



# Brairie Gazette

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SPRING, 2011



## New Exhibit at the Lakewood History Museum Debut a Big Success

The Lakewood Historical Society proudly presented a new exhibit, "Clover Park: How a School District Helped Build a Community" on Saturday, March 19th. It had been intended that Elizabeth Poinsett, daughter of Iva Alice Mann would have the honor of cutting the ribbon to the entrance of the exhibit. However, her untimely

death on February 22nd necessitated that her first cousin, Ken Wheeler, perform the duty. Other family members, Debbie LeBeau, current Superintendent of the district and Carl Fynboe, former Principal of the Clover Park High School were in attendance. The new Artist's Corner showcased paintings done by Elizabeth, as well as her mother, sister and aunt. Future art exhibits will be coordinated by the Lakewood Arts Commission.

The exhibit was the first project completed by Meg Justus, a museum consultant hired in October 2010 to do the research and development, since receiving her certification in Museum Studies from the University of Washington in June 2010. Dick Meier, a Society member who devoted countless

Left: Becky Huber, Debbie LeBeau and Ken Wheeler at Ribbon Cutting.  
Right: Meg Justus and Dick Meier attending the debut



volunteer hours, was instrumental in the implementation of the design of the new exhibit space. All of the hard work put into this exhibit will carry over to other rotating exhibits planned for the future.

The exhibit was made possible in large part to the generous donations of Comcast, Helga Miller and donations made in Elizabeth Poinsett's memory.



## Lakewood Pioneer Passes

Lakewood pioneer, Elizabeth Poinsett, tragically fell in her Lakewood home and broke her hip on her 100th birthday. She was taken to the hospital where surgery was performed but she did not recover from the stress of the operation and passed away peacefully, Tuesday, February 22nd, at St. Clare Hospital.

Her death occurred the week after she had celebrated her 100th birthday among a large gathering of family and friends on Sunday, February 13th at the Little Church on the Prairie. Prairie Hall was gaily

decorated with a Hawaiian theme reminiscent of her love of the Islands where she and her late husband, Ray, spent many vacations. One hundred colorful Mylar balloons clung to the ceiling while the very young and old alike individually greeted Elizabeth and presented cards to this beloved member of the church and community. Kate Burch and Ken Upton led the crowd in serenading her with two favorite songs, "Tiny Bubbles" and "Let Me Call You Sweetheart". Two large decorated cakes, sandwiches, coffee, and punch were served. It was a glorious and



Elisabeth (Betty) Poinsett  
1911 - 2011



## Lakewood Historical Society

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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 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)

### Editor

Dave Sclair  
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## President's Message

### President's Message

Is the cold wet weather ever going to leave? Flowers and trees know it is spring as they burst with bloom. It is also a time for renewal for the Society as well. It has been an extremely hectic three months and a lot of activities and events have happened.

The most time consuming activity was the installation of our brand new exhibit, "Clover Park: The School District that Helped Build a Community", that debuted on March 19th. Read more details on the front page of the newsletter. Please be sure to come in and visit the museum soon and be sure to tell all of your friends and neighbors.

Of course, underlying all of the joy in this accomplishment is the heavy sadness we have in losing our devoted friend and volunteer, Elizabeth Poinsett, on Feb 22nd. Read the article on the front page about her wonderful life. There will never be another more loyal volunteer who has inspired countless people of all ages. Her legacy will be felt for many years to come.

Our next big activity is planning our very special fundraising event that will be held in the afternoon of Sunday, July 31st at Villa Madera. Upon arrival you'll step back in time to the 1920's as the greeters dressed in vintage clothing direct you to the sweeping lawn overlooking Gravelly Lake. You'll hear strains of piano music as you walk past the scent of roses in full bloom. Refreshments will be served in convenient seating areas. Guided tours of the historic home will be offered and include the fascinating history. You'll soon be getting a postcard reminder about the event.

Another project is partnering with Harrison Preparatory School in documenting oral histories of Lakewood's residents. Each of them have a fascinating story to tell and will be shared in future newsletters. It is hoped that this will be an ongoing activity. Please let me know if you or someone you know would enjoy telling about the "good old days".

What cannot be said enough, the Society and Museum would not function without our loyal volunteers who are willing to devote 2 or more hours a month to fulfill various tasks and duties. I am so pleased to have two new docents join us by offering their skills to meet our goals.

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**

## Elizabeth, from page 1

memorable morning of celebration.

Last year Elizabeth's birthday was celebrated in grand fashion at Thornewood Castle. Her sons, John and Joel pulled out all the stops in making it a memorable occasion. Refer to Spring 2010 Prairie Gazette for the full story, "Ninety Nine and Counting", as well as a reprint of the interview done by Hayden Mackley in 2006, "An Afternoon with Elizabeth".

Elizabeth was born on February 17, 1911 in Yakima, WA and moved with her parents to the prairie around Lake Steilacoom when she was 7 years old. Her mother and father had careers in education and Elizabeth did likewise. Her mother, Iva Alice Mann, was instrumental in establishing the school district in the Lakes area and was so recognized when Mann Junior High School was named in her honor in 1959. Elizabeth and her husband, of 57 years, raised two sons. She remained in their Lakewood home after his

passing in 2002. In spite of needing a full time care giver, she still kept up with her numerous activities.

As a Charter member of the Society she helped preserve the chronicles of this city from its beginning as a vast wilderness prairie to its present day development. She served on the Board of Directors and continued to attend meetings regularly even after she was given Director Emeritus status in 2008. She volunteered as a docent at the History Museum on a monthly basis and enjoyed telling visitors about the "good old days" in the Lakes District.

Elizabeth lived a full and storied life as a scholar, a teacher, an artist, and was a charming lady who was beloved by all those she met and befriended throughout her many years. She will remain in our memories as a loving and dedicated member of the community, a Lakewood pioneer in the true sense of the word. Many feel blessed to have shared their lives with Elizabeth as she was truly a treasure to know and love.

## New Member Orientation

An active and involved membership is one of the Society's greatest strengths. Informed members that use every opportunity to promote the Society are the best way to grow. Actively participating members that are involved in our projects, committees and activities is the best way to get our goals accomplished.

Another New Member Orientation is scheduled for Wed, May 11th, 7-8 pm OR Sat, May 14th, 1-2 pm. It will be held at the Lakewood History Museum, 6211 Mt Tacoma Dr SW. Personal invitations will be sent to those who have joined since October, 2010. Anyone who has joined in the last year is welcome to attend. Please RSVP to Becky Huber by May 10th, at 253-582-8682 or [craftyhubers@comcast.net](mailto:craftyhubers@comcast.net) if you plan to attend either time.

## New Volunteers at Museum

Barbara Scott and Kristen Davis have joined the group of dedicated volunteers who docent at the Lakewood History Museum on a monthly basis. They will be adding their special talents and assisting in Society in various tasks while on duty.

The museum docent is often the first person to introduce the first-time visitor to the history of the area and the activities of the Society. It is especially rewarding for a long time resident to relate stories about "the good old days" or to donate an artifact that can be placed

## Memorials in Honor of: Elizabeth Poinsett

by Helen Amsbary  
by Margaret J. (Peggy) Bal  
by Patty Ann Forsyth  
by Carl and Ingrid Fynboe  
by John and Rebecca Huber  
by Kris and Sylvia Kauffman  
by Laurel Lemke  
by Eugene K. Maun  
by Lisette C. Meyer  
by Helga Miller  
by Mathew D. Miller and  
Sharia A. Crumbaker-Miller  
by Jim, Ann and Karen Pallilo  
by Frances and Mayo Prentice  
by Robert and Skaidrite Russ  
by Patricia G. and Lorelei Stolp  
by Bob and Candy Tingstad  
by Sharon M. Wheeler  
by Dorothy Wilhelm  
by Paul and Rebecca Wulfestieg

in an upcoming exhibit. It is exciting to see a child's face light up when they learn something interesting about their grandparent's past.

Don't you want to join us as a volunteer? Please contact Becky Huber at 253-582-8682 or e-mail [craftyhubers@comcast.net](mailto:craftyhubers@comcast.net) to learn more.





## Pat Graham to display her art at the Lakewood History Museum

Accomplished Lakewood artist, Pat Graham, will display her work at the Lakewood History Museum starting in early May. The museum's new feature, the Artist's Corner, debuted the works of Elizabeth Poinsett at the Grand Opening of the new exhibit "Clover Park: The School District that Helped Build a Community" on March 19th.

Pat has been an accomplished artist since an early age and has taken lessons and training through her whole life. She immersed herself in the commercial art field after attending Clover Park Vocational School. She has been recognized for her fine work by receiving numerous awards and has been selling her artwork since the age of nine. She was unable to paint for twelve long years when she was affected by a serious condition that affected her eyesight. Fortunately, in 1998 she had successful surgery that corrected the condition. Since that time she has been creating paintings with more focus than ever before. She will be one of the artists featured in an art exhibit sponsored by the Lakewood Arts Commission being held at Lakewood Gardens as a part of their annual Mayfest from May 2-8th.

A special evening event will be held at the museum in Pat's honor after the paintings are put on display. Details will be announced later.

# Be a part of the largest community reading event in Pierce County

## 2011 Pierce County READS

Pierce County READS is the largest community reading event in Pierce County. This year marks the fourth annual Pierce County READS program, which will run March 5-April 30. The Lakewood Historical Society is one of dozens of community partners sponsoring the event.

Following a public vote, Pierce County Library System selected the best-seller "The Big Burn" by Pulitzer Prize winner Timothy Egan for this year's READS book.

"Involving residents to help select the book makes the reading event an even greater part of the community," said Neel Parikh, executive director, for Pierce County Library System. "The program is focused on taking a reading activity and giving people opportunities to discuss and connect as a community."

"The Big Burn," chronicles the epic story of the largest-ever forest fire in America and the tragedy that became Theodore Roosevelt's legacy. History lovers, outdoor enthusiasts, conservationists, or just North American residents will be enthralled and compelled with the suspenseful and spellbinding account of the Great Fire of August 1910.

During the Pierce County READS program people may participate in more than 40 free events, which will include gardening with native plants, getting inspired about climbing Mount Rainier, hearing how firefighters battle forest fires, and discovering early 1900's history. For further information visit Pierce County READS @ [www.piercecountylibrary.org](http://www.piercecountylibrary.org).

People may meet the award-winning author Timothy Egan at a free event and book signing at Clover Park Technical College, Sharon McGavick Conference Center, in Lakewood, on Sat, April 30, at 7 pm.

## Sorry the Newsletter is Late

**I apologize for you receiving this newsletter late. As most of you know, Dave Sclair, our editor for the last 3 years, has had some recent health concerns. He has been diagnosed with brain cancer that is being aggressively treated. It has significantly affected his involvement with volunteer activities. It isn't until something like this happens that you truly understand how much you rely on that person. Please put Dave and his family in your prayers.**

<b>FINANCIAL STATEMENT: 1st Quarter 2011</b>	
Cash on Hand - January 1	\$13,875
Income	\$13,871
Expenses	\$15,395
Ending Cash - March 31	\$12,371

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## Now is the time To aid YOUR Society!

Our organization is operated by volunteers. If many people help in some small way the tasks can be completed. I realize that all of you have very busy schedules, time constraints and personal commitments but I'd like you to consider donating at least 2-4 hours a month to assist the Lakewood Historical Society. Listed below are responsibilities and tasks that need assistance.

All of the committees already have someone in charge. The committees meet on a regular basis to discuss the activity. Your role is to receive assignments and work with the Chairman.

1. **Museum Docent**-We need at least 10 more people to take at least a two hour shift a month to greet visitors at the museum. It is not required that you know the local history but rather you enjoy meeting new people and share what you know and learn from others.

2. **Collections Committee**-This committee is responsible for inventorying and processing our donations. New items received in the museum need to be documented. The work can be done on a schedule convenient for you.

3. **Special Event Committee**-Our next major fund raising event, "A Walk into History at Villa Madera" is being planned for July 31, 2011. For this event to be successful we need volunteers to escort guests to the center of activity, assist the caterers and lead tours of the home.

4. **Program Committee**-Members plan and coordinate the monthly programs for the coming year. You will share the responsibility as the "lead" for several programs assisting the presenter to ensure all details are coordinated. If you have ideas for programs we welcome your input.

5. **Calling Committee**- This activity is done at home and only requires a minimum of time. You will be responsible for calling about 10-15 people every month to

remind them about our programs and events.

6. **Society Board**- We currently have one vacancy on the LHS Board this year. Consider this job if you have leadership skills and want a challenge. Elections will be held in November and Directors are elected for a three year term.

7. **Website Manager**- Here is an ideal job for someone who is computer savvy. You will be responsible for submitting information on programs and events on a monthly or as needed basis. Most of the time spent on the activity can be done at home on your own schedule.

Please seriously consider how you can help the Society, using the talents you already have and the experience you have already gained. Your commitment and active involvement are what makes it YOUR Society. I look forward to hearing from you.

Call Becky at 253-582-8682 or e-mail [craftyhubers@comcast.net](mailto:craftyhubers@comcast.net) to let me know what task you'd like to help with or if you have questions.

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## Society to Host Its Next Major Fund Raising Event at Villa Madera

On July 31st, come take a walk through history at Villa Madera, a spacious Spanish Colonial estate built in 1919 with a rich history and classic old world elegance. Spend a summer afternoon sipping a glass of wine, nibbling on delicious hors d'ouvres, viewing the lush gardens and listening to live music. The theme will be the 1920's and we encourage guests to wear vintage clothing.

As you tour this Gravelly Lake mansion you'll quickly recognize it is one of the crown jewels of the Pacific Northwest. The Lakes District was famous for historic estate homes owned by Tacoma lumber tycoons and businessmen. The original 12 acre estate gardens have been recognized by Sunset Magazine and the Garden Club of



America. Most of the homes are closed to the general public but for this one special occasion you'll have a unique opportunity to have an intimate look at one.

Tickets are only \$50 each and will be available in May. Proceeds go towards the operation of the

Lakewood History Museum and the promotion of Society activities. You will not want to miss out on this once in a life time opportunity. Be sure to invite your friends and neighbors. A "Save the Date" postcard will be sent soon.

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# Society Partners with Harrison Preparatory School in Oral History Project

Becky Huber and Nancy Covert, Steilacoom historian, have coordinated a joint project with Justin Gorman, a Social Studies teacher at Harrison Preparatory School, for their yearly Community and Service activity. It was determined that doing Oral Histories would be a worthwhile project for both parties. Not only would students be introduced to the interview process and learn about the local history but the Society would start gathering firsthand accounts from some of its members.

The interviewees include Lakewood's first mayor and Lt. General (ret) Bill Harrison for whom the school is named, Claudia Thomas, Lakewood City council member, Kris Kauffman, Society Board member and Reynold Muranaka, a Japanese American who served in World War II. In total, 10 people were interviewed by 2-4 member teams of students.

The interviews took place in

the Intel Computer Clubhouse Network facilities housed in the basement of the old Lake City Elementary School behind Harrison Prep. Equipment used provided a number of ways to capture the interviews. The raw data will be transcribed, edited by the students and made into a finished product that will be shared with the school in June. The Society will also receive copies of the completed interviews. Plans are being made



for them to become a part of a future audio-visual library in the Lakewood History Museum that will be available to members and visitors.

## Photos

Top: Lakewood Historical Society's president, Becky Huber is interviewed by a student participating in the Oral Histories project.

Center: Lt. General (ret) Bill Harrison, shares a wealth of history with students, including accounts of the formation of the City of Lakewood and his terms as mayor.

Left: Justin Gorman, a teacher at Harrison Preparatory School, is coordinating the Oral Histories project. Students participating in the project watch over his shoulder as he enters information into a database.

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# Lakewood History Museum

Thank You, Museum Fund Donors and Sponsors

2011 Goal: \$25,000 for Operations,  
Education, Exhibits, Programs and  
Community Outreach.

Actual: \$13,040 from 67 donors plus  
\$1245 Memorial gifts from 21 donors.

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



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## **SPONSORS, BUSINESS and ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

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### **PREMIER - \$1,000 or more**

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Brad and Liz MacGowen  
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Cynthia Spieth  
Glen and Marlene Spieth  
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**Lakewood, WA 98496**

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## **Program and Event Schedule: Spring 2011**

Please note: Lakewood Historical Society Programs have been moved to New Location! Starting Mar 15th programs will be presented in the Parish Hall of St Mary's Episcopal Church, 10630 Gravelly Lake Drive SW, next to the Lakewood Library.

Tues, May 17, 7 pm: Uncivil War: Battle of the Classroom. Author Nick Adams will review his book that is being presented to commemorate the 150th Anniversary of the start of the Civil War.

Tues, June 21, 7 pm: History of the Lakewood Fire Department (now West Pierce County Fire and Rescue) A representative will provide a brief overview of the history of the department that was established over 70 years ago as well as present the latest update on the merger with University Place.

Sat, Jun25th, 12 noon-7 pm: City of Lakewood's Summer FEST, Ft Steilacoom Park, the Society will again participate in this event. Come by and see historic photos and

Sun, July 31, 2011: SAVE THIS DATE! Social Event at Villa Madera, signature fund raising event to be held at historic estate home. Details will be announced later.