Historic Lakewood Home Has New Owner

By Becky Huber

The Boatman-Ainsworth home is the oldest house in Lakewood and is named for its first two owners, Willis Boatman and John Ainsworth. It dates back to 1858 when Willis Boatman arrived on the South Puget Sound prairie and built a log cabin on 160 acres. He and his pregnant wife Mary Ann made the arduous overland trek on the Oregon Trail in 1852, the year with the largest migration that included settlers looking for a better life as well as those who were seeking their fortunes in the gold fields of California.

Captain John Ainsworth purchased the home from the Boatmans in 1878. He arrived in the Northwest in the 1850’s as an experienced Mississippi River steamboat pilot. In 1860, he started the Oregon Steam Navigation Company and sold the business for five million dollars in 1881.

He was also a prominent investor in Tacoma and was identified with bringing the Northern Pacific Railway Company to the city in 1873. He is known to have entertained the famed Civil War generals William Tecumseh Sherman and Ulysses Grant as well as other area prominent citizens. He made major changes to the home expanding it to its present day appearance. The original log cabin is part of what is now the present day kitchen and dining area.

The forty-acre property was purchased by Craig and Margaret Gunter in 1971 from the family of Dwight Orr, Sr. The Gunter’s raised their three daughters in the home. After Craig died in 2005, the daughters made the difficult decision to sell the home which the family had owned for over 40 years. On November 4th, 2011, Marjorie Thomas-Candau from Medford, New Jersey, became the sixth owner of the 2,800 sq ft home now on the remaining one and a quarter acre property.

Even though Mrs. Thomas-Candau has yet to visit the area and see the home in person, she relied on the information provided by local family and friends to buy the home. Her current home was built in 1860 and she has developed a keen appreciation for what an older home can offer. She plans to move to the area in the next year or two. “It’s very hard to find an old home and one that’s not so expensive you have to be a millionaire to be able to afford it,” Thomas-Candau said. “That’s something that I thought was pretty lucky.”

The Boatman-Ainsworth House was placed on the State Historic Home Registry in 1974, the National Registry of Historic Places in 1982 and the City of Lakewood’s Registry in 2003.

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* New “Cityhood” Exhibit......3
* Donors List..................4&5
* Annual Financial Report....5
* Programs & Events.........8

~Programs and Events~

Winter 2012

NO PROGRAM IN JANUARY.

Tues, Feb 18th, 7 pm-History of the Incorporation of the City of Lakewood, St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, 10630 Gravelly Lake Dr SW, presented by former Mayor and Councilwoman, Claudia Thomas and others involved with the process.

Sat, Feb 25th, 1 pm- Debut of new exhibit, City of Lakewood: The Long Road to Incorporation, Lakewood History Museum, 6211 Mt Tacoma Dr SW.

Tues, Mar 20th, 7 pm-History of the 62nd Airlift Wing at McChord Field, presented by Dr. Robert Allen, the unit historian.

Remember, monthly meetings are held in our new location in the Parish Hall at St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, 10630 Gravelly Lake Drive SW, next to the Lakewood Library.

******Check out our website for more information and current events******

www.LakewoodHistorical.org
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, 6211 Mt. Tacoma Drive SW, Lakewood, WA 98449. Phone: 253-682-3460. 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.

Content of this publication is copyrighted by the Society and/or the authors and artists.

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

Newsletter Editor: Stephen Neufeld
New Museum Exhibit Will Debut in Feb 2012

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The exhibit called “City of Lakewood: The Long Road to Incorporation” will explore the process taken since 1971 when the first failed attempt occurred, losing by a wide margin in our community of 17,000 at that time.

The second attempt was held in 1991 and also failed. The third attempt in 1994 lost by a small margin which qualified the community to hold the election the following year rather than wait three more years.

With the population now at 37,000, the final election in 1995 proved to be successful. It was primarily due to the very organized and concerted efforts of a transition team that was able to provide a vision for what cityhood could offer its citizens. Upon incorporation, Lakewood became the second largest city in Pierce County and the seventh largest in the State of Washington.

On Feb 28th, 1996 the City of Lakewood celebrated its birth with an outside ceremony at the new City Hall that had been established in People’s Plaza at Gravelly Lake Drive. It included comments from various dignitaries, performances of various groups and the introduction of the first City Council with Bill Harrison elected as Mayor and Claudia Thomas as Deputy Mayor.

Meg Justus, the museum consultant who did the school district exhibit, was hired to do the new exhibit. Over the last four months, she has interviewed over 15 people and gone through boxes and boxes of records, clippings and brochures saved and donated by a number of people. T-shirts with the new city logo were provided and a number of new items have been donated.

It may seem unusual that the 17th birthday of a city would be marked by any ceremony or recognition but the Lakewood Historical Society is marking the occasion with an Open House on Feb 25th at 1 pm to debut the new exhibit. The decision to do it now was in large part due to the immediacy in obtaining the oral histories from the witnesses of the event before any more time had passed.

The attainment of cityhood will also be the topic covered for the regularly scheduled Society program on February 21st at 7 pm at St Mary’s Episcopal Church, 10630 Gravelly Lake Drive SW. Presenters will include Bill Harrison, Claudia Thomas, Andie Gernon and others who played a part in the process. They will also highlight the accomplishments and successes that the city has attained in the last 16 years. It is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.
CONTRIBUTOR

Nic Adams/Carolyn Modarelli-Adams
Robert W. Allen
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Sandra K. Anderson
Gene and Peggy Bal
Miles and Cheiko Becker
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Vail D. Stewart
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Thank You,
Museum Fund
Donors and Sponsors

LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM 2011 MUSEUM FUND CONTRIBUTORS
**Lakewood Historical Society and Museum 2011 Museum Fund Contributors**

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- Leona W. Long
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- David J. McDonald
- H. W. (Howie) Meadowcroft
- Dick Muri
- Jeanne Nicker – Abigail’s
- Estate Sales
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- Stanley and Beverly Bills
- Mary Bowlby
- Michael and Hae Yon Brandstetter
- Tacoma Musical Playhouse
- William J. and Dorothy L. Wickline

**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 Kaufman
- by Laurel Lemke
- by Eugene K. Maun
- by Lisette C. Meyer
- by Helga Miller
- by Mathew D. Miller and
- Shara A. Crumbaker-Miller
- by Jim, Ann and Karen Paliio
- by Frances and Mayo Prentice
- by Bob and Candy Tingstad
- by Sharon M. Wheeler
- by Dorothy Qilam
- by Paul and Rebecca Westfield

**Memorials in Honor of:**
- LTC Darwin C. Miller (USA Ret)
- Hem Asmsby
- Margaret J. (Peggy) Bal
- Patty Ann Forsyth
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**Income—**
- Grants $ 7,545.00
- Donations $ 13,253.00
- Sponsorships $ 1,250.00
- Memorials $ 2,570.00
- Special Fund Raisers $ 8,430.00
- Bank Interest $ 99.13
- Other $ 195.00
- Total Income $ 22,752.13

**Expenses—**
- Operations & Administration $ 5,912.57
- Web Site $ 2,545.00
- Contract Services $ 6,815.00
- Insurance $ 1,780.00
- Museum Lease $ 4,949.61
- Postage & Printing $ 1,784.33
- Museum Annual Fund $ 4,444.12
- Special Events $ 9,654.04
- Marketing/Publicity $ 15,987.45
- Total Expenses $ 70,775.59

**Thank You,** Museum Fund
**Donors and Sponsors**

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**LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2011 FINANCIAL STATEMENT**

**Beginning Cash on Hand:**
- Checking $ 1,902.28
- Money Market $ 11,973.51
- Total $ 13,875.79

**LAKEWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM**

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

**Actual: $20,412 plus, $2,545 in Memorial gifts for $22,957 total from 203 donors**

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

**SPONSORS, BUSINESS and ASSOCIATE MEMBERS**

**AA Party Rentals**
- B&B Glass
- BCRA Design
- Better Properties Real Estate
- Robert “Bob” Babigan Insurance
- Cardridge World
- Comcast
- Gramor Development WA
- Harborstone Credit Union
- Heritage Bank
- Lakewood Ford
- Lakewood Chamber of Commerce
- Lakewold Gardens
- LeMay Enterprises
- Les Schwab Tire Center
- Merit Construction
- Murray Pacific Corporation
- Northwest Commercial Bank
- Paktek Inc
- Patriots Landing
- Puget Sound Energy
- Smith-Western Company
- Sound Transit
- Tacoma Musical Playhouse
- The Suburban Times
- The Helen & John Vogt Foundation
- Water Rights Inc

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Lakewood History Museum
6211 Mount Tacoma Drive SW
253.682.3480
www.LakewoodHistorical.org
Museum Hours:
12 to 4 pm
Wednesday thru Saturday
*Group Tours arranged by appointment*

Lakewood’s Historic Boatman-Ainsworth Home Photographs

Top Left: The Boatman-Ainsworth Home is a "Federal Style" farmhouse
Bottom Left: Entryway with staircase
Top Right: Front Parlor
Bottom Right: View of Mount Rainier and backyard
Special Thanks to Steve Sloboda for photos!
Puyallup’s Ezra Meeker and Steilacoom’s Laura Belle Downey Bartlett; local sites such as the Lakewood Ice Arena and the Lakewood Theatre and local events such as the centennial celebration in 1841. Ten different topics will be rotated on a random basis over the next three months.

We welcome program topic ideas to cover in a future program. Contact: Becky Huber at 253-582-8682, or: craftyhubers@comcast.net

Phil Raschke is “On Air”

The program is sponsored by the Lakewood Historical Society as part of their expanded marketing campaign. According to Becky Huber, President of the Society, “It is exciting to use this media to promote local history. It is even more special that we are using a business right here in Lakewood. It is a great way to get people interested in local history to encourage them to visit our museums and attend our programs.”

The opening show delved into some history about Fort Steilacoom. Future episodes will feature people who have played a big part in local history such as Puylallup’s Ezra Meeker and Steilacoom’s Laura Belle Downey Bartlett; local sites such as the Lakewood Ice Arena and the Lakewood Theatre and local events such as the centennial celebration in 1841. Ten different topics will be rotated on a random basis over the next three months.

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Pierce County Reads 2012

The Pierce County Library system will launch its fifth Pierce County READS on Feb 19th. The community one-book program will run through Friday, April 13, when the staff at Clover Park New Times best selling and prize-winning author will give a free talk and book signing at Clover Park Technical College in Lakewood, at 7 p.m.

The program is geared toward thousands of people in the county—mostly adults, with some high school students—reading the same book, at the same time, sharing and discussing the book, and coming together as a community.

For the fifth year, Key Bank Foundation is the major corporate sponsor of Pierce County READS. The Lakewodd Historical Society will again be one of 19 community partners to reach individuals throughout the county to gain their involvement and engagement in this community event. Specific activities will be announced at a later date.

50th Anniversary Celebration of the Century 21 Exposition (Seattle World’s Fair)

Did you attend the Century 21 Exposition, commonly known as the Seattle World’s Fair on the grounds of what is the Seattle Center? Do you have old movie film or photos to share? Do you have souvenirs from that event? We want to hear from you.

Remember, the Future becomes... History!
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