things."

Those new things include line-dancing class, joining a book club at UPS, serving on the Board of Directors of the Lakewood Historical Society and volunteering as a docent at the History Museum. She also keeps up with her well-practiced

hobbies such as playing the dulcimer and oil painting - the walls of her home are lined with a remarkable variety of paintings she has worked on over the years. She is also kept busy with entertaining and attending social functions with her friends she has met along the way.

Elizabeth Poinsett is still going strong, having survived numerous surgeries and has fought back from a stroke some years ago. She is a living treasure trove of stories - a great too many to write here. So, if you have the pleasure of meeting her, you'll have to ask her about ice skating down the hill in Seattle to catch a ferry on her honeymoon; about losing her luggage on the Danube; her happy memories of UW; her many near-death experiences; boating on the Sound; intrepid trips on Mt Rainier; or any of the other great stories she has to tell.

This edited article was first published in the Jan-Feb 2007 LHS Newsletter, written by Hayden Mackley, the editor and transcribed from an interview done by Bill and Donna Cable for the use of their Oral History Project.

Update on the Eagle Scout Project at the Old Settlers Cemetery

Did anyone notice the "army" of kids working industriously at the Old Settlers Cemetery on Washington Blvd on Saturday, March 6? Well, Leavitt Castro and other scouts were removing the old fence to make way for the new one that will be installed in the next few weeks. He had finally gotten enough money donated to get a portion of it completed.

Now Leavitt needs your support to complete the project. He needs to complete the project this year and collect an additional \$5,000. The Lakewood First Lions have stepped up to accept the funds so your donation can be tax deductible. Please send

your contributions to:

Lakewood First Lions Community Foundation
8315 Washington Blvd SW
Lakewood, WA 98498
Note: Old Settlers Cemetery Eagle Project

Contact Leavitt at 253-581-3869 or e-mail legotrains@comcast.net if you have any questions or want to volunteer.

**Have you asked
a relative, friend or neighbor to join you
in a visit to the
Lakewood History Museum?
Why Not!**

**LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
FINANCIAL STATEMENT
FEBRUARY 28, 2010**

Cash on Hand	01/31/2010	12/31/2009
Checking	\$ 2,305.11	\$ 1,907.36
Money Market	\$12,334.14	\$10,807.58
Total	\$14,639.25	\$ 12,714.94
Income	February 2010	2 Months 2010 YTD
Grants	\$ 0.00	\$ 3017.52
Memberships	\$ 305.00	\$ 520.00
Donations – Museum Fund	\$ 790.00	\$ 1810.00
Sponsorships	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Memorials	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Special Fund Raisers	\$ 680.00	\$ 860.00
Bank Interest	\$ 8.47	\$ 17.51
Other	\$ 20.32	\$ 60.32
Total Income	\$ 1803.79	\$ 6285.35
Expenses		
Operations & Administration	\$ 260.38	\$ 574.35
Web Site	\$ 0.00	\$ 125.00
Contract Services	\$ 948.54	\$ 948.54
Permanent Museum Study	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Insurance	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Museum Lease	\$ 1500.00	\$ 3000.00
Museum Exhibits	\$ 12.94	\$ 12.94
Postage, Copies & Printing	\$ 1.19	\$ 174.02
Museum Annual Fund	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Special Events	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Marketing/Publicity	\$ 0.00	\$ 445.45
Total Expenses	\$ 2723.05	\$ 5280.30
Closing Cash on Hand	02/28/2010	
Checking	\$ 3,825.92	\$ 3,825.92
Money Market	\$ 9,894.07	\$ 9,894.07
Total	\$13,719.99	\$13,719.99

Prepared 03/ 02/2010

**MUSEUM FUND
DONORS SINCE
JANUARY 2010
NEWSLETTER**

Darlene Anderson
Bob and Marilyn Arndt
Marion Ball
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Pearl Finley
Gary and Karen Fowler
Horace Gamas
Ruth Stevick & Lynn Gracey
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Charlie Hyde
Clyde and Jean Kalahan
Florence March
Brad and Liz MacGowan
James Manning
Sharon & Clark Montgomery
Gene and Margaret Pankey
Alice Peeples
Elizabeth Poinsett
Jeanne Reigelman
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Glen and Marlene Spieth
Raye Staples
Irwin Sternberg
Linda VanDy
Joan Walston
Harriet Wolverton
Paul and Becky Wulfestieg
David and Barbara Young

**Now is the time for all good members to join in
the aid of the Lakewood Historical Society
Sponsor a new member * Become a museum docent
Attend a monthly program * Serve on a committee
Your help is needed now!
Lakewood Historical Society
6211 Mount Tacoma Dr SW, Lakewood WA 98498
253-682-3480 <http://www.lakewoodhistorical.org>**

**NEW MEMBERS
SINCE JANUARY
NEWSLETTER**

Mary Bowlby
Steve Cissell
Allan G. (Bud) Emmons
and Frances Emmons
Jeanne Reigelman

Lakewood Historical Society
P.O. Box 98014
Lakewood, WA 98496

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Programs for Spring 2010

*Meetings start at 7 pm in Lakewood Library meeting room
6300 Wildaire Road SW, Lakewood unless otherwise mentioned.*

Saturday, April 17, 2 pm, Command Performance of HMS Pinafore, Lakewood Playhouse, 5729 Lakewood Towne Center Blvd SW; a Society fund raiser, tickets are \$20.

Saturday, May 1, 2 pm, "Max is Back" Vaudeville Variety Show, Lakes High School Performing Arts Center, 10320 Farwest Drive SW, Lakewood; a fund raiser, tickets \$15 and \$20, see details on Page 1 of this issue.

Tuesday, May 18, 7 pm, Historic Home Tour of Rhodesleigh Estate historic home built on Lake Steilacoom in 1921 by Arthur Rhodes of Rhodes Department Store. Home is for sale by Michael Morrison, Sotheby's International Realty. Tour is open to the public. Details to follow.

Tues, June 15, 7 pm, Bad Boys of McNeil Island, presented by Joan Curtis, Steilacoom historian.

Saturday, June 26, 12-7 pm, SummerFEST, Ft Steilacoom Park, Lakewood; tours of park highlighting history of Western State Hospital and Historic Ft Steilacoom; drawing for Hawaii trip at 4 pm