

BYGONE TIMES

A Newsletter of the TROUTDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

April, 1996

Sharon Nesbit, Editor, 665-0423

An evening with Sam

How to pin a label on Sam Cox, mayor, park builder, historical society president, gardener and chief fan of the City of Troutdale?

We won't label him, but we will interview him on **Monday evening, April 22 at 7:30 p.m.**, in Troutdale City Hall, taping the interview for our oral history collection.

Sam has more stories and tall tales than we will ever know. Sliding down the Columbia River Highway in his big coat, turning 50 to the amazement of the whole world, mopping soot out of the Harlow House, finagling candy for Troutdale's Santa Claus.

As part of our Troutdale Main Street meeting series for this year, we want to hear Sam's reflections on his years as mayor, the narrow escapes, the funny stuff. The things that happened the way he wanted and the things that didn't.

Join us and ask some questions of your own. Refreshments and more talk will follow.

Coming up, big bargains, big breakfast: Brunch, brown bag sale set

This newsletter contains two flyers to post in some prominent place in your neighborhood or for you to give to a neighbor who might want to attend either event.

On April 20, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., we have a **Brown Bag Sale**, all you get in a brown paper Bag for \$5. This is a spring cleaning event for our barn and basement, where things just seem to accumulate.

You get great bargains and help us clear out clutter at the same time. Want to help in this sale? Lots of fun and much good cheer -- call Ellen Brothers, 661-2164.

The second poster is for our **Welcome to Spring Brunch**, cooked by Rich and Dorothy Kerslake and served May 5, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the park. Cost is \$6 for adults, Children 6-12, \$3, and children under 6, free. Bring a crowd from your church before or after services.

Want to help on this one? Call Florence Baker if you can offer salad, a dessert or help serve, 665-9656. And put the poster up in your church.



CALENDAR

for April

April 6, Sat., 9 a.m.: Barn storming exhibit committee in the barn.

April 8, Mon., 7 p.m.: Steering Committee, planners of Harvest Faire and Ice Cream Social, in the barn.

April 11, Thurs., 6:45 p.m.: Bingo, Glenn Otto Community Park.

April 20, Sat., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.: Brown Bag Sale at the barn. All you Can stuff in a brown paper bag, \$5.

April 18, Thurs., 6:45 p.m.: Bingo, Glenn Otto Community Park.

April 22, Mon., 7:30 p.m.: An evening with Sam Cox, an oral history interview. Troutdale City Hall.

April 25, Thurs., 6:45 p.m.: Bingo, Glenn Otto Community Park.

May 1, Wed., 7:30 p.m.: Troutdale Historical Society Board meeting at the barn.

May 2, Thurs., 6:45 p.m.: Bingo, Glenn Otto Community Park.

May 4, Sat., 9 a.m.: Barn storming exhibit committee in the barn.

May 5., Sun., 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.: Welcome to Spring Brunch, Sam K. Cox Hall, Glenn Otto Community Park.



Surprise set for May Trek

You asked for it. A surprise (we'll follow you anywhere) trek, destination unknown, planned for your delight and continual amazement by Trekmaster Sharon Nesbit.

This trek is such a surprise that Sharon is not entirely sure where we are going and doesn't have all the costs yet, but we have room for 22 daredevil explorers to join us for a day-long jaunt Saturday, May 18, from sometime after breakfast to guess where? Get your name on the list by calling 661-2164. More information on costs

TREASURER'S REPORT

FROM PENNY BALCH

OPERATING ACCT.....	\$ 9,291.20
DED. BARN FUND.....	150.00
BARN BUILDING.....	24,512.93
ENDOWMENT FUND...	22,174.20
DIRECTORS FUND.....	2,336.23
BINGO FUND.....	1,958.73
 TOTAL.....	 \$60,423.29

This reflects \$20,000 from the estate of John Nasmyth for the barn and exhibits, as well as more than \$22,000 in our endowment fund dedicated to the future of our society.

GIFTS

BARN FUND

Roy & Nancy Hoover

OPERATING FUND

Adrienne Clausen

Membership News:

Joining the Director's Club, a membership level that helps pay the cost of our part-time director Ellen Brothers, are: **Penny Balch, Mike & Elaine Dubesa, Beverly Jones, Walter & Lorraine Mackey, Bob & Mona Mitchoff, Bill & Sharon Nesbit and David Ripma.**

And a warm welcome to new members: **Ruth & Lynn Ann Woodke, Lloyd & Laura Anson, Marilyn Morrison, Cathy Peetz, Cathy Walter, George Kelley** and to **Donna Anderson**, who received a gift membership from **Helen Wand.**

CENTURY FARMS SOUGHT

The Oregon Historical Society, telephone 306-5215, is seeking applications for the 1996 Century Farm program.

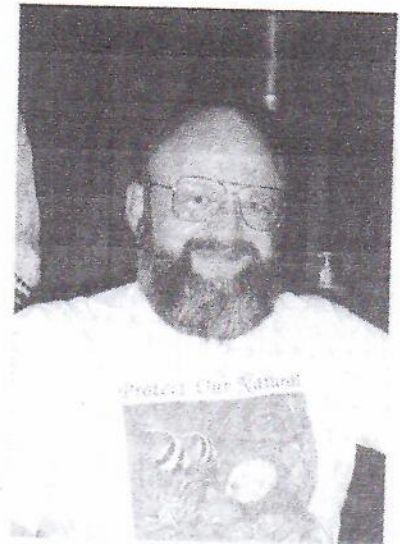
The Century Farm program recognizes the achievement of Oregon's "first families" for keeping and working farms from generation to generation.

Remembering Ruby Staten

Ruby Staten, who with her husband, Elliott, operated the small gas station that still stands at the west end of the Troutdale bridge, died Feb. 1 in Salem at the age of 99.

Ruby and her husband were running the station and the tourist cabins during the 1948 flood. Her account of canoeing along the Columbia River Highway in those days and the subsequent efforts to rebuild their business stories she shared for our records.

Thanks to Ione Doolittle for spotting the obituary and sending us the news. Please remember us when you see items that the readers of "Bygone Times" would be interested in.



Retiring Board member, Len Otto, without his awful fishing hat.

Former board members take on other work

Len Otto, who served two years on our board of directors, left that office at our February election.

We owe him and retiring vice president Sharon Nesbit thanks. Appropriate honors will be presented at our May meeting.

Neither Otto or Nesbit are off-duty, however. He continues vital work on the Barn Storing committee planning barn museum exhibits. He has taken the job of recording minutes and preparing computer documents for the committee.

Nesbit continues historian duties. Last month that included a program on Troutdale banks, a talk before the Glendoveer Garden Club, a walking history tour for the Oregon Trails Club and a history talk at the Harlow House.

Nesbit and Otto were replaced on the board by Florence Baker and Mona Mitchoff.

GIFTS TO THE ENDOWMENT FUND

Edwin & Marie Arnold
Gerry & Madeline Grimm
Thomas & Sarah Thompson

In memory of
Bobbie Armstrong
Pat & Ellen Brothers
Jack, Helen & Norma Greenlee

In memory of
Georgia Mae Carow
Dennis & Mary Bryson

In memory of
Herbert W. White Jr.
Charlotte White

Ellen Says: "Give us your Green Stamps!!"

Thanks to previous donors and recent raids on cupboards as well as fits of drawer-cleaning by **Connie Purvis, Bette Boyd and Martha Booheister**, we have more than 150 books of stamps and want more.

We'll be using the stamps to buy flatware, coffee pots and other items we use at our meetings.

APPLAUD THESE BINGO WORKERS

Volunteers at bingo are: Dick & Valora Jones, Carolyn & Harley Taylor, Bud & Marilyn Neubarth, Agnes Stiles, Sam Cox, Bob & Mona Mitchoff, Dave Ripma, June Nasmyth, Dione Pugh, Kris Fappas, Jean Holman, Marge Schmunk, Sharon Nesbit, Heather Mitchoff, Dan DeGraw and Al Stoeckel.

The Rude Awakening

by Walter Nasmyth

When I was a young lad living in Troutdale there were very few homes that had inside plumbing. There was a standing phrase that covered the trip to the outhouse quite well. It was, "Over the bed and on the floor, a 50-foot dash to the bathroom door." On one particular morning the "50-foot dash" proved to be my undoing.

At that time we lived in the old railroad house directly across from the old bank building at the foot of "Hungry Hill." The house was below the level of the Columbia River Highway but still 35 to 50 feet above the railroad tracks to the north of the house.

I was 6-years-old when the "ice man cometh" during the winter of 1932. Over night the Troutdale area was the recipient of four to six inches of ice that covered everything, including the outhouse.

That morning we (the children) were awakened by my mother's gentle voice yelling, "You kids get out of bed. Breakfast is almost ready." With that gentle awakening we (the younger kids) grabbed our clothes and headed for the living room and gathered around the old wood stove to get dressed. Many a blister was raised on the rump of the unwary kid that bent over too close to the stove.

As I was the youngest, I had the privilege of using the outhouse first. I dashed into the kitchen and slipped into my father's rubber boots and headed out of the door. When I reached the end of the porch, lo and behold, a new world of ice greeted me as if to say, "Come on Walter, you can make it to the outhouse."

I was almost halfway to the end of my distant trek when Dad's boots betrayed me and down I went on my backside. That was only the beginning for I began to slide downhill toward the creek that ran along the railroad track. Of course, there was a barrier just south of the creek, a barbed wire fence that stopped my unexpected toboggan ride to the bottom of the world.

It took some doing to stand and when I did, the next step was impossible. It suddenly dawned on me that I was going to freeze to death and began to yell at the top of my voice, but to no avail. Everyone was too busy getting ready for breakfast to hear my cries for help. It was quite evident that I could not climb back up the hill. I don't know how long I was at the bottom of the hill, but it was long enough to get mighty cold.



The railroad house that was the Nasmyth home, scene of Walter Nasmyth's fall from grace.

When the family sat down to breakfast, my mother said, "Where's Walter? Herbet, you go after him and tell him to shake a leg and to get a move on."

It should be to no one's surprise that Herb's first words when he saw me at the bottom of the hill were, "What are you doing down there?" He tried to reach me by using a rake to sink into the ice, which did not work. He then grabbed an axe and began chopping steps in the ice so he could reach me.

It took quite some time for Herb to reach me and my mother's patience was wearing thin. She dispatched my sister, Laura, to see what had happened to the two boys. When Laura saw what was taking place, she ran back into the house to report to my mother. Just as everyone came out of the house, Herb and I finally made it to the top of Mount Everest.

From that time on, in the winter time I would put off Mother Nature's call until I reached school where they had one of those newfangled things that was all white porcelain. Of course, when school was closed due to the weather, it did create problems.

I shall never forget my rude awakening on that icy morning in '32.

How do I volunteer at the Harlow House?

This is the time of year Ellen Brothers sets up our summer volunteer list of Harlow House Hosts. The house opens June 1 through October, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday, 1 to 4 p.m. We need volunteers who can give one or more days a month with the understanding that they may exchange days with other hosts when they have schedule conflicts.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

1. A **hostess/planner** to coordinate the May 5 Brunch. Since the Kerslakes do 85 percent of the work, this involves only decorating tables, arranging for salads and desserts and coordinating servers.
2. Frustrated **exhibit designer** needed to coordinate temporary displays in Harlow House, working with collectors to display their things, as well as exhibiting Harlow House artifacts.

**A recipe
from Connie Purvis**

(in response to requests at the February meeting. Connie notes there is no oil in the cake. The frosting gets it all!)

My Mother's Pineapple Cake

2 cups sugar
2 cups flour
1 teaspoon soda
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup pecans
2 eggs, beaten
1 20-ounce can pineapple, don't drain
Bake cake in large jelly roll pan at 350 degrees for 40 minutes, more or less

Topping:

1 8-oz. package cream cheese
1/2 cube margarine
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 cups powdered sugar
1/2 cup pecans
Spread topping on cake while it is still warm.

Namedroppers

Edwin O. Ege, Inc. is now Waste Management Troutdale with Terry and Dave Ege retiring and Ken joining the Waste Management firm...The Ege family have been longtime friends of our society, collecting our garbage at the Harlow House at no cost (and often on demand) and sponsoring music at our ice cream social... **Troutdale Historical Society** photos and information were used in a March 14, 1996 "Focus on Troutdale" piece by Suzanne Richards in the MetroEast Oregonian...**Family Displays?** On a recent trip to Canada, we saw a local museum offering space for families in the community to display photos, artifacts and a bit of history about their lives in the area. In one case, the display was arranged to honor the 50th anniversary of a pair who were longtime residents. Nice idea, we said. We have space in our display case in the rear parlor to honor local families. Anyone interested in mounting such an exhibit and being the "first family" to be so showcased? Call 661-2164.

AN ANSWER: WHY IS PORCH CEILING BLUE?

Travel is not only enlightening, it sometimes solves mysteries.

In 1980 when we were painting and restoring the Harlow House, we noted that the original paint color on the porch ceiling in front was a soft gray-blue. Why?, we asked. And people such as Bob Kerlake said that you "always" paint porch ceilings blue. "But why?" we asked. And in each case, Kerlake and other old-timers shrugged and said, "It's always that way."

In a very old church in St. Francisville, La., last month, the rector was describing the building's original interior colors. In the days before air conditioning, he explained, the windows were always open and the ceiling was painted blue. Thus, when mud daubers flew in, they thought the ceiling was sky and did not build their nests there.

One could argue that wasps don't see colors, or even that they aren't that dumb, but the ruse has worked for years. Now we know why the Harlow House porch ceiling is blue.

**TROUTDALE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
104 S.E. KIBLING STREET
TROUTDALE, OR 97060**

**BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TROUTDALE, OR
PERMIT NO. 5**



Nothing more fun than:
An Evening with Sam
7:30 p.m., Monday Night,
April 22 in Troutdale City Hall