

Footprints

on the sands of time...

ISSUE LXIX SOUTHWEST SEATTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY & LOG HOUSE MUSEUM SPRING 2008

Admiral Theatre—A Place to Call Your Own



Admiral Theater interior with zodiac ceiling and sea life mural
Gift of Richard McCann SWSHS # 1999.45.6

Interior sea mural, ca 1990 showing water and construction damage.

SWSHS #1999.45.7

The Admiral Theater is going through another historic transition. Approaching 90 years of having a theater on the site, the community and state landmark has definitely lived a life. From first and second-run movies, from a major remodel and name change in 1942, and current new restoration plans, the Admiral Theater continues to deserve our attention.

B. Marcus Priteca, architect of the 1942 conversion, also designed several other Seattle area theaters you may recognize: the Coliseum, the Granada, the Rex, the Magnolia, the Orpheum and the Paramount Theater. How many of these are still standing? One more reason to give our old lady a bow of congratulations. Originally the theater near the junction of Admiral and California was the Portola. Built in 1919, within five years this West Seattle landmark had become a destination theater. Extra amenities included free parking in an adjacent 75-car lot, the best in first-run pictures, the largest pipe organ in suburban Seattle and a unique screen lighting system. This last effect was used to heighten viewer experience with colored lights during the era of

black and white movies –such as adding yellow during a bright sunrise, red for a sunset, blue tinted evening and night scenes, and a startling flash of lightning for drama. Admission was a dime for children, one quarter for an adult.

Less than ten years later, the Portola was sold to the Universal Chain Theatrical Enterprises, along with another local theater, the Granada. Technological developments in moviemaking and sound were moving at a fast clip, and “talkies” were enjoyed in the Portola beginning in 1929. Right before the Depression the Portola was sold again, and admission prices were dropped to 15 cents to keep the doors open.

Russian-born John Danz came to Seattle around 1900 and soon ventured into the movie business in Pioneer Square. From a single storefront he quickly acquired a number of theaters in the northwest. In 1938 he cast his eye westward toward the site of the Portola Theater, envisioning a landmark destination theater with 1,000 seats. His vision came true, and on January 22, 1942 the renamed Admiral Theater threw wide

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**One Day
Courtyard Sale!**
Saturday, May 10,
9 am to 3pm
The Log House
Museum
3003-61st Ave SW
one block off Alki Ave

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Footprints

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(one block south of Alki Beach)

Editor, Judy Bentley

Museum hours

12–4 p.m.
Thursday, Friday
Saturday & Sunday

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loghousemuseum.org

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its opening night doors to throngs of excited moviegoers.



Built in the art moderne style of architecture, the Admiral was created as a seagoing vessel of cinematic proportions.

Out front a mast and crow's nest greeted the moviegoer; the front doors opened to a ship and sea-themed structure. Portholes, woodwork and nautical themes surrounded the lobby, but the truly remembered feature was the murals. The theater walls were painted with undersea images--flowing seaweed, swimming fish and sea-life with glow-in-the-dark touches of paint.

The ceiling had an elaborate zodiac radiating from the center... where youth vied to sit under their "sign." In 1973, the theater was split from the 1,000 seat auditorium into two 430-seat theaters. The ceiling was dropped and a wall put down the middle, damaging and obscuring the zodiac. The now water-damaged murals that line the walls are hidden behind heavy curtains.

With a threat of the loved Admiral Theater being turned into a "shoebox cinema," community interest rose to critical levels in the 1980's. The Southwest Seattle Historical Society, with a groundswell of support, acquired landmark status for the theater with the National Register of Historic Places. Building on that success, the society went on to landmark the Log House Museum and the former Fir Lodge (now the Homestead Restaurant).

Theater manager Steve Garrett is working diligently to secure funds for restoration of this important local landmark. Plans include diversifying the entertainment to engage a wide variety of audiences. Patrons can look forward to independent films, musicians, burlesque and cult classics along with box office hits. There is definitely something for everyone. Time for popcorn and a movie (or comedy or Rocky Horror)!

For more information on the Admiral's fundraising projects and show-times, visit the website at www.admiral-theater.com.

Andrea Mercado
Museum Director



Photo Credits:

Top Left:
Portola Theater built in 1919.
(Lucille Mason Collection
SWSHS #2004.21.7)

Left:
Admiral Theater concession
stand mural, 1942.
(Gift of Richard McCann
SWSHS #1999.45.10)

Below:
Admiral Theater, ca. 1942,
with crow's nest and mast
exterior.
(Gift of Paul Dorpat SWSHS
#2005.10.40)



Museum Director's Report

Springtime near Puget Sound is always a treat. Of course, I think many of us are still waiting for spring to begin...

There are always new happenings at the Log House Museum.

Larry Carpenter has been busy recruiting volunteers to assist in all public aspects of the museum.

Please join me in welcoming new employee, Sarah Frederick. Sarah comes to us with a history and museum studies degree. She'll lead an engaging history tour by bicycle of Alki and Harbor Avenue this June.

Local historian and long-time volunteer Bob Carney is combing through our photo collections to begin building material for a new book.

This change of seasons brings our second annual Walkin' Talkin' and Tunes Tours. We begin with the June 21st West Seattle Cultural Trail Bike through History Tour.

July 26th is the centennial anniversary of Fauntleroy. Community-member and historian Ron Richardson will walk through layers of history and stop along for quick discussions with

Fauntleroy specialists to discuss the history, culture and natural history of the area.

August 23rd will have historian and professor Judy Bentley and Frank Zuvella lead a group through Riverside. Walk the trails and roads of an old immigrant neighborhood along the Duwamish River that was immortalized by the poet Richard Hugo. A bicycle trail, hillside roads and reclaimed shorelines lead along the river of the Duwamish people and the gritty industries that built Seattle. The tour includes an optional hill climb (more than 200 steps) to an overlook from Pigeon Point.

The month of September will extend our tour down into White Center to visit the many sites and sounds of this community that tried to re-name itself Westwood not so long ago...

Either Sarah is here or I am here Thursday through Sundays and always by appointment. The door is open!



Andrea Mercado
Museum Director
206-938-5293
amercado@
loghousemuseum.org

Andrea Mercado
Museum Director

Membership Application

Yes, I want to support the work of the Log House Museum!

\$15 Senior/Student \$20 Individual/Non-Profit

\$35 Family \$100 Pioneer

\$150 Business \$250 Settler

Please send me information about volunteer opportunities.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone _____ : e-mail: _____

Cash _____ Check _____

Visa/MasterCard # _____ Exp. date: _____

Name as it appears on card: _____

Please make checks payable to the **Southwest Seattle Historical Society**

Volunteer News

An Embarrassment of Riches: Docents Galore

On becoming self-styled Dean of Docents for the museum in late 2006, I had no idea that folks would flock to sign up. The clincher seemed to be asking for no more than two hours a month. Looking over the records for 2007, over 40 people were willing to come in for an hour's orientation. A total of 387 hours was logged for the year, but the ranks were quickly decimated by the demands of jobs, family, health, and new interests. Though I hope the warmth of summer will lure some of these back, my purpose here is not to carp, but to heap praise upon that small band of multigenerational heroes of heritage who stuck it out through 2007 and are still going strong at the end of April 2008:

Caty Ellis takes top honors for showing up for two hours every month except one for the last 16 months. Born in Port Orchard and reared in Indiana, she moved to Alki almost four years ago. Our only Generation Y docent, she is the office manager at the West Seattle John L. Scott office.

The next three heroines are a gift from the "Greatest Generation," all living in condos along Harbor Avenue:



Volunteer Caty Ellis
(Photo courtesy of Larry Carpenter)

Lane Townsend is one docent who's sure of her roots, having spent 78 of her 80 years in Admiral and Alki. Her father's fuel business begun in 1929 stood on the site of her present residence in the Seabird condos while her parents once resided across the street on the site of today's Don Armeni

Park. Lane also bowls, plays tennis and enjoys opera.

Norma Templeman accompanied her Army officer husband on tours in Japan, Germany, England, and Italy. Norma is a natural hostess whose language skills have made several of our foreign visitors feel at home. Norma's condo is just across the hall from Lane's.

Connie Gunn grew up in Texas and came to Seattle when her recently deceased husband came to work for Boeing. She frequently visits her four sons, two of whom own commercial fishing boats in Alaska, Hawaii, and American Samoa. Another son lives in Tokyo, writing and performing music for Japanese TV and acting in B movies.

Lew and Rachel Townsend (no relation to Lane) are our only father and daughter duo. Baby boomer dad is a programmer with Bank of America while Rachel attends Explorer West Middle School. They, along with mom Judy (recent board member), have lived in Alki since 1993 and are avid skiers and sailors.

Nancy Poole is a New Yorker baby boomer who recently moved to Alki after almost 30 years as a flight attendant with major airlines. Her background makes her a natural at greeting museum visitors. She now works for Federal Express and enjoys regular workouts at her health club.

by Larry Carpenter

Volunteer Coordinator, 206-938-0887,
starving@comcast.net

Vice President's Report

The museum is abuzz with activity this spring. Visitors come to "exotic" West Seattle from Kirkland, Renton, and Bellevue as well as Missouri, California, North Dakota, Colorado, and Germany. Volunteers crowd the office on the top floor. Director Andrea Mercado and Docent Larry Carpenter talk with long-time residents, returning residents, and people who've always intended to drop by that log house and see what's inside. (See Larry's article on docents.)

One visitor asked, "How do you do it? How do you stay open?" with just visitors and small donations. The volunteers are part of that answer. A hard-working board is another. The long-time dedication and efforts of the founders are another. Our vibrant

and thoroughly committed director, Andrea Mercado, is probably the biggest reason. But we need new energy, new money, new ideas.

Stop by the museum. Chat. Visit the gift shop. Renew your membership. Bring your neighbors. Visit the website. Come to the courtyard sale. Mention the exhibits, the oral histories, the photo collection. Refer people with questions about history to us. In this fast-moving, constantly shifting world, people yearn for roots, for history. We have it. Spread the word.

Judy Bentley
Vice President



Judy Bentley
Vice President
jbentley@sccd.ctc.edu

SWHS Members Annual Picnic and Fourth of July Celebration!

Save the Date and bring your family and friends! Friday July 4, 2008

This event is always a success because YOU make sure it is.

The annual members' picnic on the 4th of July – well, that just seems to be the right way to reconnect and revitalize ourselves!

Hamburgers (beef and veggie), hot dogs, and all the fixings will be provided by the SWSHS.

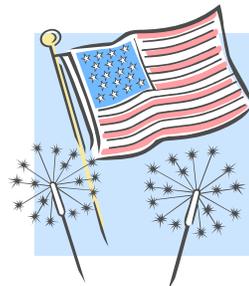


You bring a favorite side dish, people, and stories you'd like to share about your life experiences. Music, door prizes, and a raffle will round out the day's fun.

When: Friday, July 4th; 12noon -3pm

Where: Log House Museum Courtyard, Rain or Shine!

*If you'd like to volunteer to help with the picnic, please call the Log House Museum at 206-938-5293 and leave a message for Marcy.



Larry Carpenter and Joan Mraz cooking at the 2007 member picnic.
(Photo courtesy of Joey Richesson).



Business Members

- Admiralty House Antiques
- Banana Pages
- Better Business Bookkeeping
- Clear Channel Outdoor
- David Kehle Architect
- The Good Book
- Graphics Plus
- Jackson & Morgan PLLC
- NW Art & Frame
- The Pacific Institute
- Sposari's Concrete & Materials
- Tom's Automotive
- Villa Heidelberg
- West Seattle Herald

Donors

Thank you for supporting the Southwest Seattle Historical Society.
Donations received at the 10th Anniversary Gala Celebration

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Gayle Anderson | Betsy Hobbs | Ron and Sherry Richardson |
| Calvin Bannon | Chris & Ann Huston | Mary Lou Richardson |
| Harry & Edith Beasley | Marcy Johnsen | Morest L. Skaret |
| Allen and Judy Bentley | Denise Johnsen | Joan Stover |
| Carol Berry | Dorothy Kaloper | James M. "Mike" Sweeney |
| Jack Block | Jackie C. Kelly | DianeLou & Diane Tice |
| Susan Christ | John E. Kelly | Elaine Townsend |
| Jon | Patricia Kloster | Judy & Lew Townsend |
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| Richard Hallberg | Daniel A. Nye | |
| Alyson Hallberg | Jane O'Neil | |
| Nancy Hallberg | Steve Phinney | |
| Verda R. Hansberry | Jamee Rakus | |

My Personal Invitation....

The Log House Museum, Birthplace of Seattle, is very special to me for several reasons, and I invite you to come and visit. It was built in 1904 as a carriage house for Fir Lodge, built by the prominent Bernard family. When its use as a carriage house was no longer needed, it was moved to its current location, and converted into a home. The main lodge is still present and has been for many years the widely popular Homestead Restaurant.

As a residence, "The Log House" had numerous owners. My parents bought the house in 1959 when I was in first grade. Like kids in a candy store, my sisters, brother and I were thrilled to be living in a log cabin one block from the beach! We felt privileged to live in the "log house" because of its history, and it was our family home until my mother sold it in 1973.

Over the years, many folks in the community thought this special house should be a museum, preserving our history and telling the story of the land and the people who were here when the founding families landed.

When it came up for sale in 1994, it was purchased by The Southwest Seattle Historical Society who with many of you in the community raised the thousands of dollars needed to buy and renovate the building. The dedication, with blessing done by James Rasmussen, a descendant of Chief Sealth, was held on November 13, 1996, and the opening as the Log House Museum, Birthplace of Seattle, occurred one year later on November 13, 1997.

Currently I'm a board member of the society and I will be a volunteer docent in the museum on Sunday, July 13 from 12 p.m. until 4 pm. I would love to have you visit the museum on that day for a personal tour.

*Marcy Johnsen
Board Member*



West Seattle High School All-School Reunion, Friday June 6th

2008 Executive Board

Each year in the evening of the first Friday in June, West Seattle High School celebrates every graduating class by holding what is called the "All-School Reunion." This is the time when former students and faculty can gather together and reminisce. Savoring memories: sounds a bit like what we do here at the Log House Museum – preserve and tell the stories of our past.

sharing memories connecting the past, present and the future. As we look forward to another fabulous ten years and beyond, we would love to see more West Seattle alums get involved by honoring their heritage and the preservation of all of the Duwamish Peninsula's history.

Come by the Log House Museum Friday June 6th 2-4pm to visit with other WSHS

Alums before heading "back to school." And if you plan to attend this year's "All School" reunion, please tell your friends about the Log House Museum and how they can become a member for as little as \$15.00 a year and be an active contributor to preserving our heritage. See you here-and there!

Joan Mraz, '54,
Marcy Johnsen, 70,
Tia Hallberg, 73



West Seattle High School, 2008 (Photo courtesy Joey Richesson)

West Seattle High School opened in 1917 and is known for having the largest Alumni Association in the United States. Some alumni families span three generations. We alums share a common history and understand ourselves as part of a very special community. Many Historical Society members are alums of WSHS and helped to create the award-winning "Rich Traditions" exhibit that opened in 2003. The exhibit examined the school's 85-year commitment to excellence and diversity in educational, extracurricular, athletic, and community activities for more than 27,000 WSHS students.

The Log House Museum recently celebrated ten great years of preserving and

vacant
President

Judy Bentley
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Tia Hallberg
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Susan Christ

Jane Conrad

Marcy Johnsen

Flora Belle Key

Joan Mraz

Ron Richardson

Joey Richesson

Tony Vincent

Staff

Andrea Mercado
Museum Director

Sarah Frederick
*Membership,
Museum Liaison*

David Keith
Bookkeeper

Joyce Anderson
Gift Shop Clerk



Left to Right: Joan Mraz, Marcy Johnsen,
Tia Hallberg

(Photo courtesy of Joey Richesson)



*Mission of the
SWSHS & Log
House Museum
“ . . . to advocate
the collection,
protection and
preservation of
historic artifacts
and sites, and to
sponsor programs
and events which
enhance our
community's
heritage”*

Calendar of Events

- May 10:** Courtyard sale 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
May 12: SWSHS Board Meeting, 6:45 p.m., South Seattle Community College, RS30
June 6: West Seattle High School Alumni open house 2 to 4 p.m.
June 21: Bicycling History Tour with Sarah Frederick, 1:30
June 28: SAVE THE DATE– Unveiling original Admiral theater popcorn machine and Film Festival
July 4: Annual Membership Picnic, museum courtyard, 12 p.m. to 3 p.m.
July 26th: Fauntleroy History Walking Tour with Ron Richardson, 10 a.m.
August 23rd: Riverside History Walking Tour with Judy Bentley and Frank Zuvela, 10:00 a.m.

Alki Cultural Trail Bike Ride—June 21

Sarah Frederick will be leading a bicycle ride along the Alki Cultural Trail on June 21st. We will leave from the museum courtyard at 1:30. We are going to be biking towards the Duwamish Longhouse site and stopping for Duwamish talking points along the way. All levels of riders are welcome, and hope for no rain!

One Day Courtyard Sale! - Sat. May 10

All sales benefit the Log House Museum!

The West Seattle community garage sale is happening in our own courtyard too!

***Antiques, *Collectibles, *Books on Local History, *Unique Gift Items, *Lots of CD's, *Vintage Jewelry and Linens, Toys, Memorabilia, Small Appliances, Furniture, Crafts & Art supplies, Baskets, Cooking, Art, new Christmas items and much, much more! None of the items are from the Log House Museum collections, but all are from folks helping out the museum fundraising goals!**

FOOTPRINTS

Newsletter of the Southwest Seattle Historical Society
& “Birthplace of Seattle” Log House Museum
3003 61st Ave. SW, Seattle, WA 98116

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