



BYGONE TIMES

A Newsletter of the TROUTDALE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

December, 1997

Sharon Nesbit, Editor, 665-0423

Merry Christmas

Should we fail to meet this holiday to exchange greetings of the season, then we cannot let this year pass away with saying some small thanks for the pleasure of your company in 1997 and years past.

The warmth and verve of our meetings, the great, good fun of our treks, the welcome and joy in our festivals, and the open doors at Harlow House and depot are the product of members devoted to this community and its past, and determined to keep that spirit fresh in the present.



*The officers and board of directors of
The Troutdale Historical Society*

CALENDAR

Meetings

Sunday, Jan. 18, 2 p.m.
The Sager Family story from Lynn Renner, Troutdale City Hall

Sunday, Feb. 15, 2 p.m.
Thirtieth Anniversary meeting and an interview with Garthe Brown, Troutdale City Hall



Board of Directors

Wednesday, Jan. 7, 7 p.m.

In the barn. All members welcome

Wednesday, Feb. 4, 7 p.m.

In the barn. All members welcome

Harlow House

Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 4 p.m.

Depot Museum & Store

Open through Christmas, Saturdays & Sundays, 1 to 4 p.m., then closed for the winter.

Oregon's Trail's most dramatic story Jan. 18

Few tales of the Oregon Trail glued us to tour history books more than the story of the seven children of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sager, Oregon Trail travelers of 1844.

Sunday, Jan. 18, 2 p.m., in Troutdale City Hall, our speaker is Lynn Renner of Vancouver, descendant of the Sager family. Renner presents her program, based on family diaries, to students. Now she brings the dramatic tale to us.

After the death of their parents, the seven Sager orphans, one an infant, completed passage of the Oregon Trail and were placed in the care of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman at their mission near the present Walla Walla, Wash.

A year later two of the Sager boys died in the Cayuse Indian attack that killed the Whitmans. The girls were among those taken captive. Renner will tell that story.

If weather conditions make driving hazardous meetings are automatically canceled.

Committee races to complete barn and exhibit on smelt runs

With just a little bit of good luck -- and a whole lot of endurance and determination on the part of our Bamstorm Committee -- we will see in late spring the opening of our barn museum and our first professionally designed exhibit on Troutdale smelt runs.

The Bamstorm Committee began more than three years ago to talk about our barn museum and the story we wanted to tell there. We worked our way through Troutdale history, narrowing choices and finally setting our sights on first telling about smelt in the Sandy.

We were able to obtain the exhibit design services of Tommy Griffin and his Presentation Design Group due to a \$20,000 bequest from John Nasmyth. The result is exciting. We have Floyd Splawn's smelt boat. We have a display of great photos and a text that uses the memories of Glenn Otto, Ted Schulte, Floyd Splawn, Dick Knarr, Roy Meger, Walt Nasmyth, Bill Ellis and a host of other smelt fans. Fine tuning of text and photos for the smelt exhibit was completed just before Thanksgiving.

In memory....

Dick Jones, 1924-1997



Dick Jones and I met at an old house, Troutdale's Harlow House, and our last communication before his death from Lou Gehrig's Disease, Oct. 29, was about another old house, Zimmerman House.

We shared a passion for preservation and he was selfless in giving his considerable skills to that cause. His first restoration was the interior of the Harlow House, every latch, door plate and board of the kitchen floor is the work of his hands.

He turned to new construction, tying that bandanna around his head and building our museum barn. Long after others went home, he worked alone bringing it to near completion.

He took that same determination to the Zimmerman House. The face of our historic community is renewed because of him.

Sharon Nesbit

Richard M. "Dick" Jones, 73, a leader in East Multnomah County historic preservation, died Oct. 29 at his Portland home of Lou Gehrig's Disease.

Typically, when he learned that he had a terminal illness, he devoted his waning strength and abilities to leaving papers and documents, neatly labeled and filed, that will help his co-workers in history continue with the work.

An old sailor, he was making plans to blink to his family in Morse Code, if he was no longer able to talk.

Born April 28, 1924, he spent his childhood in East Multnomah County, returning in his retirement years to work for the Troutdale Historical Society, to be a founding member and president of the Fairview Rockwood Wilkes Historical Society and to found and be first chairman of the Friends of the Zimmerman House. In the latter role, he forged an agreement to bring the historic Zimmerman House into the Gresham city park system, in much the same manner that our society and Troutdale City Parks are partnered.

At the time of his death he was a member of the board of directors of Troutdale Historical Society and had just recently relinquished chairmanship of the barn committee, a job now assumed by Bob Strebin.

He enjoyed telling how he moved to this area and Wilkes Elementary School in 1936, a kid from Chicago in knickers, a vest and a tie.

"To be generous, the other kids, they were just brutal. They tried to hang me with my tie."

Jones was rescued by an older student named Willard Duncan. In 1947 he eloped with Duncan's "snotty little sister," Valora. The pair raised six children. Dick spent years in Scouting, at soccer games and bringing his grandchildren to Troutdale Historical Society events.

After the shooting death of his grandson in southeast Portland, he joined Parents of Murdered Children and became active in victim advocate programs. He prepared a history of his ship and shipmates in World War II where he was at Guadalcanal as well as other battles.

"You can go away from something, but you never really leave it," he said once. "The older you get, the more you develop a tendency to hang on to things that you feel are good."

The workshop in the barn was named the Dick Jones Workshop several years ago. Our goal is to finish it.

Gifts to the Troutdale Historical Society

Endowment Fund

In memory of
Dick Jones

from

Pat & Ellen Brothers

Barn Fund

In memory of
Dick Jones

from

Beverly Welker

Penny Balch

Ted & Lois Schulte

Roy & Nancy Hoover

Bonita Jenkins

Elsie Sinnitt

Finishing the barn falls to Bob Strebin

Word that designers are on the last lap of our smelt exhibit sent Bob Strebin into high gear to get the barn ready for occupancy.

Bob, who assumed the chairmanship of the barn committee when Dick Jones was taken ill, has spent many hours rounding up skilled workers to do finishing work. Mike Yost and Jim Murphy were hired to finish door frames, stairs, stair rails and other items. Mike Alderson and City of Troutdale workers helped pour the concrete pads outside the doors and Alderson will contribute time to build our storage area, so we can clear the main floor. Lights must be purchased and installed, some wiring adjusted. And we need small porches over the doors.

Money will be very tight, Bob says. Our barn building fund has been at comfortable levels for some time, but it is going fast.

Tea and Tour set for May 2

Jean Hybskmann, our volunteer coordinator at the Harlow House worries like the rest of us about money to keep the old house running. Because she enjoys the custom of afternoon tea, and because Vi Menefee, our good friend in Brownsville, Ore., historical circles, invited her to attend their most successful tea, Jean has created a May 2, 1998, Tea and Tour.

Our event, at \$35 a person and limited to only 100 guests, will offer a very fine tea and tour of a lovely home, this first time, the house of Junki and Linda Yoshida, the former Portland Automobile Club on the Sandy River at the Stark Street Bridge. The Yoshidas have kindly opened their home for the afternoon.

First priority for invitations goes to our own members, so if you want to be on the guest list, please call our Harlow House office number, 661-2164, and leave a message.

GIFTS

TO THE GENERAL FUND

Betty & Norwood Johnson
Tamara, Bob, BJ and Sam
Campbell
Alice M. Hartje
Clay & Rayleen Nelson

A Harlow Christmas...

Though not yet accomplished at this writing, volunteers for this year's Harlow House Christmas decorating included **Frieda Ryland**, chairwoman, **Jean Hybskmann**, who created the ornaments ("If it doesn't move, I paint it gold."), **Bill Hunter & Jackie Tutt** who loaned Nutcrackers for the exhibit, **Christina Balsiger** who arranged the display, **Adrienne Clausen** who made the soup and **Mike Hamme** who cut and donated the Christmas tree.

Name Droppers....

Welcome to new members, **Betty & Norwood Johnson, Jemina Kiser** and **Clay & Rayleen Nelson**. A warm thank you to the **Brass Rail Tavern**, sponsor of the Harlow House for December with a \$100 donation...**Herb Nasmyth** responded to our plea for tools for the barn, delivering a collection of hand tools the next day...Bless **Frank Driver** who gave us a radial arm saw...Though many of our E-mail-equipped members sent applications, the Oregon State Lottery picked **Sharon Nesbit's** application for a "Scratch Off for Charity" Event, Dec. 12, at the Lloyd Center. Two volunteers will scratch off as many lottery tickets as they can in five minutes, the proceeds going to Troutdale Historical Society... **Director Deb Cook** convinced **Northwest Natural Gas** to give us a \$200 rebate for installing an energy efficient gas furnace at the Harlow House...From member **Bette Boyd** in Vermont: "Just read your last newsletter. I want to look like **Elsie Sinnitt** when I am 80."...And from **Barbara Grahn**, former Harlow House caretaker, now in California at Stanford University, "Everything is great down here. **Dennis' (Grahn)** inventions are just taking off. It's amazing. We're starting a major remodel of our 1906 house in January. Our house is a real dive, but living at the Harlow House made me love old houses"... **Florence Baker** brought photos to contribute to our history collection on the berry growing industry...Thank you to **Bob & Louise Dix, Bill Strebin, Vaden Callister, Bob Strebin** and **Florence** for their contributions to our oral history collection at our November meeting...And to **Vi & Clover Nasmyth** and **Doris Woolley** for a fine assortment of cookies...And a thank you to **Nancy (Bui) Wolf**, a superb copy editor, who has volunteered to edit **Sharon Nesbit's** chapters of Troutdale history...And to **Jim & Nina Kight** for providing a portrait of Floyd Splawn that we needed for our smelt exhibit...To **Alice Wand** who hunted for a negative, or the source, for pictures of smelt eggs...To **Steve Lehl** who personally delivered a smelt photo from his private collection...To **Sadie Riley, Carolyn Taylor, Deb Cook, Dick Waite & Sharon Nesbit** who keep the depot open through Christmas...To **Connie Purvis & Beverly Welker** for continued work on photo and oral history collections.

Vacancies on board offer opportunities

The death of Dick Jones and the pending resignation of board member Mike Dubesa will leave us with two slots to fill on the Troutdale Historical Society Board of directors at our annual meeting in February.

If you are interested in those positions, (the board meets on the first Wednesday night of the month), then give Deb Cook a call at 661-2164.

The board is also concerned about mustering an active force for its Ways and Means Committee. Members who would like to work in that regard should call Deb at the number above.

Finally, we desperately need someone willing to learn woodburning to complete the donation plaques for the barn. It would make a nice warm hobby for a cold winter.

Christina Balsiger exhibit coordinator

Christina Balsiger, who works with her husband at the family chiropractic clinic in East Multnomah County, stopped by the Harlow House in late summer, worried that she had seen someone upstairs while driving by on the previous evening.

The "prowler" was Dolly, the upstairs clothing mannequin, cast in a



new light by a different security lighting system. One thing led to another and Balsiger indicated an interest in volunteering to coordinate our rotating exhibits. Her first job is the December showing of the Nutcracker collection. For future events she would like to show new materials from our collections, a spring bonnet exhibit and perhaps the Valentine collection from the Zimmerman House. Our rotating collections often are items loaned by our members who want to share with others.

If you have ideas to add to her repertoire, please leave a message for her at the Harlow House, 661-2164.

**Troutdale Historical
Society**
104 S.E. Kibling St.
Troutdale, OR 97060



If the old year was a good one and the new year looks promising, a gift to the Troutdale Historical Society before year 's end couldn't hurt.

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Worrisome floods under study by city

Continued problems with flooding in the pond areas behind the Harlow House have resulted in a decision by the City of Troutdale to call for bids for an engineer to study and fix the problem.

The development of Strawberry Meadows on the former Dix berry farm has filled the wetland in back of the house and barn with silt and recently flooded our parking lot in heavy rains.

Torrents of water coming so near the house and barn raised concerns about both buildings as well as the grounds, and city officials promise that work will be done to protect our historic property.

A correction: Ernie Cereghino's cousin, who marked his 65th anniversary of graduation from Troutdale Grade School is named George. He was incorrectly identified in last month's newsletter.

Name Properly...

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
TROUTDALE, OR.
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Karl and Coy &...
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In memory
Our sympathies to the family of **Marge Whitlock**, neighbor to the Harlow House, who died in October.

Frustration key word in bulk mail problems

A new central bulk mailing in Portland, presumed to improve service, has done the opposite. Since June when our newsletter was delivered so late that it cut usual attendance at ice cream social in half, we have been plagued with delivery problems. Your newsletter, which once arrived in less than two weeks and more often, in a week, is mailed at the same time but now comes as much as 22 to 23 days after mailing.

We apologize for the problems, which came without warning. We hope that the system will improve. Until then we will try to get as much advance news as possible into each edition.

More news from out members...

Jack Elmer, who grew up on Stark Street just east of the Troutdale Thriftway, wrote a memoir of his childhood, which we will share in a future newsletter. For now, just a sample:

"In the last days of school in 1945, I came from the first grade at Cedar School. And as I came into the house, I called for my mother. She was downstairs in her sewing and ironing room. When I walked downstairs, there she was ironing on her old "mangle." Tears were just streaming down her face! I asked her what was wrong. All she could say was, "The war is over."

Congratulations to members **Clinton & Gloria Witter**, who celebrate their 50 anniversary in December.

And thanks to **Walt Nasmyth** who has written more memories for future newsletters. Do you have a story to tell? Write it down and send it to us.