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BECAUSE OUR HISTORY MATTERS

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# Brairie Gazette

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2008

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*Mueller-Harkins Airport Hangar located at today's Clover Park Tech College Campus*

## LHS Board decides on Permanent Museum site

After careful and thoughtful deliberation the LHS Board has finally decided on the permanent site to pursue for the Lakewood History Museum. Since the inception of the Society in 1998, it has always been a dream to have a museum to showcase the history of the Lakewood area.

The LHS Planning Committee began the process in June 2005 by reviewing potential sites. Eight sites were presented to the membership on September 2005. The list was narrowed to two; the Boatman-Ainsworth House, the oldest

home in Lakewood built by Oregon Trail pioneers, and the Mueller-Harkins Hangar, built in 1928-29 as part of the Tacoma Airport and now on the campus of the Clover Park Technical College. A feasibility study comparing the two sites was done by BCRA, a Tacoma architectural, engineering and planning firm, in January, 2006. The results were presented to the LHS Board with the recommendation to select the Hangar.

Any further follow up on the permanent site selection process was deferred because of the more immediate decision to pursue a temporary

storefront museum. The start up museum would give the Society an opportunity to learn about museum management, train volunteer docents, acquire a collection of artifacts and memorabilia and start fundraising to meet the increased operational expenses. After a review of various locations in the city, a space in the historic Lakewood Colonial Center was leased in June 2006. Just like any new family we started out modestly and "made do" with borrowed and used furniture. We even salvaged closet doors to use as display panels. Countless

**Continued on Page 3**



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

### EDITOR

Dave Sclair  
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## LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM MUSEUM FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

June 25, 20

*Thank you, Museum fund donors and sponsors*

### Gifts - \$7452 YTD

Goal : \$25,000 by Dec 31, 2008  
for Operations, Education, Exhibits,  
Programs and Community Outreach

### City of Lakewood Lodging Tax supports museum promotions

## NEW MUSEUM FUND DONORS

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hours were devoted by volunteers and contracted staff in fabricating and arranging exhibits and displays. Finally, in October, we opened our doors and welcomed our community into our new home.

Now that the storefront museum was operational, it was time to resume the pursuit of the permanent site. The process began in November 2007 by the formation of a Task Force that presented the new Board the research previously done. With the aid of a facilitator at the retreat in March 2008, the Board compiled a list of criteria. They included: use a historic building, have enough space to display Lakewood history as well as have Society and community activities, a location that had easy access for visitors, and had a favorable long term lease or purchase price. The criteria were applied to the following sites: a larger space in the Lakewood Colonial Center, the Boatman-Ainsworth House and the Mueller-Harkins Hangar.

In April the LHS Board unanimously approved the Hangar as the permanent

museum site. It met all of the criteria plus it provided a unique advantage to partner with the College.

The Colonial Center did not have a large enough space available and the rent would have been prohibitively expensive. The Boatman-Ainsworth House had limitations because there was limited space available for exhibits other than those pertinent to the time periods it represented. The surrounding land would not have accommodated adequate parking or enough new buildings for the other Society activities or museum services. Even with a below market asking price, it would have meant purchasing the home outright, something the Society was in no position to do. One of the major reasons to have selected the property would have been to “save it from developers.” Fortunately, the home is on the National, State and City of Lakewood Historic Registries so any changes made by a new owner would require approval by the Landmarks Heritage Advisory Board.

Because CPTC would be our “landlord” and the

primary partner, Becky Huber, President of the Society, and Glen Speith, the Task Force chairman, met with Dr John Walstrum, President of CPTC and Tony Robinson, Operations and Facilities Vice President in April. It was quickly realized by all of us that we wanted to “make this happen.” In May, the College’s Board of Trustees approved the concept.

Now we are ready to move forward in the negotiations for a long term lease. There are many concerns and issues that need to be addressed by both parties. We also realize there are other partners we need to bring into the project. We are embarking on a journey in which the end result is a museum we all can be proud of that is utilized by our community and appreciated by visitors. We look forward to giving you regular updates on the progress of the project and welcome your input at anytime.

I continue to be inspired by all of you everyday and it gives me strength to carry on.

Your fearless leader,

Becky Huber

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## ***Please consider helping the museum!***

**We are constantly on the lookout for items of historical significance. Please contact the museum if you have relics you are willing to donate or loan for exhibits.**

**6211 Mount Tacoma Dr SW, Lakewood, WA 98498 253-682-3480**

# Program outlines early schools of Lakewood

By Becky Huber

Try to imagine what it was like and how important education was to the early pioneers who wanted a school built before there were stores, before there were roads and before there were enough residents to fully support a school. They knew that schools brought families and families instilled permanency-the basis on which a community would grow and prosper. This area had just become the Washington Territory in 1853 and settlers were coming over the Naches Pass of the Cascades Mountains.

The area was sparsely populated and everyone relied on their neighbors.

Byrd School, built in 1855 on the site of the present day Park Lodge School, was the first schoolhouse north of the Columbia River. It was built on an acre donated by A. J. Knecht. Henry Withiel furnished 3,000 shingles for which he was paid \$12. Lumber was supplied by the A. F. Byrd Mill. David Hall presented a bill for \$130 for building the school. This was a typical "country school" in which all eight grades were taught by the same teacher in the one room.

In 1856 the school was moved to a more "centrally located" site on an acre of the W. P. Dougherty Claim, near the present day Clover Park Technical College. The teacher's salary was \$40 a month. School was held for only three months. This "long vacation" and a new teacher nearly every term made for slow scholastic progress. The school drew from a large area that included Lakeview, Parkland, and American Lake and as far away as Spanaway, Fern Hill and Day Island.

In 1861 it was determined that the school was too small. The old building was sold for \$36 and a new school was constructed, measuring 36' by 46' and 12 feet high. There were 41 pupils in 1863 and the term was extended to six months. Girls showed better attendance than boys who often had to help with farm work and took jobs in the lumber

mills and logging camps.

In the 1880's the Lakeview community had begun to grow rapidly and a movement was begun to move Byrd School. However, bitter opposition arose and one Saturday night in 1885 the schoolhouse burned to the ground. All the pupils lost their books, except those of one family who were told to bring their books home on Friday. The cause of the fire was never determined. Classes continued in an old log cabin on the John Rigney Claim until the new Lakeview School was completed in 1890.

As the population in the Lakes District grew, so too was the need for more schools. By 1912 when Park Lodge School was built, there were five schools, each having its own district, management and financial support. As each school's enrollment increased, buildings were expanded or rebuilt. Classrooms were filled to capacity and teachers were stretched to the maximum with 30-40 students in each room. The same pressures were being applied to the Tacoma schools and it was becoming increasingly difficult for that district to supply the higher education needs of the entire region.

The schools in the Lakes District only provided education only through the first eight grades. Students had to travel to Tacoma in order to receive a high school education. No mean feat in those days before the automobile was commonly used. They relied on "public transportation" primarily street cars to get them to school.

In 1928 it was realized by Lakes District residents that major changes needed to be made. A group of local educators and prominent citizens decided the best alternative was to form the union high school district and start their own junior high school. The initial enrollment of 135 included the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades from all of the grade schools who were moved to the new facility, relieving the over crowding. Additional building was

done in 1937 to accommodate the high school grades with the first graduating in 1940. In 1941 the district officially became known as Clover Park School District #400 as we know it today.

Several private schools also provided education. DeKoven Hall founded by DeLos Schuyler Pulford in 1891, named in honor of Dr James DeKoven, who taught Pulford in Racine, WI. The school ceased to operate in 1916. In 1919 the property was bought by Henry Slauter and operated as the DeKoven Inn until 1925 when a fire burned the main building. The remaining buildings were operated as apartments.

Visitation Villa was a Catholic girls' school. It was founded by the Sisters of Visitation, a Catholic order originally started in France in 1610. They moved their school to Tacoma at 18<sup>th</sup> and Yakima in 1891. When this site became unsuitable they relocated it to the Richmore Estate in 1923. The property was sold in 1954 and became the Villa Plaza shopping center in 1957.

Because of limited space, more detailed information on the Park Lodge School was unable to be included in this article. A future issue of the Prairie Gazette will be devoted to it.

Timeline of Lakewood area schools:

1. 1855-Byrd School
2. 1890-Lakeview School
3. 1891- DeKoven Hall-private boys school
4. 1891-Custer School
5. 1907-Lake City School
6. 1910-American Lake South School
7. 1912-Park Lodge School
8. 1923-Visitation Villa-Catholic school for girls
9. 1928-union high school district #204 formed, Clover Park Junior High School started
10. 1941-district renamed Clover Park School District #400



# Evolution of Washington Schools from 1854

In the great Westward Migration, from the plains to the west coast, the schoolhouse followed the flag. America's earliest pioneers believed that educating their children was the only way to ensure a secure future for our democratic institutions as well as a bright and secure future for their offspring.

Prior to 1853, the primary educational influences in the Territory were the Hudson Bay Company and the missionaries. On April 12, 1854, the Legislative Assembly of the new Territory of Washington passed the Basic School Law of 1854 that established the common school system of the Territory.

The new law established that schools would be funded by a property tax in each county plus the moneys received in fines for breach of the penal code. The law also required the election of a county superintendent whose duties were to establish districts, issue teaching certificates, visit schools, and apportion the funds.

When statehood was granted in 1889, the state assumed responsibility for fostering equal opportunity for each child in the State and in fostering increasingly higher standards of education. The curriculum expanded beyond the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic as the

number of students grew and new schools developed.

The desire of the residents of the state and the Legislature was to provide universal education. Because of this, one of the most significant statutes in the history of the state was enacted in 1895, known as the "Barefoot Schoolboy Law." It authorized a state tax to be levied for each child between the ages of 5 and 21. The proceeds would be devoted to equalizing the funding between districts. By

the end of the 19th Century, the foundation for excellence in education was firmly in place in Washington State and education would continue to improve throughout the 20th Century.

Credits: This article is condensed from "Education Narrative History, The History of the Common School" accompanying the exhibit, Washington Schoolhouses, organized by the Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma, Washington.

## ***Can You Help?***

We are still looking for an older classroom globe, flag, and other typical supplies plus posters, artwork, photos, school books, maps, papers, grade cards, pennants, banners, programs, trophies, awards, and uniforms for sports and other school events, and more. Lakewood schools include public, private and church schools and we would like to represent as many as possible in this exhibit and in our permanent collection.

A few months ago Clover Park High School contributed a great selection of CPHS yearbooks from their excess supply... surely Lakes High alums don't want to leave this one-sided?

Please let us know if you have items to add to the Museum's collection and archives.

## ***Boy Scout Troop 51 Creative Work Displayed***

The Museum is currently showing five artistic photos featuring the creative endeavors of Boy Scout Troop 51 award winners from a recent class on digital photography taught by Tod Wolf of Robi's Camera Center.

The top five photographs were taken by Ryan Harrington, Sean Hobbs, Hunter Larsen, Matt Lewis, and AJ McReynolds.

The photographs were previously on display at Lakewood City Hall. This display will be up through July.



## Lakewood History Museum

*Thank You,  
Museum Fund  
Donors  
and  
Sponsors*

**Gifts: \$26,472**

Goal: \$100,000

by July 31, 2009

for Operations, Education, Exhibits,  
Programs and Community Outreach

## LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

New members since the last Newsletter

June 25, 2008

### *NEW MEMBERS*

David and Julie Aiken

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Jim and Mona Stone

Marilee Titus

Ella Washburn

Julia Watness

## ***Do you have items of historical significance?***

**The Lakewood Historical Society is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization.**

**Gifts to the society are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.**

**Please contact the museum if you have questions or want to consider making a contribution.**

**6211 Mount Tacoma Dr SW, Lakewood, WA 98498**

**253-682-3480**

**LAKESWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
FINANCIAL REPORT  
June 30, 2008**

<b>Cash on Hand</b>	<b>05/31/2008</b>	<b>12/31/2007</b>
Checking	\$ 923.69	\$ 2414.68
Money Market	\$ 7085.65	\$10,260.29
Certificate of Deposit	\$ <u>0.00</u>	\$ <u>0.00</u>
Total	\$ 8009.34	\$12,674.97

<b>Income</b>	<b>June 2008</b>	<b>6 Months 2008 YTD</b>
Grants	\$ 0.00	\$23,253.54
Memberships	\$ 760.00	\$ 3015.00
Donations - Museum Fund	\$ 3990.00	\$ 7202.00
Sponsorships	\$ 500.00	\$ 1500.00
Special Fund Raisers	\$ 0.00	\$ 2100.00
Bank Interest	\$ 10.09	\$ 153.73
Other	\$ <u>50.00</u>	\$ <u>371.54</u>
Total Income	\$ 5310.09	\$37,595.81

<b>Expenses</b>		
Operations & Administration	\$1003.72	\$ 2991.79
Web site	\$ 0.00	\$ 255.00
Contract Services	\$ 0.00	\$ 6615.00
Insurance	\$ 0.00	\$ 1280.00
Museum lease	\$2100.00	\$12,100.00
Museum exhibits	\$ 750.00	\$ 4349.01
Postage, copies & printing	\$ 125.50	\$ 2099.15
Museum Annual Fund	\$ 92.86	\$ 2285.15
Special Fund Raiser	\$ 0.00	\$ 1000.00
Marketing/Publicity	\$ 114.73	\$ 8163.06
Other	\$ <u>0.00</u>	\$ <u>0.00</u>
Total Expenses	\$4186.81	\$41,138.16

<b>Closing Cash on Hand 6/30/2008</b>		
Checking	\$ 4709.25	\$ 4709.25
Money Market	\$ 4423.37	\$ 4423.37
Certificate of Deposit	\$ <u>0.00</u>	\$ <u>0.00</u>
Total	\$ 9132.62	\$ 9132.62

# **Lakewood Historical Society Future Programs**

**July 15th - 7 PM: *Life and Times of Gentleman Jim.*** Family members of the famed local historical figure, Admiral James Russell, will present a program about their ancestor from a more personal perspective. Lakewood Library. Open to the public

**Aug 19th - 7 PM: *History of the Lakewood Tennis Club.*** Club members will present a history of tennis, of their local club, and provide a tour of the facilities. Location: Lakewood Racquet & Sport Club, 5820 - 112th Street SW Lakewood, WA 98499

**Sept 16th, 7 PM: *No More Bells or Whistles.*** Paul Curtiss will share his research on the street car companies that operated in the Lakes District in the early 1900's. He has unearthed detailed maps on the routes to include neighborhood stops such as Lochburn, DeKoven, Linwood, and Sherwood. Location: Lakewood Library. Open to the public.

**July 1 - Sept. 30: *Early Schools of Pierce County and Washington.*** A new, temporary exhibit about early schools in Washington Territory and the early years of statehood, featuring many in Lakewood and Pierce County. This exhibit will be supplemented by a display of Lakewood school furnishings, artifacts and memorabilia donated to the museum by former students and community members. Local lore, favorite tales and special school memories will be added as they're collected. We hope you will submit yours. At the conclusion of this exhibit, items will be loaned to the Clover Park School District for display in their recognition of the District's 80th Anniversary. Location: Lakewood History Museum Tuesday-Saturday, 10 am - 4 pm. Open to the public. No fee

Questions about these upcoming programs?

Contact Shannon Krueger 253-579-3249 or Becky Huber 253-582-8682

Lakewood Historical Society  
POBox 98014  
Lakewood, WA 98496