



Newsletter of the

September 2012

*Troutdale Historical Society*

# BYGONE TIMES

## Mark Your Calendars!

### ~September 22~

*Trek to  
The Oregon  
Garden.  
& Frank Lloyd  
Wright House.  
Bus leaves the Barn  
Museum at 9 a.m.*

### ~October 5~

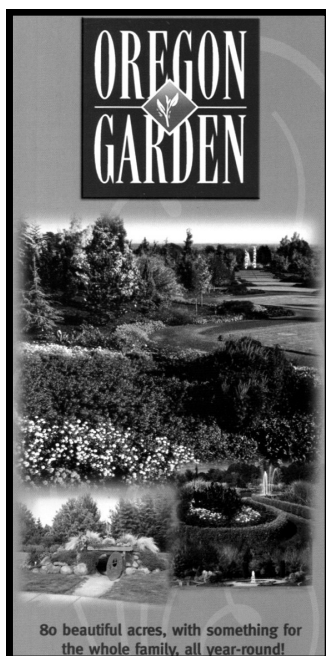
*First Friday at the  
Depot and Launch  
of the new Arcadia  
"Troutdale" book  
compiled by  
Sharon Nesbit and  
Julie Stewart!  
5-8 p.m.*

### ~October 20~

**6:00 p.m.**

*Len Otto interviews  
the Quade sisters  
about Growing up at  
Sundial. This is an  
evening meeting at  
the Barn Museum  
and we will be serv-  
ing beer, wine and  
snacks. More infor-  
mation next month!*

## Trek to the Oregon Garden and Frank Lloyd Wright's Gordon House in Silverton set for September 22



On September 22, the bus will leave the barn museum at 9 a.m. and sweep the occupants away to the wonderful world of the Oregon Garden in Silverton, OR.

The cost for the trip is \$20 which covers bus and garden admission (\$30 if you want to tour the Frank Lloyd Wright Gordon House) and lunch. You can either bring your own lunch, dine in the Garden Café or have lunch in the full-service restaurant at The Oregon Garden Resort.

We will start with a tram ride around the entire garden and you can scope out places you would like to return to later to explore further. The

tram ride is free with admission and you will have unlimited on-off privileges at stopping points throughout the garden. The tram runs every 25 minutes.

There are many Troutdale connections to the Oregon Garden. Many of you know, or have heard, the name J. Frank Schmidt Jr. from the nursery by the same name and there is a Lewis & Clark Garden, a train garden and Rip Caswell from Troutdale has some art in the garden.

Call the office by Sept 12, 503-661-2164, to reserve your spot for this really fun day with a lot of nice folks from THS.

### **2012 Annual Pioneer Picnic & Program**

**97th East Multnomah Pioneer Assn.**

**September 9th, 2012 (Sun.) -- Social Hour at 10:00 am**

**Meeting beginnings at 11:00 am -- Corbett High School MPB**

**PIONEERS OF OUR TIME**

**Share your stories!**

**Please RSVP: [www:PioneerPicnic@gmail.com](mailto:www:PioneerPicnic@gmail.com)**

**Lunch only \$6.00 each**

The doors open at 10:00 a.m. for a social hour.

The program starts at 11:00 a.m. The program this year will involve a sharing of stories. Lunch is served at noon.

The wrap-up starts around 1:00 p.m. The meeting usually ends by 2:00 p.m.

## Ken Simnitt

Kenneth James Simnitt Junior was born in Portland, Oregon on March 1, 1939 to Ken and Elsie Simnitt. Ken grew up in Troutdale, Oregon passing childhood days in games of Lone Ranger, cowboys and Indians and kick the can with his siblings and listening to radio programs at night. He graduated in 1957 from Gresham Union High School where he sang second tenor in the choir, wrote a pop music review in the student paper, pitched all state baseball, and fell in love with Margie Ann Chambers whom he wed at Gresham Methodist Church on July 18, 1959.

Ken's hopes for a career in baseball ended with his contraction of bulbar and spinal polio in September, 1959. He was among the last handful of polio's Portland victims, and bore a tracheotomy scar, vocal chord and lung damage, as well as partial paralysis on his left side as life-long reminders of the harrowing ordeal. Refusing social security disability, Ken resumed his teen aged job at Troutdale's Wool Pullery, where he set a record for "pulling" the most hides in one day that was never beaten. Ken & Margie divorced after the kids were grown.

Ken volunteered with Indian Guides, Boy Scouts, and local Little League as his sons came of age to play their dad's favorite sport. Ken was a passionate life-long fan of The New York Yankees.

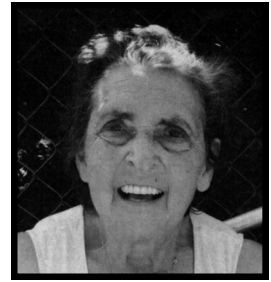
In 1986 Ken married Arina Jacoba Vanderveenen and lost her to illness in 1997. He later resided at Greenfield Village in Tigard where he enjoyed books, conservative talk radio, and viewing the news, OPB, and The Yankees, Blazers and golf on a modest flat screen television.

A very private man, Ken was a talented sketch artist, watercolor and oil painter. He loved 1950s music and was a thoughtful and prolific writer with several published poems, numerous short stories, and thousands of letters to his credit over the years.

Our thoughts are with Elsie and the entire Simnitt family.

## Dorothy (Van Orsow) Kerslake

Dorothy (Van Orsow) Kerslake, longtime Corbett resident and a ready hand in any kitchen in the community, died Monday, Aug. 13, at the age of 82.



Severely disabled by a stroke some years ago, Dorothy fell at her home near Springdale and died two days later.

Born April 26, 1930, in Dundas, Minn., to John and Mary Van Orsow, she came with her family to Oregon at age 12.

She graduated from Corbett High School in 1948 and went to work for the JC Penny store in Gresham, remaining with the Gresham Store until it closed, and then finishing her career at the company's Damascus district office and Vancouver Mall, retiring in 1991.

She married Richard E. Kerslake on May 9, 1952. They were married more than 60 years.

Both she and her husband enjoyed working in the community. Dorothy and Rich were factors in the kitchen at nearly every gathering of the East Multnomah Pioneer Association.

They were regulars at the Helping Hands program at Columbia Grange. For some years, they and family members hosted a brunch to raise money to complete the Troutdale Historical Society barn.

The community responded with awards. In 1995, Dorothy and her husband received the Community Hero Award and in 1997 the Heini Ziegler Community Service Award. They were grand marshals in a Corbett Fourth of July parade. The Kerslake Family was honored at the 2002 Troutdale Historical Society's Ice Cream Social where they served ice cream to the masses.

Though her stroke made speech difficult in her later years, Dorothy was always able to work in the kitchen and never failed to make it clear what should be done.

Her husband survives her, as well as two sons, Charles and James Kerslake; a daughter, Kathleen Charlton; two grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

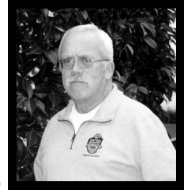
Donations may be made in her name to Corbett Fire District No. 14, P.O. Box 1, Corbett, 97019, or Columbia Grange Helping Hands, P.O. Box 266, Corbett, 97019.

**We Need a Grant Writer! If you have any experience, please call the office 503-661-2164**

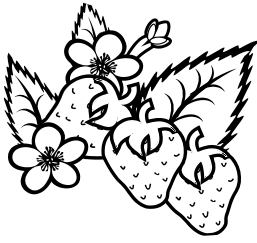
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## More Life and Sports in Wood Village

by  
Jim  
Glenn



Before Troutdale was full of bedrooms, it was full of berry fields. Miles of berry fields owned and operated by more berry farmers than I know. I don't recall picking blackberries but I certainly had a fair shot at the strawberry and raspberry fields. The fields and their rows of berries were always so neat and tidy. I often wondered what they looked like from the back seat of one those airplanes used for crop dusting.



I have five brothers and each one of them have two sisters and we all marched through the Bob Dix Berry Farm. Mr. Dix and his family acted like they were glad to see us everyday. The only thing is, it wasn't an act, but then I would expect that from a farmer who was sitting on a gold mine and paying with silver. Those silver coins in our pockets sure made Tommy and I feel important when we walked into Roy Meger's General Store in downtown Troutdale.

When I recently asked my brother Larry if he had ever picked berries for Bob Dix, he chuckled and said, "I made him a millionaire." He also told me that on his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday, Louise Dix had somehow found out about it. When he brought his last crate of raspberries to the check stand that day, Louise was there and said to him, "sweet 16 and never been

kissed." Immediately his berry field tanned face turned crimson red, and his tongue got all tied in knots. He let out a high pitched whimper and his feet sent him racing for home in an embarrassed state of mind. Larry considered Louise the most beautiful lady in Troutdale if not the whole world and he didn't yet know how to act in such a situation.

As Larry finished his story, it took me back to my 7<sup>th</sup> grade Christmas party



"I figured right off that this kissy face stuff is all right, even with a big boned girl."

when a classmate took me by the hand and led me over to where the mistletoe was hanging and all but challenged me to kiss her. When a small crowd gathered, I knew I had to do the deed or be scoffed at and ridiculed for life. A kid only gets one shot at a first kiss, so I took a deep breath, stood tall on my tip toes and kissed her square on the mouth and to my surprise she kissed back. I figured right off that this kissy face stuff is all right, even with a big boned girl.

Our siblings who worked before us must have left a strong enough impression in Bob's mind for him to tolerate Tommy and me. He was so gracious and apologetic that first day in the strawberry field when he explained that our color coded method was all wrong. Bob let us know right off that the green berries stayed on the bush and the red ones did not belong in our mouths. Except for the delicious tasting strawberries and the berry fights, the berry harvests were just not for us. The muddy rows and cold mornings in the strawberry fields and the long hot days listening to anonymous voices carrying on inane conversations became agonizingly painful in the raspberry fields as July slipped into August.

One thing about the berry fights is that for the most part, they had little to do with berries. A well placed berry never made much of an impact as it found its target, so we resorted to dirt clods and rocks as our primary supply of ammo.

I don't know if my big brother's efforts ever put Bob Dix in the rarified air of running with the Rockefellers but that berry field was truly a gold mine. To me, a "family outing" is as precious as anything in the world and Bob had that everyday during the harvest season. Bob, Louise and his

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folks Luella and William "Ben" Dix spent their summers joking, teasing and laughing with the young berry pickers all season long, making the drudgery of my first job more fun than it might otherwise have been. And through it all, they introduced us to the discipline and some of the responsibilities that go along with any job.

When the crops were all harvested, Bob Dix would have a picnic at Blue Lake Park for all the berry pickers to show his appreciation for the hard work involved in bringing in his crops. That was always a fun time, especially for Bob and Louise I believe. They truly enjoyed being around the young pickers and it showed more so at the annual picnic.

As we grew older, we graduated from the berry fields to the nursery fields of East County. My brother Pat went to work for Glen Handy's nursery over on Sandy Blvd. for several years in the mid to late 1950s. When I went to work a few years later at Handy's nursery, I found out that Pat had been a perennial all star year after year.

My folks had pretty much figured I was well on my way to being a career knot head before I first went to work for Kaphammer's Rose Nursery over on Blue Lake Road a bit north of Sandy Blvd. With the hard work in the rose fields every day, some of the immaturity of my adolescence was starting to fall by the wayside.

## Delores (Stout) Franks

Former longtime Troutdale resident Delores R. (Stout) Franks passed away on July 16, 2012 surrounded by her family and loved ones at the age of 80.

Delores was born in Sandy Oregon on November 16, 1931 to Harris Stout and Thelma Williams. She graduated from Gresham High School in 1950, where she met the love of her life and she married Vernon "Tug" Franks, on March 26th, 1951. They had five children.

Delores enjoyed sewing, and cooking and made all of her four girls' clothes for many years. She was an avid reader of romance novels and stories about 17 and 18th century women. Her love of geography gave her the desire to see the world. For much of her later years, she went on several cruises, seeing Russia, parts of Europe, the Panama Canal, South America, Alaska and the Caribbean. She enjoyed being waited on by the crewmembers on board.

She also used her talent of crochet to make hundreds of receiving blankets for children at The Shriners Children Hospital. It was her desire to help warm the children there, as she crocheted her love and care into each stitch. She was excited to try different color combinations and see her pile of blankets grow.

She is survived by four of her children: Ronda Hall, MT, Glenn Franks, Gresham, Joni Bontty and Marie Franks, Portland. She is also survived by eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by Tug in 1995, and her youngest daughter, Kathy Franks in 2006.

In lieu of flowers, she requested donations be made to the Portland Shriners Children's Hospital.



### A Note from California:

Jim Glenn's article in the latest newsletter about his being a Portland Beaver's fan reminded me of the attached photo I have of my grandfather (Jesse "Mike" Rogers). I remember that Grandpa was a big fan of the Beavers. He didn't talk much about his past. This photo would have been taken about 1915.

Grandpa is on the left. I see that he didn't have much of a "uniform." His teammate (unidentified) has a "C" on his jersey which, I presume, was for a Corbett team. Grandpa Rogers, who was the son of William Henry Rogers & Hattie (Chamberlain) Rogers, lived all his life on Mershon Road.

Dorothy Keefe - Soquel, California



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**THIS NEEDS YOU!**

Can you volunteer at one of our museums for a Saturday? or for a special tour? Take photos at an event? **HELP** on the newsletter? Dust? Scrapbook? **HELP** with fundraisers? Do you know or work for a company who would donate goods or services?...Call the office to volunteer. The smallest task helps a lot!



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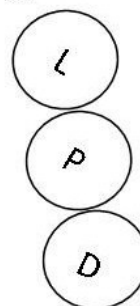
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## The Saga of *Not-So-Happy Mom* and the Kids that almost Didn't Make It!

By Terry Huston

We lived on Arata Road in a house owned by Multnomah Kennel Club for about six months while Dad helped Mr. Jannen finish the house that he and Not-So-Happy Mom would buy on Jackson Park Road.

That was 1959 and I had to leave second grade half way through the year and move from Corbett Grade School to Troutdale Grade School.



Greg Handy

Greg Handy was the only person I knew because Grandma & Grandpa Huston lived so close to the gas station, and being the only girl in the family, I got to spend more time with them in Troutdale. Greg and I would sit in the old jeep parked out on the side of the gas station and travel thousands of miles and never leave the parking lot. (The jeep did venture out on the highway one day, something about releasing an emergency brake or something, but that is Greg's story to tell). So, because Greg was the only one I knew in the second grade, I got in trouble a lot for talking to him. Mrs. Bailey made me write, "I will not talk to Greg Handy" 100 times. It didn't work.

It was while we lived on Arata Road that my Grandpa Huston died of a heart attack. Grandma & Grandpa lived on Buxton right behind what is

now the lawyer's office. He was able to get down to Handy's Service Station and they called Dad who drove him to the hospital, but he didn't make it. That was 54 years ago and I still miss that man something fierce.

Grandpa was a guard at the aluminum plant during the war and kept busy after he retired. He cleaned the bank, that is now soon to be the old police station, and I loved being able to ring the buzzer and go behind the counter where no one else could go. He also worked out on Division at Smith's Shetland Pony Farm. We got to go with him sometimes and feed the oats and molasses to the horses.

We finally moved to the house on Jackson Park Road. Another paradise for kids who like to run around, be active and use their imagination. We had trails on the hills behind the house. (Dix's berry fields were at the top.) All I am going to say about that is Yum! There was a spring about 30 feet up the hill in our back yard and it was the clearest, coldest, cleanest water you would ever taste. We always left an old metal cup up there so we could get a drink. Dad would run a hose down the hill to water the back yard in the summer time. It never occurred to me that a slug might travel down that hose and get into my mouth,

UNTIL IT HAPPENED! The spring ran into Mayo's Trout Pond and spawned mosquitos the size of 747's. The only way to be outside on a summer evening was to be eaten alive. But



Grandpa Huston at Smith's Pony Farm 1958

it was a great trade-off because of the huge bull frogs that lived in the pond. I loved to lie there at night with the window open and listen to them as I fell asleep.

Not long after we moved into the house on Jackson Park, Not-So-Happy Mom was taking me out to Betty Johnson's (Our former neighbor out on Gordon Creek Road who had a beauty shop in her home) to get my hair cut. My little brother Bobby was with us as was one of many puppies we had over the years. She took me out of Mrs. Lindholm's third grade class that day for my hair appointment. On the way down Stark Street Hill we hit a slick spot and crashed into the hillside and the car turned over on its side. If we had gone the other way, we would have gone over the side and I am sure

## Bygone Times

we would have been killed on the long drop down to the Sandy River at the bottom. The car was a 1949 Ford that my Grandpa had owned until he died. Right after the accident a man in a jeep stopped by and helped us out of the overturned car and gave us a ride down to the bottom of the hill where Not-So-Happy Mom called Paul Kimmel, the Pastor at Cherry Park Presbyterian Church. He came to get us, but not before the police had called an ambulance because the puppy had spit up a little blood on the seat of the car, so they assumed someone was hurt.

I was taken back to school and the most traumatic thing for me that day was leaving my lunch in the back of that man's jeep. Mrs. Lindholm sent me to the cafeteria and made sure I got something to eat.

We had trails all over those hills behind the house in the summer time. We could go to Perkin's house "next door", the clay hill, the grade school, down to the bridge that crossed Beaver Creek and never walk on the roads. On one such trip up in the woods, we found this beautiful Ivy growing up a tree. We pulled it down, wrapped it around our bodies and took it home to Not-So-Happy Mom. She yelled at us to get it off along with our clothes and made us take a bath immediately. Bob, Stan and I almost died from that poison ivy.

The kids that lived on the road would get buckets of crawdads out of the creek and Mrs. T. (Tomlinson), housekeeper for the Perkins', would cook them up for us and hand us all a ham-mer. We messed her kitchen up on


more than one occasion. On one expedition Brother Bobby fell through the hole on the side of the bridge and Harvey Wieprecht came along and pulled him out of the creek.

We rode horses with Barbara and Davey (Davis now) Perkins. One day we were on horseback on the grass, right by the road in front of Mayo's Pond and some idiot went by in his car and honked the horn. The horse reared up and I was on the back and went flying. Barbara was able to stay on the horse. As they always say, "If you get bucked off you have to get right back on"...I think I walked (limped), my pride hurt more than my body, the 20 feet to the front door.

**More next month!!!**

**We would love to  
have your stories  
about growing up  
or living in  
Troutdale.**

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503-661-2164

**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 and knowledge of, the locality's past.

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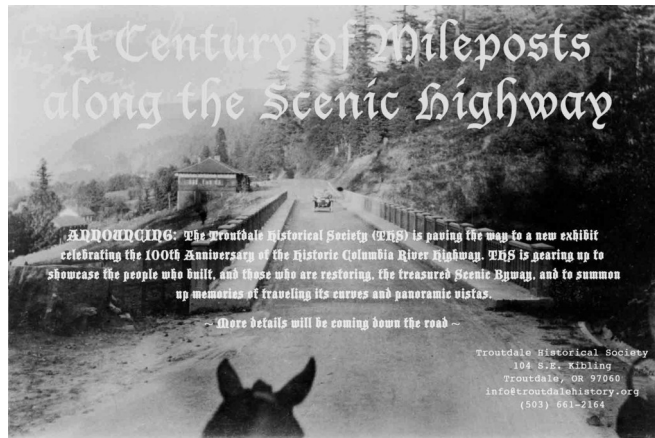
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### New Columbia River Highway Exhibit Fund

Your Name  
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Could Be HERE!



Did you have family members who worked on the old highway? Lived on the old highway? Or just loved to drive the old highway? This is a good way to honor their memory by sending a donation in their name to the Troutdale Historical Society for the new exhibit.

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