

# ByGONE TIMES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE TROUTDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### October 1

#### Museum Winter Hours

#### *Barn Exhibit Hall*

10am - 3pm Wednesday-Saturday

1pm - 3pm Sunday

#### *Harlow House*

1pm - 3pm open Sunday only

### October 15

#### **Farewell to Schools**

Fairview Elementary 10am - 11:30am

Wilkes Elementary noon - 1:30pm

Troutdale Elementary 2pm - 3:30pm

### October 24

#### **Edgefield History Night**

#### *The Roots of History:*

#### *Oregon's Heritage Trees*

@ McMenamins Blackberry Hall

6:30 p.m. (doors at 5 p.m.)

### November 28

#### **Edgefield History Night**

#### *Oregon Coast*

#### *Pre-Contact Archaeology*

@ McMenamins Blackberry Hall

6:30 p.m. (doors at 5 p.m.)

### December 2

#### **Christmas at the Harlow House**

**No History Night in December**

## FAREWELL TO SCHOOLS - October 15th

In honor of Fairview, Wilkes, and Troutdale elementary schools which are slated to be demolished next year, the School Celebration Committee formed by the Troutdale Historical Society and East County Historical Organization, will be hosting a farewell open house at each school building on Sunday, October 15, 2017.

These gatherings will be honoring and capturing memories, highlighting stories and memorabilia. Please see times below photos. Refreshments will be served. We are seeking volunteers to help us plan and conduct each of the events.

To contact us with questions or to volunteer, call 503-618-0946 or 503-661-2164 or email us at [celebrateyourschool@gmail.com](mailto:celebrateyourschool@gmail.com). Please help spread the word to classmates, staff, and others who attended one or more of these schools.



Fairview Elementary 10:00am - 11:30am  
225 Main Street, Fairview, OR



Wilkes Elementary noon - 1:30pm  
17020 NE Wilkes Rd, Portland, OR



Troutdale Elementary 2pm - 3:30pm  
648 SE Harlow Ave, Troutdale, OR

## SAVING HISTORY

by Julie Stewart, THS photo curator

I had to change clothes lickety split. A phone call from the Troutdale Historical Society interrupted my race to an appointment that day. The news came... a fire in the Gorge placed the Barn Exhibit Hall, Harlow House, and Rail Depot Museum in a Level 1 Evacuation zone. This prompted a change in my plans as I was needed to help pack irreplaceable and important photos, documents, and artifacts. I headed to Troutdale and learned a new defini-

tion of "urgency." Decisions on what was essential and irretrievable became an "on the spot" choice. Unfortunately, Sharon



"Sharon's Brain on the move"

Nesbit was out of town, but on the phone to make sure her history files, known as "Sharon's Brain," were going to be saved. Within an hour six volunteers – Sue & Greg Handy, Marilee Thompson, LeAnn Stephan, Joy Beldin, and Bettianne Goetz arrived to help pack the essential items into several vehicles to be stored for an unknown length of time. But we did it! Eight days later, the "all clear" lifted the Level 1 Evacuation and the cars were unloaded, items were returned, including "Sharon's Brain."

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

What are CEP grants, you ask?

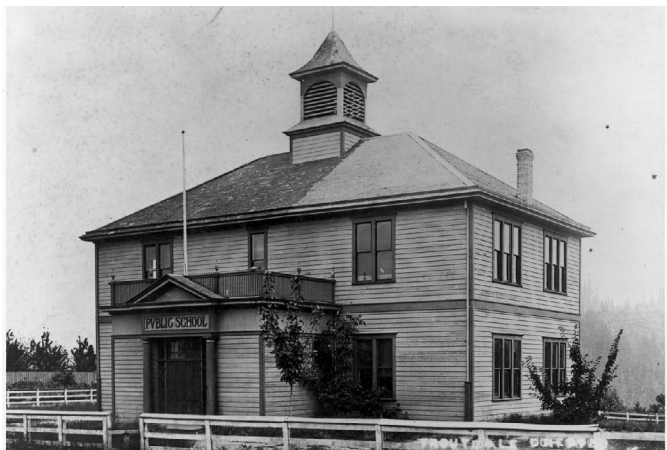
The City of Troutdale in conjunction with Waste Management offers Community Enhancement Project grants each year to organizations/individuals in the city whose goal is to improve the overall culture and ambiance of Troutdale. The Troutdale Historical Society received four grants this year for the following projects: 1.) A new sign for our Barn Exhibit Hall - a rustic sign, befitting a barn, will be about 7 feet tall with a stone base and wood signage. 2.) A recreation of the "Lover's Oak Arch" near the oak tree between the Barn and the Harlow House - a wood-like concrete sculpture of the old Lovers Oak tree's arch [See our website for the full story of Lover's Oak](#) 3.) A life size bronze sculpture of Troutdale's first woman mayor, Clara Latourell Larsson. Sculpted by local bronze artist, Marlena Nielsen. 3.) Murals of the gorge (already completed) and a Troutdale Public Art Tour Map - a series of murals around the base of the new monument *Devoted Passion* at Visionary Park, by artist Libby Krock. The Troutdale Public Art Tour Map will lead visitors (and locals, too!) on a tour of the town where art is located.



Bettianne Goetz, President  
Troutdale Historical Society

## TROUTDALE SCHOOL'S HISTORY

by Sharon Nesbit



Third Troutdale School, 1892

It is likely that the first Troutdale school was also Fairview's first school. The common histories of the two communities mention the building of a "shake" school, opening in 1855 or 1857. It seems likely that the scattered families in the vicinity of Fairview and Troutdale shared the same school in the earliest years of settlement. A District 20 school, later known as Troutdale School, was first documented in 1868 when David and Fanny Buxton donated two acres for a schoolhouse on Sandy Road. The construction of the 1868 school on the Buxton land appears to have been triggered by the 1867 arrival of a single family, Captain James Menzies and his second wife, Lucy Taylor Crosby, and their brood of children. They bought 1,200 acres of ranch land near the confluence of the Sandy and Columbia rivers.

Marianne Dudley Eling's 1919 account in The Gresham Outlook says that Menzies joined neighbors James Stott and David Buxton to form the new District 20 school district, hiring teacher Selina Barker, who would later marry Sam Barr. "Miss Barker's pupils were of sturdy pioneer stock -- not easily frightened," she said. "They tramped through dense thick-

ets to the little school house. A bear or a deer crossed their path often. One day a panther flashed by, and nobody loves a panther. Captain Menzies rather scoffed at the idea, until one day Mrs. James Preston came over on horseback for a call and discovered the great cat sunning himself on the Menzies' fence near a gate through which the school children would soon pass."

An 1873 report from the county school superintendent noted that the school had insufficient seating. Two more rooms were added to that first Troutdale school to ease overcrowding that likely occurred when the transcontinental railroad passed through Troutdale in 1882. The school on the Sandy Road is pictured in an 1891 photo with a scatter of barefoot children and a single teacher standing outside.

### The Third Troutdale School, 1892

The town site of Troutdale was developed in 1890 on the hillside about a half-mile east of the school. In 1892 Troutdale residents

Continued on page 3

### WINTER HOURS

October 1 - April 30

#### Barn Exhibit Hall

10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday  
1 - 3 p.m. Sunday

#### Harlow House

1 - 3 p.m. Sunday Only

#### Rail Depot Museum

10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Friday Only



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rallied to build a new schoolhouse on the "Harlow Forty (acres)" at the top of the hill above the raw new town. The builder was H.B. Chapman, county road master. Seventy-eight pupils were enrolled that first year, though average daily attendance was 45. Teachers were R.H. Thomas and Ida D. Sabin.

The two-story, four-room building was much more imposing than its predecessor. A report from the county school superintendent in November 1894 indicated that Troutdale School had 97 pupils with an average daily attendance of 79. C.W. Altman was the principal. In the long run, the four-room school proved to be too ambitious. Troutdale's fortunes declined in the early part of the century when the meat packing plant moved to Portland, the cattle and distillery company burned, and the lumber mill shifted to the Willamette Valley community of Goshen. The school would grow rickety and drafty and continue to serve Troutdale until 1926 when a new, sturdier concrete and stucco school was built.

#### **Troutdale's Fourth School, 1926**

Troutdale's next, and present, school was dedicated December 1, 1926, with "appropriate exercise," according to a Gresham Outlook story. The new building cost \$29,000 and the general contractor was M.C. Arthur. Principal R.D. Hewitt accepted the keys.

When the school opened in 1926, only three rooms were in use. The fourth was to be a PTA room. Also included was a kitchen with a gas plate and other conveniences for serving refreshments and hot lunches, opposite was the principal's office. The building was steam-heated, using wood for fuel.

It had a stucco finish on the outside and a 50-foot flagpole. Playgrounds and other outside equipment would come later. Enrollment was 72. R.D. Hewitt taught the three upper grades. Nancy Thomas taught fourth and fifth grade, and Arminta Scott the three lower grades.

The PTA was deeply involved in the 1926 dedication of the new school. Mayor Laura Harlow, who had been president of the PTA in 1919, spoke. It is significant that though the new Troutdale school was modern and offered the conveniences that Laura Harlow mentioned in her dedication, it was no larger, in terms of classrooms, than the school it replaced. Troutdale had not grown much in the intervening years and four rooms were deemed satisfactory to meet the population of the community. Not until World War II and the influx of war workers, shipyard employees, and the Dust Bowl immigrants of the 1930s did Troutdale need to expand. In 1949 eight classrooms were added. In 1955 a gymnasium was added.

The 1949 expansion to eight rooms was encouraged by William Elmer, chairman of the school board, who talked the board into eight rooms instead of four. Elmer claimed he was the one who booted the Troutdale Rod and Gun Club out of the woods north of the school in order to create a playground. The gun club, too, once occupied the basement of the school, setting up target ranges on the concrete wall at the east end. Pockmarked concrete is evidence of the shooting range beneath the school. The gun club elected to build a new club at the dead-end of Fourth Street, a site that is now the Troutdale Public Works building. The original walls of the gun club are incorporated in the public works structure.

#### **Building new schools**

In 1955, the same year a \$125,000 gymnasium was built at Troutdale, the Wilkes, Troutdale, and Fairview schools voted to jointly form School District 7 and build a high school. Previously the three schools tuitioned high school students to Gresham, or to Portland high schools. Later called Reynolds, the new district took advantage of an aluminum plant built at Troutdale during World War II. After the war, the plant was purchased by Reynolds Metals Company, which provided a hefty industrial tax base to jump-start a new high school district. Construction of a high school began February 1, 1956. The doors opened in September 1956 with 215 students and 13 teachers. At the same time the gymnasium was completed in 1957, the district was named Reynolds in honor of Richard Samuel Reynolds, founder of Reynolds Metals. As Troutdale grew and expanded in the 1960s and 1970s, the need for a second grade school resulted in Sweetbriar Elementary School in 1975. Sweetbriar was part of the Sweetbriar subdivision on the historic farm of Lenore and Helen Althaus. It was unique in that the developer of the planned unit subdivision provided school space in planning the project.

In 1977, the Reynolds District built a second high school, Columbia, on Cherry Park Road just east of 242nd Avenue in Troutdale city limits. Troutdale Mayor Bob Sturges drew only snickers when he suggested it should be called Troutdale High. Ultimately the \$7 million school was merged with Reynolds High in 1989-90, forming a single Reynolds High School. The old Reynolds High on Halsey Street became a middle school.

In 1998, Troutdale's fourth school, Walt Morey Middle School, built in a cabbage patch just north of Stark Street and Legacy Mount Hood Medical Center, opened to students. That school is named for the late writer Walt Morey, famous for his "Gentle Ben" stories.



Fourth Troutdale School, 1926

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## DONORS TO OUR MEMORIAL FUND

In Memory of Dorothy Kerslake

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Lori Vencill

In Memory of Scott Cunningham

Mary & Dennis Bryson  
 Greg & Sue Handy  
 Sharon Nesbit  
 Len & Gloria Otto  
 Kathleen Shaffer  
 Barbara Welsh

In Memory of Elaine Quade Wright

Mary & Dennis Bryson



• **Norm Thomas** for getting a soft, flexible handle on our portable signs for the Barn & Harlow House museums.

• **Diane Castillo-White** for flowers at our events.

• **Andrea Heim** for clearing the back flower bed at the Harlow House of noxious yellow weeds.

• **Sue Landreth** for inventory work at the Harlow House.

• **Joy Beldin, Joyce Belcher, Kelly Broomall, Charlotte Freeman, Sue Landreth, and Margaret Rice** for helping **Diane Castillo-White** with the Barnyard Concerts this summer.

• **Margaret Rice & Norm Thomas** for covering the office duties while **LeAnn Stephan** was on vacation.

• **Herb Mohn** for hosting the Barn on Labor Day - ALL DAY.

• **Bettianne Goetz** for hosting the Volunteer Appreciation Party at her Fairview Lake home.

• **Kelly Broomall, Len Otto, Norm Thomas** for installing security cameras at the Barn Exhibit Hall.

• **Erin Janssens** for the use of her '63 T-bird automobile in the Summerfest Parade.

• **Joy Beldin, Bettianne Goetz, Greg & Sue Handy, LeAnn Stephan, Julie Stewart, Marilee Thompson**, for packing, transporting, and storing essential items for the Level 1 Evacuation.

• **Joy Beldin & Margaret Rice** for returning "Sharon's Brain" to its home intact.

## NEW MEMBERS

• Shelley Burns  
 • Donald & Doxandra Cook  
 • Shirley Craddick  
 • Charlotte Freeman  
 • Rick Hosea  
 • Jamie Kranz  
 • Saul & Ruby Pompeyo-Ristorante di Pompello  
 • Jon Thorsby

## RENEWING MEMBERS

• Carol Addleman  
 • Terri & Ron Best  
 • Joy Beldin  
 • Larry Callister  
 • Dr. Robert & Tami Campbell  
 • Rod & Geri Canzler  
 • Terry & Charles Ciecko  
 • Tom Cowling  
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 • Jon & Audrey Lowell  
 • Laureen Lucero  
 • Sharon Luvaas  
 • Sheryl Maydew  
 • Leo & Mary Ellen McGlothlin  
 • Lois Moller  
 • Brian Moran - Troutdale Sand & Gravel  
 • Twila Mysinger  
 • Ken & Kathleen Overton  
 • William & Pat Pattison  
 • Cecelia & Tom Pavlik  
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 • Betty Jo Pietzold  
 • Rosie & Larry Puderbaugh  
 • Mike & Margaret Rice  
 • Janice St. John  
 • Judith Scott  
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 • Jerry & Janice Simnitt  
 • Larry & Jean Torland  
 • Hazel Webb  
 • Norman & Louella Webb  
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 • James Workman  
 • Lori Vencill

## DONORS TO OUR GENERAL FUND

Donald & Doxandra Cook  
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 Dee Dee Hansen  
 Judith Scott  
 James Workman

## A RECIPE FROM CONNIE PURVIS - VOLUNTEER & PIE BAKER

Those who attended our volunteer party in August at Bettianne Goetz's lakeside home, got a slice of **Connie Purvis'** Sour Cream Rhubarb Pie.

Connie, who died in 2013, was one of our "hidden volunteers" at the Troutdale Historical Society. She rarely attended our meetings and events. Getting around with a bad hip was hard. And later there were breathing problems that kept her hooked to oxygen. But she loved history and was a typing whiz. When she retired from her "real" job she got the foot-activated machine that helped her type transcripts of meetings, etc. It was perfect for our oral history recordings. In the good old days, before current technology, we did interviews on a small tape recorder. Connie took those and typed them neatly into written transcripts.

She said many times, as she was listening to those long-ago voices talking about bootleg whiskey and boyhood pranks, that she had to take her foot off that pedal and enjoy a long laugh before she could start again.

(Those voices, by the way, were recently captured electronically from our old tapes and we can now hear again people who were taped nearly 40 years ago. We have dozens of videos and audio interviews that you can either purchase, or use at the barn.)

In addition to the legacy of recording our history, Connie shared recipes. Every one at the volunteer party loved her pie. She would be happy to share it again.



Connie Purvis

### Sour Cream Rhubarb Pie

- 1 pie shell
- 2 cups diced rhubarb
- ½ cup flour
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 8 ounces sour cream
- Pinch of salt

Place rhubarb in unbaked pie shell. Mix other ingredients then pour over rhubarb. Bake 10 minutes at 400 degrees and then 40 minutes at 375 degrees.

### Troutdale Historical Society Board Members

President: Bettianne Goetz  
Vice President: Margaret Rice  
Treasurer: Marilee Thompson  
Secretary: Norm Thomas

#### Board Members

Rich Allen, Corey Brooks, Kelly Broomall,  
Diane Castillo-White, Rip Caswell,  
Erin Janssens, Jon Lowell

#### Past Presidents

Sharon Nesbit, Len Otto, Dave Ripma

Give a gift of membership to  
**TROUTDALE HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY**

### McMenamins Edgefield History Nights

Sponsored by the Troutdale Historical Society

Nate Pedersen will show pictures and speak on Oregon's Heritage trees on Oct. 24. And Nancy Nelson, state archaeologist, talks about pre-contact discoveries on the Oregon Coast on Nov. 28.

Doors open at Blackberry Hall at Edgefield at 5 p.m., lecture begins at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free. Food and beverages are sold there. There will be no history night in December.



275 E Historic Columbia River Highway  
Troutdale, OR 97060  
503-489-5730

### New Pizza In Town - The Way Out Inn

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**RIP CASWELL**  
PRESIDENT

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C 503.502.7756

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WWW.RIPCASWELL.COM

## Our Volunteers

### 5 STAR RATING

After an enjoyable visit to the Barn Exhibit Hall, a guest gave us a 5 star rating on our Google Business page with this comment:

"I love this historic museum. Very well put together and volunteers were amazing! I think Shaina was her name... but whom-ever it was, she walked us through all the exhibits and was very knowledgeable. And Sally gave some fascinating insight into the gorge. I will recommend this museum to all my friends visiting. Thank you!"

Thank you **Sally King** and **Shaina Thomes** for representing our museum and giving our guests an enjoyable experience.



### NOTES FROM THE KING OF ROADS HIGHWAY EXHIBIT GUEST BOOK

"Lovely chatting with you about Scotland and New York City." "Wonderful Museum" "Found historical data on my family. Thank you." "Interesting and in-depth." "Beautiful photos and much info." "Joyce (Belcher) is perfect." (museum host) "The volunteers were so kind and informative." "Finally, after 25 years of driving by."

### AT THE BARN STORE...



100th Anniversary  
Commemorative Poster  
At our Barn Store or through our website  
[troutdalehistory.org](http://troutdalehistory.org)  
11" x 17" - \$25; \$35, signed  
18" x 24" (limited edition, numbered) - \$80

### Meet Volunteer Joyce Belcher

by Margaret Rice

Joyce Van Lom Belcher of Gresham is a two-year volunteer docent on Thursday mornings at the Barn Exhibit Hall. She also hosts our First Friday Barnyard concerts and other special events.

Joyce's early exposure to history began with Sunday family drives to Timberline Lodge, visiting the coast, seeing state landmarks, and excursions on the scenic highway. She credits further interest in history from reading Sharon Nesbit's Gresham Outlook columns and articles about the Troutdale Historical Society.



Joyce Belcher

Joyce was raised and attended grade school in the Parkrose area, and graduated from Reynolds High School (go Lancers!) in 1961. She was on the RHS school newspaper staff and one of her most memorable experiences was attending the 1957 dedication of the high school by namesake Richard S. Reynolds, Jr., complete with all-student turnout at the Troutdale Airport for his arrival.

Joyce has a daughter in Yacolt, a son in Gresham, and three grandchildren. Her work years have been varied with stints as office manager of her husband's wholesale tree nursery for 52 years; show manager for "I Love Dance," a company which conducted youth dance studio competitions throughout the U.S. and took her to 46 states in 12 years; and table dealer for Wild Bill's party casinos where she met former Trail Blazer coach Jack Ramsey and taught his wife how to play black jack.

Her most exciting job was with two girlfriends as dry goods purveyors to fire camp workers in Oregon, Washington, and Utah. They applied for a Forest Service pilot program and earned a one-year contract to supply men and women fire fighters with boots, shoes, and clothing. It turned into an eight-year gig. Their traveling store was a remodeled RV trailer fitted with shelves to sell clothing, and a van set up for boots and shoes. Upon receiving a call from the fire dispatcher, they had 24 hours to arrive with supplies to fire camps that could have up to 1,000 workers. They also coordinated on request with Portland company Goldsmith and Sons to have logo t-shirts printed for the named fires. While stationed at the fire camps which could be for a week to a month, the girls slept in tents and ate at the mobile kitchens.

Also over the years Joyce has restored a '55 Thunderbird, cars being a longtime interest from her dad. Prior to volunteering for THS, she was a dog walker at the Boring Guide Dogs facility. She loves being a THS volunteer because she enjoys people, learning, and everything she gains from talking to museum visitors and other volunteers. She is a regular attendee at the McMenamins Edgefield History Nights. And in her spare time she enjoys reading and gardening. Stop in and see her.

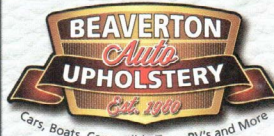


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## Friends in History Remembered

### Scott Cunningham, 1926 to 2017

Longtime Troutdale Historical Society President, Scott Cunningham, died June 23. His memorial service was July 14 where former THS president David Ripma spoke briefly saying, "Boy, could he run a meeting. He'd move it right along."

Scott was born in Maupin to Andrew and Charlotte Cunningham. His dad worked on the railroad and that brought them to Troutdale where the family lived on Third Street. Scott shared many memories of growing up in this community, which he loved deeply. Those are recorded in his own words in our files and in videos taken over the years.

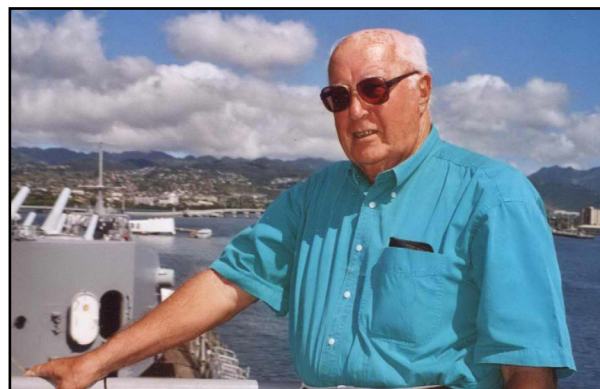
Remarkably, when Japanese American farmers were forcibly removed from the area in 1942, the Cunningham family, notably Charlotte Cunningham, ran the Fujii farm, kept the books and gave the family the profits and an accounting every year.

Drafted in 1945, Scott served with the 27th Infantry Division and 98th Signal Corps in the Battle of Okinawa, and was one of the few survivors of his unit, though he rarely spoke of his wartime experiences, according to his son Ken.

Though he did not graduate because of the war (he would later earn a degree from the University of Portland), Scott was instrumental in founding the 50th reunion group for Gresham High which each year welcomed the next class to make the 50-year mark. He also helped launch a Mariners group at Smith Memorial Presbyterian Church that included couples other than Presbyterians and united many of the young couples of this community.

After working in grocery stores in Troutdale, he worked his way into the food business specializing in frozen foods. He was always happy to say that he was blessed with two great marriages. He was married to his first wife, Joyce Ann McPherson, who died after 35 years of marriage. Two years later he met Eileen Taylor Ferris and they remained married until her death. He is survived by his two children, Eileen's three children and all the grandchildren and great-grandchildren who became part of his family.

He was always grateful to our society for inviting him to become a member of our board and reunite him with his home town.



Scott Cunningham - 2010, Hawaii

### Evelyn Schmidt - August 18, 1920 - July 6, 2017

Evelyn Schmidt, who with her late husband J. Frank Schmidt Jr., founded the wholesale tree nursery, J. Frank Schmidt and Son Co., in Boring, died July 6.

A memorial was held for her at the Schmidt arboretum on Aug. 18, which would have been her 97th birthday. Raised in Pittsburgh, PA., she was a professional singer and ultimately joined the Ice Capades on tour. She met Frank Junior when she came to Gresham to visit her sister, Hilda Larsen. They married in 1946 in Pittsburgh and drove back to Oregon in a shiny new 1946 Studebaker, arriving in time to plant trees on the original five-acre nursery near Troutdale. The Schmidt farm would grow to more than 2,500 acres and be known around the world. Frank Schmidt's most famous tree was the Red Sunset Maple, one of which grows on the front lawn of the Harlow House.

The family has remained a mainstay in the community, and the Troutdale Historical Society receives an annual donation from the family trust.



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# Troutdale Historical Society

Preserving The Past, Embracing The Future

With membership in the society, you receive quarterly newsletters to keep up with all of our activities. Membership privileges include a reduction in membership cost for the Oregon Historical Society and free entry to all our museums.

- ☐ \$20 Individual Membership
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- ☐ \$100 Lovers Oak Club
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219 E Historic Columbia River Hwy  
Troutdale, OR 97060

Questions? Contact THS Office  
Phone: 503-661-2164  
Email: [troutdalehistory@gmail.com](mailto:troutdalehistory@gmail.com)  
Website: [troutdalehistory.org](http://troutdalehistory.org)

## Thank you for your support!

Troutdale Historical Society sponsors free programs throughout the year.

### Edgefield History Night

The last Tuesday of every month (except December) the Troutdale Historical Society co-sponsors a speaker at McMenamins Edgefield Blackberry Hall. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. and the free program begins at 6:30 p.m.  
Food and drink are available.



Troutdale Historical Society's logo, the "Lovers Oak," stood on the floodplain of the Columbia River until the Columbus Day Storm of 1962. It was a popular gathering place for locals and was an instantly recognizable landmark.

Mission Statement  
To gather, preserve and make available material relating to the history of the community of Troutdale, the Sandy River, the Columbia River Gorge and nearby area; to stimulate interest in the knowledge of the locality's past.

Mail Address:  
219 E Historic Columbia River Hwy.  
Troutdale, OR 97060  
Office Location:  
732 E Historic Columbia River Hwy.  
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