

BYGONE TIMES

January 2015

Upcoming Events

Troutdale Historical Society & Friends of Vista House Programs

Sunday, January 18, 2 to 4 p.m., Mark Nelsen, Fox 12 weatherman, enlightens us about our local weather. Program will be in the Phoenix Room at the Holiday Inn Express, 477 NW Phoenix Dr. (between Shari's & Taco Bell off I 84).

Saturday, Jan. 17, 10 am. to 2 p.m., Harlow House open to visitors.

Sunday, February 15, 2 to 4 p.m., Dodi Davies presents a program about saving the history and artifacts of the Zimmerman House. She will bring a selection of vintage Valentines. Program is in Sam Cox Building in Glenn Otto Park, Troutdale.

Sunday, March 15, 2 to 4 p.m., our own **Len Otto** tells about the 1948 Flood and how it affected Troutdale. Program is in Sam Cox Building in Glenn Otto Park, Troutdale.

Sunday, April 19, 2 to 4 p.m., Sharon Nesbit interviews the **Winkler Family**, early residents of Troutdale, and Troutdale Historical Society's annual meeting and election of officers. This program is in Sam Cox Building in Glenn Otto Park, Troutdale.

Saturday, May 16, is our annual Cemetery Tour hosted by **Stan Clarke** and Gresham Memorial Chapel. . This year's tour takes us to Astoria. Time of departure TBA.

Saturday, July 25, is our annual volunteer thank-you pot luck picnic hosted by **Jean and Bob Ice** at their Sandy River home. The Ice house is located at 1442 Jackson Park Rd. Troutdale, Oregon. Event runs from 3-6 p.m.

Nelson loves the weather in the Columbia gorge

Sunday, January 18, 2 -4 p.m., Holiday Inn Express, 477 NW Phoenix Dr. in the Phoenix room (between Shari's and Taco Bell on Frontage St.)

Mark Nelsen, a native of the Northwest has always had an interest in weather, especially after the destructive wind-storm here in November 1981.



Mark was hired by KOIN-TV in Portland for weekend weather duties. While forecasting at KOIN, Mark also was seen on FOX News At Ten. In October 2000, Mark joined FOX 49 as chief meteorologist, and then became chief meteorologist at KPTV.

Mark loves rough weather, and lives in the west end of the Columbia Gorge for that reason. His favorite weather pattern? A good Northwest snowstorm, of course.

Admission is free, however donations are greatly appreciated. Refreshments will be provided for more information call THS at 503-661-2164

Dodi Davies

Sunday, February 15, 2015, 2 to 4 p.m., Sam Cox Building in Glenn Otto Park

Dodi Davies presents a program about saving the history and artifacts of the Zimmerman House. She will also bring a selection of vintage Valentines. Zimmerman House is cared for by East County Historical Organization, ECHO.



An Update on our Exhibit -- King of Roads



A great deal of work -- some committee members are putting in at least a full day a week or more -- is underway to get the final pictures and text finished so our exhibit designers can pop them into the computer and prepare the panels.

Len Otto, surrounded by tables and photos and a lot of his own heavy-duty computer equipment, has been scanning photos. A neat trick when you blow up a postcard into a picture the size of your refrigerator. At his side, Steve Lehl, keeps rummaging in his collection and his considerable memory, for photos and other material that will tell the story of the 100th anniversary of the highway.

Jeanette Kloos, with decades of experience on the old highway, is going deep into old files for photos. Beyond that, we rely on her memory of every stretch of the road and its restoration to guide us in telling the story. We consult Clarence Mershon's books nearly every week.

Sharon Nesbit and Julie Stewart provide access to our own historical society files, plus Julie keeps minutes of our meetings. At students at the Center for Advanced Learning in Gresham have narrowed their choices for a window sticker

and decal for the exhibit.

Greg and Sue Handy are the record keepers and drive the exhibit. Greg is responsible for translating all our stuff into the technical language that the designers understand, and ultimately to get the exhibit up in the barn. Sue keeps records and counts pennies. Others, including Helen Wand, Nesbit and Otto, have been working to bring in the money to keep the exhibit going. And those laboring over grant writing and responses: Marilee Thompson, Mary Bryson, and Julie Stewart.

And in the barn? Nearly all the old material is down. The walls have been repaired and are ready for painting. It looks hopeful for a July 2015 opening and talk has begun on special opening parties for the donors to the exhibit who have helped. We hope to have some costumed dignitaries. Sam Hill and his mistress Mona Bell? And old cars, of course. If you want to be part of the event, it is not too late to make a donation, or offer other help.

Christmas in three places Dec.6

And each event was a party

Our Christmas sale in the barn brought shoppers, the curious, many neighbors and some new faces to the Harlow House property just wondering what was going on. Sharon Nesbit and Julie Stewart sold previously-loved Christmas décor and ornaments in the barn at bargain prices, making \$115 toward the THS highway exhibit fund.

In the Christmas-decorated Harlow House, the Tuesday ladies hosted offering fresh-baked cookies, punch, a doll exhibit and Christmas. Our Santa there was Bob Mitchoff, but when he was called to another site, our late afternoon Santa was Alec Fappas, Bob's grandson, who was a babe on his Grandpa's knee in the Harlow House 18 years ago. He is our first second generation Santa.

At the depot, Nell Simien spent her birthday hosting a book signing with D.C. Burkhardt, author of a photo book on the railroads of the Columbia Gorge. Helping out there with hosting and paying customers were Jon and Audrey Lowell.

At the house, Mary Bryson, Starr Williams, Jean Holman, Barbara Welsh, and Mona Mitchoff. And thanks to Sam Barnett, who put up Christmas sale signs that no East Wind could take down. The ladies baked extra cookies, which were packaged and delivered Monday to the various offices of the City of Troutdale, parks, public works, city hall, all important partners in the grounds around our museums.

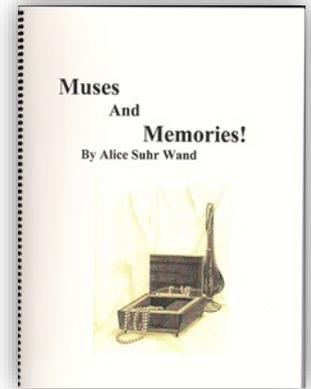


Book store has Wand books

We have a mother and daughter book combination in our Depot book store.

We have the memoirs of the late Alice Wand, and her daughter, Helen's, book, loosely based on the settlement of her family in the Columbia River Gorge, "Where Eagles Nest."

Book sales were excellent during December. Please remember we carry dozens of local history books in our museum store.



Sign of the Holidays

It was kind of a Christmas present when Bill Flynn, acting wood shop teacher at Reynolds High, showed up with our restored and repaired barn sign, which was damaged last year, and then somehow disappeared.

Flynn, who substitutes at Reynolds, and also writes books, recognized the broken sign in the wood shop as one that he had frequently walked by. Surgery was required to get the broken parts out of it, but he put it back together, and then took it to art teacher, Ron Gjesdal, who repainted it. We will hang it over the door of the barn, thanks to the kindness of these local teachers.

Good deeds done for THS

Jerry Hybskmann refinished the top of the reception table in the Harlow House. Sam Barnett made and put up signs for our Christmas sale of used ornaments in the barn. Greg and Sue Handy picked the lock on the sign case on the front of the Harlow House -- it was stuck -- and then repaired it.

Sharon Nesbit updated the sign. Len Otto busied himself in the barn clearing old molly screws and other hanging devices from the walls. A new exhibit construction will start up soon. Julie Stewart continues to plug away at the back log of pictures to be entered in our computer system. The new scanner works like a charm, thanks to our members who pay dues for such things.

Want to donate to Troutdale Historical Society while shopping at your favorite store or on-line store? THS has made it easier:

Here is how to link your Reward Card. Go to www.fredmeyer.com/communityrewards which entitles THS to donations from Fred Meyer. Please enroll, using our non-profit number 85937. Every time you shop and use your Rewards Card, you are helping Troutdale Historical Society earn a donation.

Support Columbia River Highway Exhibit coming in 2015 by shopping at AmazonSmile. That link is <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/93-0738777>. It is really easy to shop Amazon Smile (just like Amazon.com) and select Troutdale Historical Society as the charity.

1964 flood— The Otto family

At Thanksgiving, instead of watching football or fighting over politics, (though they likely did some of that, too) the children of Glenn and Helen Otto put together their memories of the 1964 flood on the Sandy River.

While the flood, and a second that followed in January, made a disaster area of the entire state, the Otto family's seat for the event was their home right on the Sandy at the west end of the Troutdale Bridge, now the home of City Councilor Glenn White and his wife, Dianne.

Len Otto, chairman of our barn exhibit committee, asked his siblings to give an account of the day they fled the flood and what it did to the Christmas that followed.

The set-up for the flood was a big snow storm, followed by a warm rain that filled the Sandy River with raging water. The Sandy at Troutdale started rising on Dec. 22.



“The river was dark gray and was raging with huge waves. It was filled with debris; trees had been uprooted and were being tossed by the waves, remember Jo-

ann Otto. “Mom had been working all day moving items upstairs from the basement; this included jars and jars of fruit that she had labored to can. She was exhausted.”

But Helen Otto, a survivor of the Vanport Flood and not that happy about living near any water, began to worry, seeing debris threatening the Sandy River bridge. She got on the phone to Multnomah County, then owners of the bridge, and after repeated calls, dump trucks of boulders were hauled in and dropped protecting the bridge abutments, and likely helping save the Otto house as well.

Glenn Otto was at work as an electrician in Portland but the crisis kept growing. Water tumbled the big cook house at the church camp (now Glenn Otto Community Park) into the river. The most tragic sight for nearly everyone in Troutdale was Lester and Eleanor Clark's house washing downstream.

Neal Otto, then only 3 1/2, remembered “mom screaming and crying (not usual for a World War II veteran who had seen so much) when she saw the Clark's house go downriver.

Glenn Otto arrived home at about nightfall, and along with him, family friends, Carl and Lorraine Klingner. Sometime during the day, Helen Otto had apparently secured the family's three flat-bottomed boats, mostly used for smelt runs, to an oak tree. Glenn Otto went out to secure them.

“Pulling all three at once should have been more than one man should have been able to do, but Dad was a big man, sturdy and strong,” Len remembered.

Hearing that the river was about to wash its way through the highway near the Beaver Creek bridge, (the only way out), the Ottos prepared to evacuate in two cars. Len, Joan, and Ken, were in the first car with Lorraine Klingner.

Waiting at Troutdale City hall for the rest of the family, Len remembers hearing a big bang, a gas line explosion, as the road at the bridge washed away. No cell phones then, to check on others. They waited and worried.

The rest of the family just made it, sprinting across the bridge over the collapsing road to car parked west of the bridge. Mary Otto remembers that one delay was a last-minute trip into the house to get her second grade class Christmas present, a crafty thing of yarn.

“I, for one, am glad I did not lose a major part of my family that night.,” Len recalls. Christmas was spent at Grandma's house. The Ottos went to Sandy Road (locally known as Curly Cue) and looked down on their home, an island with water within 18 inches of the foundation. They family continued to live there until Glenn and Helen Otto built a home, high and dry, in Wood Village.

Memory is a tricky thing, says Neal Otto. In 1996 at the age of 36, found himself crying while watching TV coverage of the flood, “and realized my fear was embedded pretty deep.”



Saving Bruce the Caboose

It was raining hard, and the back side of the Troutdale caboose was a quagmire, but Jim Clark, former Outlook, photographer, volunteer Larry McGinnis and Sharon Nesbit completed a photo survey of our Union Pacific Caboose in mid-December.

The purpose is a permanent record of the caboose markings/labels/signs before they fade, or are washed away. Ultimately, it will be necessary to restore the caboose and we will want to bring it back with all its original markings. The photo records will be a guide to that. While Clark took the photos and Nesbit held a big umbrella, Larry held a yard stick next to the signs and markings so the size can be determined from the photo.



Thank you so much to end of year contributors

Historic Columbia River Hwy Exhibit Contributors

Helen Wand, The Family of Clarence Mershon , Tad's Chicken 'n Dumplins, Jeanne Landis, Leatherwood Family Fund John & Netta B. Parke Fund of Oregon Community Foundation,

In memory of Vic Landreth: Len & Gloria Otto, Barbara Pederson & Philip Sheely, Vickie Nesbit & Terry Weiner, Kay Struckman, Marilee Thompson, David Ripma

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Honoring Bob & Vera Strebin: Dave Ripma and Sharon Nesbit

Membership Renewals: Richard & Linda Paz, Helen Wand, Charlotte Rubin, Jean Holman, Sam Barnett, Sharon Nesbit, Dave Ripma

Memo from THS Board of Directors:

Your newsletter goes to quarterly publication

At the last board meeting a motion was made and passed by a **Newsletter Task Committee** to reduce publication of the historical society newsletter to four times a year.

The committee checked with other historical societies to determine the number of newsletters they print and publish a year. The committee found that Troutdale Historical Society was the only society that printed and published a newsletter every month to coincide with monthly meetings.

In order to adhere to budget constraints, the board feels it prudent to demonstrate fiscal responsibility to current members and begin to cut expenses. The treasurer reported THS will save approximately \$1,200 a year by going to quarterly newsletters.

January, April, July, and October will be the months it will be published. A reminder of the upcoming monthly meetings is the one-page flyer inserted in this newsletter. Please attach to your calendar. In this issue in the left hand column on the front page is an event reminder through May. The newsletter will also be on the website.

We feel it is important to try this. It will be a test.

THS Website Under Construction

Another item that the THS Board of Directors have voted to change is the website. Some of you may have already noticed that when you log on to the old website it redirects you to a new site.

The new site has some different features designed to make it easier to navigate the site.

Even though the website is up and running there is work still going on behind the scenes to make our website a friendly and helpful to our members and the general public at large.

So stay tuned and log in when you have some spare time and let us know what you think. Or if you have a few suggestions to make the website better.

AVP media John W. Croy

AVP Media
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j gelati

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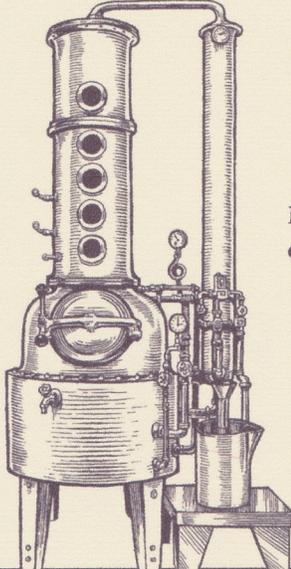
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Troutdale Historical Society
219 E. Historic Col. Riv. Hwy.
Troutdale, Or 97060
www.troutdalehistory.org
503 661-2164

Mission Statement: To gather, preserve and make available material relating to their 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.

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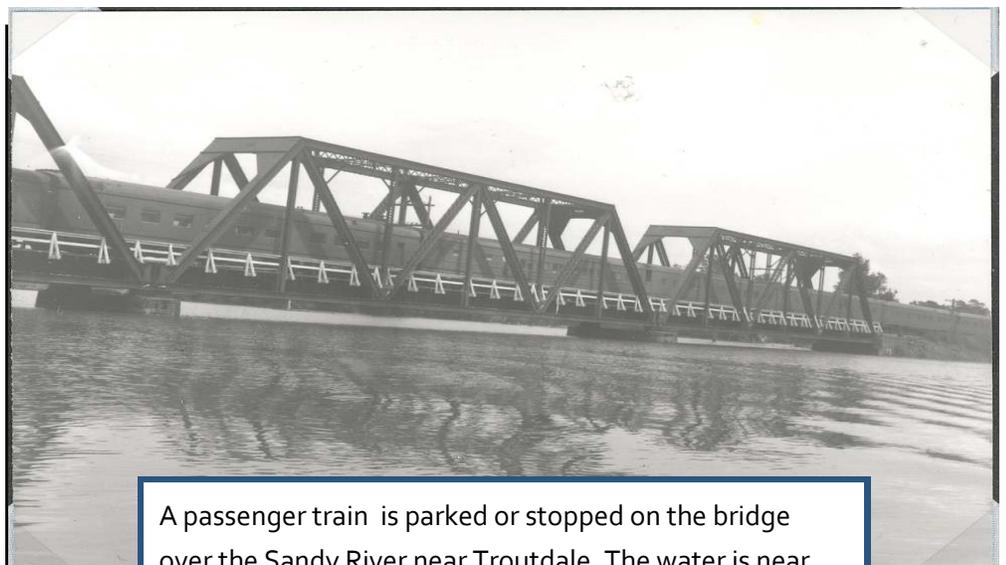
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A passenger train is parked or stopped on the bridge over the Sandy River near Troutdale. The water is near flood stage (c1948).

Remember: THS is a 501 c (3), so your donations are tax deductible and help support the museums, programs, preservation of artifacts and local history. Thank you for your continued support.