

Footprints

on the sands of time....

ISSUE XX

SOUTHWEST SEATTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OCTOBER 1992

Dorpat headlines annual meeting

Paul Dorpat, the well-known "Now and Then" historian of Seattle, will speak and present a slide show as the main program for our historical society's annual membership meeting.

The meeting will run from 7 to 9 p.m. on **Wednesday, Nov. 4,**

in the South Seattle Community College Little Theater. Coffee and cookies will be served.

Members attending the meeting will elect officers for 1993 and fill several positions on our society's Executive Board. A nominating committee appointed by 1992 President **Bob Sumbardo** will present a slate.

Dorpat, whose familiar photo-history column runs Sundays in the Pacific Magazine of the Seattle Times, is arguably the most prolific documenter of the city's physical history.



PAUL DORPAT, shown during a recent stroll of Old Ballard, will speak at our annual meeting.

For decades, using the instincts of a dedicated scavenger, the curiosity of a loyal native and the sense of humor of an amused observer, Dorpat has given the city's history buffs half a dozen books full of classic images and whimsical commentary to savor.

For our annual meeting, Dorpat promises a varied collection of images and "a few surprises." He also will sell copies of his most recent project, a two-hour video called "Seattle Chronicle," at the discount price of \$25. (See a review of the video on page 2.)

Series invites you to share and hear memories of WWII

Do you remember World War II? Were you overseas or on the homefront?

If you aren't old enough to remember that crucial era, are you curious nonetheless?

"World War II in West Se-

attle" is the topic for the next installment in the West Seattle History Discussion Series, set for 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 21, in the children's room at West Seattle Library, 2306 42nd Ave. S.W. People of all ages are invited.

The series, which began last spring, is co-sponsored by the library and our historical society. The sessions are conducted by a moderator (past moderators have

been board member **Deb Barker** and member **B.J. Bullert**) and videotaped.

If you can't come to the Oct. 21 session, put the next session, Nov. 18, on your calendar. The focus will be on holidays.

For more information on this series, call coordinator **Carol Vincent**, our historical society's vice-president, at 684-7444 or 937-6744.

THIS PHOTO of the midway at Luna Park, which operated at Duwamish Head from 1907 to 1913, is one of hundreds of Seattle images from 1851 to 1941 shown in Paul Dorpat's new video, "Seattle Chronicle."



The delightful Dorpat touch

'Seattle Chronicle' brings now/then approach to video

By Clay Eals

A couple of years ago, our historical society asked photo historian and transportation buff Warren Wing, who lives in the Allentown neighborhood of Tukwila, to bring his unique collection of West Seattle streetcar slides to South Seattle Community College and put on a Saturday morning show.

Warren, as affable a fellow as you'll meet, consented. Prompted by a small splash of publicity, a spillover crowd of 110 crammed into the SSCC Little Theater to see Warren's rare images from the 1920s to 1940s and hear his folksy and well-informed narration.

At the last minute, the thought struck me that recording Warren's show might be a wise move. All I could muster, however, was an audio cassette recorder. We captured Warren's voice on tape, but not his slides. Soon afterward, our historical society bought a video camcorder, and we've used it to "save" dozens of recent history-related events. But I still haven't gotten around to recording Warren's full audiovisual presentation, and none of us is getting any younger.

Something new — Paul Dorpat's two-hour video "Seattle Chronicle" (\$29.95 by mail order, postpaid, from Tartu Publications, P.O. Box 85208, Seattle, WA

98145) — has come along to re-inspire me. A marriage of hundreds of choice Seattle images from 1851 to 1941 along with detailed, droll commentary and original music, it's a delightful discovery.

The identity of the producer and "star" of this mesmerizing aural/visual treat should come as no surprise to anyone intrigued by Seattle history.

Dorpat (It's hard to refer to him in print as Paul. His resonant first words on the phone are always, "Hi, this is Dorpat.") is well-known for his one-page "Now and Then" historical photo feature that runs every Sunday in the Pacific Magazine of the Seattle Times.

The Wallingford resident's local fame also derives from the handful of popular "Glimpses" booklets and "Now and Then" anthologies he's published over the past 20 years, his KCTS-TV historical features and the slide shows he's presented all over the city. (Dorpat's show last November at West Seattle Library drew an overflow audience. West Seattleites also may recall his generous contributions to the "West Side Story" history book, published in 1987.)

Dorpat's personal collection of photos and other images from Seattle's past is vast, as is his command of the city's physical and social development. But this is a guy with a personality as warm as his historical expertise is strong. Droopy, piercing eyes, a deep voice and a subtle smile, coupled with a burly, frazzled appearance and a down-to-earth demeanor, give him

the persona of a wry teddy bear.

All of that shines through in “Seattle Chronicle.” Yes, the video displays to good advantage the priceless images that document Seattle’s growth. Many familiar events and scenes from the city’s history are here, such as the Great Seattle Fire and the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition. A generous dollop of West Seattle views appears, too, including the legendary Denny Party landing and turn-of-the-century scenes of Duwamish Head ferryboats and Luna Park.

But what distinguishes the images from a mere scrapbook is what might be labeled as the Dorpat touch, which includes:

- * Pans and zooms that let the viewer “see” key details that can be elusive in a cursory, overall look.
- * What Dorpat calls “time telescopes,” series of photos that show a scene changing over the decades.
- * Live-action “now” video of “then” scenes.

Moreover, Dorpat’s lucid narrative goes well beyond telling what’s in the pictures. The script engages in alliteration (“commercial canyon,” “a girdle of grass”) and wordplay (“squatty autos”) that bring the images alive. The gentle rhythms and witty turns of phrase (he refers at one point to “tourists or welcome strangers”), complemented by a beautiful, haunting score composed largely by Dorpat, ensconce the viewer into an appreciation and affection for the city’s past.

In the flyer that comes inside the case, Dorpat frets, in typically humorous fashion, about the flaws inherent in homemade video. For example, he writes, “The production is ... interrupted by the occasional fly — summer night inspectors of our brilliant rear screen.” (When I asked him further about the invading insects, he said, “One of the flies lands on Chief Seattle’s chin. He didn’t bathe that day.”)

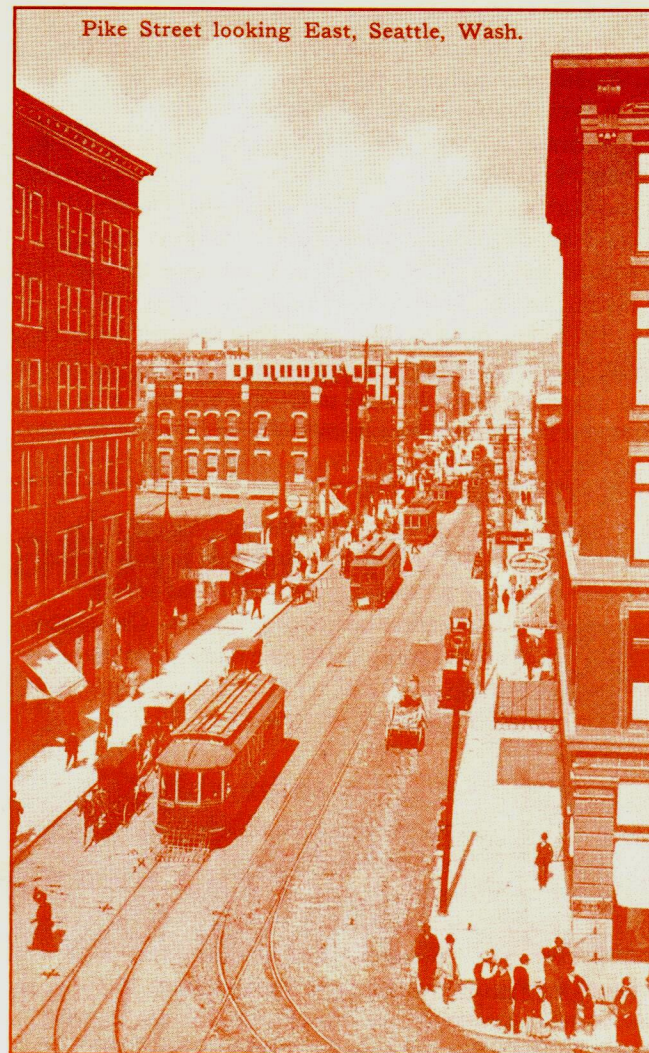
The video has other shortcomings as well. At times, transitions are strained, or cuts between still images and live footage are abrupt. In a couple of instances, panorama shots are not displayed in their entirety, and Dorpat makes a few oral fact errors (to which he also “confesses” in the flyer).

But the flaws are part of Dorpat’s charm. The guy is nothing if not imperfect. “Seattle Chronicle” is remarkably professional for a first commercial effort, but its humanity makes it all the more loveable.

Its chief virtue, of course, is that it’s done. As Dan Rather wrote in his autobiography, a story’s no good unless you get it out.

Admirably, Dorpat has done so. Seattle, and all of us connected to it, are the beneficiaries of his gift.

And now, I think I’ll give Warren Wing a call.



Postcards show 1909 scenes

We recently received as a gift for our collection a “Souvenir Mailing Card” kit with a Ballard Station postmark of Dec. 20, 1909, mailed to a Chicago, Ill., address.

The kit contains 24 color photos on 12 postcard-size pages. (Two are reproduced here.)

Alice Kerekes, of Lockport, Ill., donated the kit and asked us to verify the street name on the return address. The address is difficult to discern but appears to be 6758 Eli Ave. N.W.

Secretary Elliott Couden and board member Van Peirson are looking into the matter.



Murals project adds three

Three more historical murals were painted and dedicated during this summer and early fall, bringing the total number of Murals of West Seattle to nine. The three new ones are:

* A westward view of Alki Beach from the Admiral bluff from about 1918. Created by **Bruce Rickett**, the Nova Scotian artist who also painted the Morgan Street Market mural in 1990, this scene features a woman painting the scene from the bluff, along with an early-day Chevrolet. The mural is on the east wall of the Huling auto dealership, 4755 Fautleroy Way S.W.

* A 1923 view of Miss Chilberg's West Seattle Central (now Lafayette) School classroom on Bank Day, an activity in which students learned to make deposits in savings accounts at an early age. Created by Scottish-born **Alan Wylie** of Fort Langley, B.C., the mural is on the north wall of Washington Mutual Savings Bank, 4501 California Ave. S.W.

* A northeast view of the prize-winning "Wizard of Oz" West Seattle Hi-Yu float in the 1973 American Legion Grand Parade, with dozens of present-day portraits of onlookers, including several West Seattle community leaders. Created by Gresham, Ore., resident **Lanny Little**, the mural is on the south wall of the West Seattle Post Office, 4412 California Ave. S.W.

Want more info? Contact **Earl Cruzen** at 932-2345.

Three get honorary memberships

Our Executive Board voted this month to award honorary memberships to three individuals. They are:

* **William H. Woodward Jr.**, professor and head of the history department at Seattle Pacific University. The designated historian for the State Military Department and former vice president of the Pacific Northwest Historians Guild, Woodward was the keynote speaker for the West Seattle Library's celebration of the Seattle Public Library Centennial in April 1991.

* **Flo Lentz**, author, lecturer and researcher. The former Cultural Resources Specialist for the King County Department of Planning and Community Development, Lentz has served on our Executive Board and wrote the city landmark nomination for the Admiral Theater.

* **Paul Dorpat**, Seattle photo historian. (See pages 1 and 2.)

Passings

We celebrate the lives of these members and outstanding community personalities:

* **Corrinne Wing**, member #147, who died on May 20 at age 90. A lovely, active and dedicated member of the West Seattle community, she lived her entire life in Seattle.

* **Esther W. Hilborn**, who died on May 29 at age 96. She was the mother of charter member Lois (Leonard) Simundson. Esther was a charter member of St. James Lutheran Church and a

beloved presence in the White Center community.

* **Josephine "Josie" LaCamera**, who died, who died on July 29 at age 90. She was the widow of Anthony "Tip" LaCamera. She was active in West Seattle and White Center activities.

* **Morrison "Morrie" Campbell**, member #197, who died on Aug. 1 at age 90. An honorary member of our society, he was a longtime West Seattle businessman and community activist. Congratulations!

* To member **Marilyn Rayner**, current president of Soroptimists International of West Seattle.

* To the Murals of West Seattle program, which in early May received first prize in Neighborhoods USA's "Neighborhood of the Year" contest.

* To members **Aurlo and Virginia Bonney**, who recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

* To member **Fred J. Fletcher**, who celebrated his 94th birthday on July 3 in Walnut Creek, Calif.

Memberships on the rise

Our society continues to grow steadily, with a total of 263 members since inception and, in September, 216 still active.

If you know of anyone who would like to join, call **Elliott Couden**, secretary. He will send an application and accompanying materials. Individual dues are still just \$10 a year. For more information, contact Elliott at 932-2290.

Home tour looks to 1993

Our Tour of Homes last May, co-chaired by **Mollie Tremaine** and **Deb Barker**, drew 335 people.

The Executive Board has scheduled next year's tour, our fifth annual, for May 8, the traditional Saturday before Mother's Day. For more information, contact tour chair Deb at 935-3592.

Video library grows

Since the fall of 1990, when our Executive Board purchased a video camcorder for our society, we have videotaped many history-related events in West Seattle and White Center.

Those events have included our home tours and annual membership meetings, special events such as Mount View Looks Back and the West Seattle Library centennial celebration, and dedication ceremonies for Weather Watch Park, the renovated Gatewood School and Murals of West Seattle. The most recent videotaped event was the Oct. 10 dedication of a new interpretive marker at Belvedere Viewpoint, sponsored by the Admiral Community Council and West Seattle Chamber of Commerce.

Anyone wishing to view the tapes, obtain copies of the tapes or get more information on use of the camcorder should call board member **Clay Eals** at 935-7515.

FOOTPRINTS

(Editor: Clay Eals)

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