

Footprints

on the sands of time....

ISSUE IX

SOUTHWEST SEATTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OCTOBER 1989

Denny/Boren novelist to highlight our annual membership meeting

A celebration was the last thing Seattle's pioneers had in mind when they landed at Alki on a rainy autumn day 138 years ago.

But that's just what our historical society is planning this fall -- a celebration of the landing of the schooner *Exact* at Alki Beach. The event, which will include a costumed reenactment of the Denny Party landing, complete with descendants of the settlers and of Chief Seattle, will take place at 1 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 11, the state's official 100th birthday.

Brad Chrisman, who originated our Centennial Ferry Cruise last Dec. 10, heads the committee for our Nov. 11 event, tentatively called the Centennial Finale. He wrote the chapter of the West Side Story history book that dealt with the landing and has enlisted the help of Bellingham author Brenda Wilbee in planning the festivities.

Wilbee, an expert on the lives of Louisa Boren and David Denny, has written a trilogy of historical novels to dramatize the birth of Seattle: Sweetbriar, Sweetbriar Bride and Sweetbriar Spring. You can meet Wilbee and get a sneak preview of the Finale by attending our annual membership meeting at 10 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 7, in room RS-79 of South Seattle Community College.

Wilbee will speak at the meeting about the detailed research that led to her novels. She consulted with David Denny's great-grandsons and pored over

David Denny's and Louisa Boren's diaries, letters and artifacts, including David's pocketknife and Louisa's dishes.

The actual landing of the Denny Party took place on Nov. 13, 1851. Other reenactments took place in the 1920s and in 1951. In the 1951 reenactment, the West Seattle Sea Scout vessel, the *Yankee Clipper*, served as the *Exact* and will repeat that role at our event. John Kelly, the current

skipper of the sailing ship, was on the crew during that reenactment.

On Chrisman's committee are Ben Boren, great-great-grandson of Carson Boren, and Ben's daughter Tricia. Chrisman also has contacted Norman

Perkins, great-great-grandson of Chief Seattle, who plans to participate. The committee is trying to line up other descendants of the Boren, Denny, Bell, Low and Terry families, as well as members of the Duwamish Indian tribe.

You can call Chrisman at 935-9366 evenings or 382-5022 weekdays if you want to help plan the event.



Float video, book auction due

Would you like to see a video of the Save the Admiral Theater float in the July 29 Hi-Yu parade?

Or would you like to bid on an auctioned copy of the newly published West Seattle Census of 1907?

That and much more is on tap for the fifth annual membership meeting. It's coming Saturday, Oct. 7, at South Seattle Community College, room RS-79 (in the south end of the main building). It will begin at 10 a.m. and end at noon.

One of the main tasks will be to elect officers to terms that begin next Jan. 1. This fall, board member Brad Chrisman and membership chair Betsy Detroit served as a nominating committee. Their slate appears on the inserted sheet of proposed by-law amendments.

We'll serve refreshments at the meeting, which promises to be lively and entertaining. If you haven't joined in on any of our activities during the past year, come on along! If you need a ride, please call Clay Eals, 935-7515, or Elliott Couden, 932-2290.



Brenda Wilbee

Membership picnic brings out 54 adults, kids to Camp Long

Sun. Shade. Hot dogs, soda pop, coffee, cookies, ice cream. Gab, laughs. Awards. A trivia game. Rock rappelling and bocce ball for the kids. Sound like fun?

The 54 who turned out at our historical society's first annual membership picnic Sunday, Aug. 6, at West Seattle's Camp Long thought so.

A beautiful summer day greeted those who made the trek from the parking lot to the camp's east shelter to take refuge from the roar of the Seafair hydroplane race and enjoy the afternoon at our pleasant, tree-shaded site.

Participants were greeted with one of several written questions about West Seattle history or an answer to one of the questions. The questions and answers related to events our historical society has sponsored during this Centennial year, including the Centennial Ferry Cruise and the Centennial Tour of Historic West Seattle. The idea was for people to ask around and find their corresponding answer or question, and thus to talk with members whom they might not talk with otherwise. The trick worked, as people mixed well. Those who found their matches received Save the Admiral Theater buttons and postcards as prizes.

Several members of our Save the Admiral Task Force hauled the group's float and three-panel Capt. George Vancouver mural replica to the site so that the picnickers could get a close-up look of what was displayed during the Hi-Yu parade the weekend before.

Youngsters attending the picnic were entertained by a one-hour session of rock-wall rappelling led by a Camp Long ranger on a WPA-era practice climbing surface just south of our site, followed by a game of bocce ball led by board member Deb Barker on the meadow west of our site.

Of course, no gathering could proceed without a few formalities. In this case, they amounted to the announcement of several Presidential Awards to members chosen by this year's president, Clay Eals. Here are the recipients:

* Earl Cruzen, for leading the effort to get

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c/o South Seattle Community College
6000 16th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98106

Editor: Elliott Couden.

Editorial Board:

Margaret Mary Davies, Clay Eals, Flo Lentz

Editor's note: It has been a fulfilling experience to have served in this position for awhile. However, I am asking Clay Eals to take over as editor, effective with the next issue. Clay has excellent qualifications and a great store of energy and ability. I will support Clay as a member of the Editorial Board.

-- Elliott N. Couden



Boyd Swanson hauls Admiral float's mast and crow's nest to picnic site at Camp Long.

historical murals painted in the West Seattle Junction.

* Moe

Beerman, for his dedication of time and signpainting talent for the Save the Admiral Theater efforts and for assisting with the first Junction mural.

* The

Southwest Seattle Community Relations Team of U.S. West Communications, for spearheading the drive to pay for restoration of the Statue of Liberty replica at Alki Beach through the sale of Alki Lighthouse pins.

* South

Seattle Community College, for its generous support of our historical society, including the provision of free space for meetings and

storage of artifacts.

* Graphics Plus, Inc., in White Center, for its support of the society's Footprints newsletters and other publications needs.

* Flo Lentz, for leading our successful first Centennial Tour of Historic West Seattle.

* The Save the Admiral Theater Task Force, for its demonstration of how a good cause and hard work can mobilize a community to successful action in the name of historic preservation.

Those who came seemed to like the Camp Long site, despite (or perhaps because of) its relative remoteness. We plan to hold a second picnic next summer. Would you like to keep it at Camp Long or move it to the busier but more accessible Lincoln Park? We also may move it to a Sunday in June rather than August. We'll take up the questions at the Oct. 7 annual meeting, as we need to reserve park space as early as we can. If you can't come to the meeting, please call Clay Eals, 935-7515, or another executive board member to let us know your preferences.

Let's aim for 200!

By mid-September, our historical society's membership count stood at 195. That figure represents all who have joined since the inception of our society, including some 20 whose memberships have become inactive.

Admiral Theater effort sails on with parade float, state action

A sensational parade. State and national recognition. An encouraging series of negotiations. Sales of buttons, postcards and bumper stickers. A brochure in progress and a chapter in a forthcoming book.

The list of accomplishments of our historical society's Save the Admiral Theater Task Force for July and August is a long one. Here's an update:

* We co-sponsored (with the West Seattle Cultural Society) a booth in the Junction Street Fair on Friday through Sunday, July 14-16. We debuted Save the Admiral postcards and bumper stickers and continued to sell Admiral buttons. More than 1,400 of the collector's buttons have been sold so far at \$1 apiece. The bumper stickers sell for the same price. The postcards show off 1942 photos of the Admiral's exterior (with Gene Tierney's *Sundown* on the marquee) and interior auditorium (including the wonderful underwater murals). Each postcard sells for \$1.50. The pair goes for \$2.50.

* We marched in the American Legion Grand Parade on July 29 as part of Hi-Yu activities. We built a wood and muslin float resembling the original marquee of the theater, complete with mast and crow's nest. It sat atop Flo Lentz' bright red Checker sedan. Drury May waved from the marquee above as about 10 fellow task force members marched, sold buttons and took turns wielding handtrucks to wheel a three-panel replica of the theater's Capt. George Vancouver mural down California Avenue. With chants of *Give us an A, Give us a D ... What's that spell?*, we drew cheers and applause along the entire parade route. Optimistically chiding the message that Cineplex Odeon has displayed on the real Admiral readerboard since the theater's Jan. 29 closure, our marquee shouted: *Th-th-th That's NOT all, folks!*

* Our task force steering committee, aided by state Sen. Phil Talmadge, met face-to-face for the first time with Mark Kaplan, Cineplex's Los Angeles-based vice-president for real estate, for two hours on Aug. 8. The meeting was short on specifics but nonetheless encouraging for its cooperative tone. A new wrinkle is that Cineplex is reconsidering whether to expand the Admiral to a multiplex instead of selling it. Expansion would include preserving the distinctive exterior facades, the lobby and the Capt. Vancouver mural. Further meetings are expected in the coming months. Meanwhile, the staff for the city's Landmarks Preservation Board, which voted to designate the Admiral a city landmark on June 7, also met privately with Cineplex on July 20 and Aug. 8 as part of the Controls and Incentives process that follows such a landmark designation. The city's talks with Cineplex are expected to continue into 1990.

* We testified before the State Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on Friday, Aug. 25, in Bellingham, and the council voted unanimously to



Bumper stickers, postcards and buttons trumpet the Save the Admiral Theater theme.

nominate the Admiral for the National Register of Historic Places. The council waived its rule of not considering buildings less than 50 years old. Council members said the 47-year-old theater deserved National Register status because the Admiral is the last neighborhood moviehouse in Seattle designed by famed theater architect B. Marcus Priteca. Unlike the city's landmark designation, which controls what Cineplex can do with the building, placement of the Admiral on the National Register merely gives Cineplex tax breaks if it rehabilitates the theater. The Admiral won't be officially placed on the National Register until Cineplex or a future owner consents.

* Seattle historian Paul Dorpat informed us Sept. 9 that his forthcoming book, *Seattle Now & Then, Volume 3*, will include a chapter on the Admiral, based on Dorpat's wonderful spread on the theater that ran April 2 in the Seattle Times' Pacific Magazine. The text will be supplemented with 1942 photos of the theater. Look for it in bookstores during the coming holiday season!

The next few months will be comparatively quiet as talks with Cineplex continue. We will keep building our treasury, which now hovers at about \$1,100, to use as seed money for a fundraising mailing if that becomes necessary. (Any major expenses of the task force are subject to approval by the board of our historical society since the money officially belongs to the society.)

You can buy buttons, postcards and bumper stickers, or become involved in the task force, by calling the steering committee: Deb Barker, 935-3592; Lynn Cornelius, 938-4767; Clay Eals, 935-7515; and Flo Lentz, 935-8543. The task force's next meeting will be at 1 p.m. **Sunday, Oct. 22**, at the West Seattle Library, 2306 42nd Ave. S.W. See you there!

Jazzy brochure on tap

Our executive board is looking into producing a modern-looking brochure to promote the historical society and draw new members. Board member Deb Barker is putting together mockups. Anyone with ideas to offer can contact her at 935-3592.

By-law amendments coming

Enclosed with this issue is a list of proposed amendments to our historical society's by-laws. The amendments are mostly minor changes in language and timing. The executive board unanimously approved the amendments at its Aug. 23 meeting. They will go before the membership for adoption at the Oct. 7 annual meeting.

Cultural group gets new digs

The West Seattle Cultural Society and West Seattle Totem Theatre, dedicated to the fostering of the arts and live theater, have opened an office in the former Born in the U.S.A. storefront at Jefferson Square in the Junction. The office features a selection of gallery art and is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday. To Cyndy Jensen and Boyd Swanson, president and vice-president of the cultural society, we extend our congratulations and best wishes. More info: 938-0963.

Earl's back in style

Famed composer Earl Robinson, a 1928 graduate of West Seattle High School, moved back to his boyhood community last spring after living many years in Santa Barbara, Calif. He's hardly been idle here. Earl received a proclamation from Gov. Booth Gardner May 15 and performed for the state Legislature March 27, the All-West Seattle High School Reunion June 2 and the King County Council June 5. He was interviewed for several newspaper profiles, he staged a 79th birthday concert at Pioneer Square Theater July 2, and he became the subject of that theater's retrospective show, *The Earl Robinson Celebration* in August. The show's run was canceled in early September owing to a money crunch at the theater. But Earl isn't daunted. He's offering a University of Washington Extension class, *Songs of the Working People: American Revolution to the Present*, on Tuesdays from 7:30 to 9 p.m., Oct. 10 through Nov. 28. Cost is \$79. He can be reached at 3701 41st Ave. S.W. Welcome back, Earl!

Census debuts (82 years later)

As noted in another article, we have acquired a copy of a new book published by the Seattle Genealogical Society, West Seeattle Census of 1907. It's a 62-page, large-format book that lists the names and general street addresses of 7,76 people living in West Seattle in July 1907. The census was required for the Duwamish peninsula to be annexed to the big city across the bay

that year. The book, transcribed from a hand-scripted register book recently discovered in the Seattle City Archives, sells for \$10 and can be ordered by sending a check for \$12 (including postage) to the Seattle Genealogical Society, P.O. Box 1708, Seattle, WA 98111 or by calling 682-1410. The book debuted at the genealogical group's Aug. 18-19 meeting at the Sea-Tac Red Lion Inn, which drew 780 people from 29 states. A local contact for the group is Annette Dwyer, Publications Director, who lives at 5612 38th Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA, 98126. Phone: 938-5719.

Second mural takes shape

An imaginary concrete arch takes passers-by to the colorful streetcar and shops of the West Seattle Junction of 1919 in Seattle artist Eric Grohe's mural, which is in progress on the south wall of Junction Feed & Seed, 4747 California Ave. S.W. The mural is the second to be painted in the the Junction as the result of a King County Centennial Commission grant of \$17,661. This fall, the Seattle City Council is expected to approve \$25,000 that will go along with another \$25,000 in private pledges that have been secured for another six murals in West Seattle next year. Earl Cruzen, a member of our historical society and this year's president of the West Seattle Chamber of Commerce, is heading up the project. He's quite pleased with the strong public response to the murals by Grohe and Bill Garnett, who painted the first mural behind the Morton's Drug building in June and July. Garnett's mural, which depicts early-day West Seattle transportation, was dedicated Saturday, July 15. Grohe plans to finish his Junction scene before the cold, rainy weather of autumn hits. Stop by and watch his mural in the final stages!

Hotel/motel tax may help us

Imagine a \$10 million fund available every year to help historical and artistic programs and organizations throughout King County! That's what could be amassed each year by the turn of the century under a county hotel/motel tax ordinance proposed by County Executive Tim Hill. The \$10 million figure could be increased by 10 percent annually after the year 2000, under current projections. Hill submitted the plan to the King County Council Aug. 7. His ordinance is independent of an earlier proposal advanced by council member Ron Sims, who wants to channel surplus hotel/motel tax money to schools. Our historical society has a stake in the outcome of this somewhat volatile matter. Vice-President Neal Lockett is our representative on a committee of the Association of King County Historical Organizations that is pushing for the interests of the historic community in this matter.

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