

Footprints

on the sands of time....

ISSUE XXIV

SOUTHWEST SEATTLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOVEMBER 1993

Ours for a



Come join other members of our historical society for what promises to be our most important Annual Meeting ever!

CHARLES PAYTON, King County Historic Preservation Coordinator, will headline a combination information session/rally that zeroes in on the incredible opportunity for our society to acquire a log house on Alki for use as a museum.

In addition, we'll ballot on an Executive Board slate for 1994, and we'll consider bylaw changes that will expand the board by splitting the Secretary's position in two.

Details on all of these topics appear in stories inside this issue of Footprints.

The meeting will be held from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Nov. 13, in room RS-79 at South Seattle Community College, 6000 16th Ave. S.W.

Delicious refreshments will be provided.

Please call CAROL VINCENT, our society's 1993 President, at 937-6744 for more information on this exciting event!

Our amazing opportunity

Come find out about our potential new museum!

A unique chance for our historical society has sprung up this fall.

Thanks to the tireless work of board members **ARLENE WADE, MERRILEE HAGEN and CAROL VINCENT**, we may soon own a museum site -- the turn-of-the-century log house at 61st Avenue Southwest and Southwest Stevens Street -- to complement the storage/exhibit space planned at South Seattle Community College.

Sealing the fate of this log-house museum opportunity, however, will be a vote of Alki residents, to be held sometime in February.

Alki residents -- from Duwamish Head to the north, to Jacobsen Road to the south, and east to 51st and 52nd avenues -- will cast ballots for their top choices among 12 proposals, each with a price tag.

The winning projects cannot total more than \$500,000, the amount that Metro has set aside as so-called mitigation money to compensate the Alki area for disruption that will be caused in the next few years by construction of a sewage tunnel beneath West Seattle at approximately Southwest Hanford Street.

The half-million-dollar pot of money is called the Alki Community Improvement Fund.

Our historical society is sponsoring two of the 12 proposals on the ballot:

■ Purchase of the log house at 3003 61st Ave. S.W., at a cost of \$200,000.

■ Installation of a set of 12 historic interpretive markers, at a cost of \$45,000. The markers would identify important historic sites at Alki and provide the foundation for a self-guided historic walking tour.

How did these two proposals make the ballot?



Photo by Clay Eals

CHARLES PAYTON will help plan our museum campaign at our Annual Meeting at 10 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 13.

Arlene has been representing our society in the many Alki community meetings that have been leading up to the February election. Since early this year, Arlene has provided the leadership for getting the markers proposal on the ballot.

Then, in recent months as Merrilee sought sites for our society's 1994 Tour of Homes, she found the log house on the real-estate market. She worked with Arlene and Carol to get it, too, on the ballot.

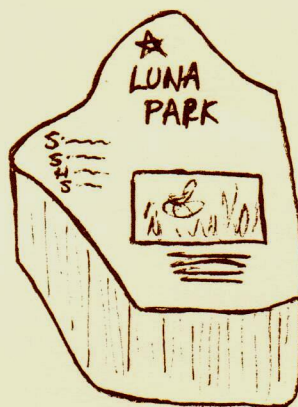
Our Executive Board has enthusiastically endorsed the log-house and markers plans, and Carol, our President, has signed the necessary papers for our society to buy the log house -- contingent, of course, on a favorable balloting by Alki residents in February.

The log house has a partially exposed log interior, three bedrooms, two and a half baths, a storage cellar, a one-car detached garage, parking for several more cars, forced-air gas heat, a brick fireplace and an old-fashioned wrap-around porch.

Merrilee's article on pages 4 and 5 clearly spells out the rationale for preserving and using the log house as a community center that focuses on the area's history.

But securing Alki voter approval of the plan obviously will take a concerted campaign of flyers and other publicity, possibly including a doorbelling of Alki neighborhoods.

Our Annual Meeting at **10 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 13**, in room RS-79 at SSCC will serve as the campaign kick-off. **CHARLES PAYTON**, the King County Historic Preservation Coordinator, will be present to help move us in the right



EACH OF the 12 proposed markers could be shaped like West Seattle and include a photo and description of the site that it marks.

direction.

In addition, the first Footprints newsletter of 1994 will deal with the election in more detail. Don't be surprised if you get a phone call asking your help in this campaign -- and please be ready to donate some time and effort.

For more information, call Merrilee on her pager at 728-4234, Arlene at 937-7494 or Carol at 937-6744.

Here it is — your slate for 1994

For the first time in recent years, a full slate of Executive Board nominees has been secured in time for their names to be publicized in Footprints.

The Nominations Committee of **CAROL VINCENT**, **ELLIOTT COUDEN** and **VAN PEIRSON** worked hard to assemble the nominees for approval at our Nov. 13 Annual Meeting.

The officer positions all last one year. Trustee positions are three-year; years of expiration are listed following the nominees' names.

OFFICERS

President ■ **MERRILEE HAGEN**

Vice President ■ **ARLENE WADE**

General Secretary ■ **BRAD CHRISMAN**

Membership Secretary ■ **CAROL VINCENT**

Treasurer ■ **JOAN MRAZ**

TRUSTEES

ELLIOTT COUDEN ■ 1996

CLAY EALS ■ 1996

ANN HOLIDAY ■ 1995

Here are details to clarify the slate:

Officers:

Merrilee would replace Carol as President, and Arlene would replace Clay as Vice President. Brad, a trustee from 1988 to 1990, would take the newly created General Secretary's position, while Carol would take the Membership Secretary's position; both jobs have been filled by Elliott since 1989. Joan would repeat as Treasurer.

Trustees:

Elliott and Clay would take three-year positions that had been filled by Van and Merrilee and expire at the end of this year. Ann, the recently hired editor of the West Seattle Herald and White Center News, would take the remaining two years of Merrilee's position. Remaining Trustees, and their terms' year of expiration, are **MARIETTA PANE** (1994), **CAROL MUNOZ** (1994) and **KAREN WISSING** (1995).

Be sure to attend our Annual Meeting at 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday Nov. 13, in RS-79 at SSCC.

By the way, we'll have some new bylaws

Secretary position would be split in two

When you come to our Annual Meeting on Nov. 13 at South Seattle Community College, you'll be asked to approve proposed changes in our society's bylaws.

Drafted by **ELLIOTT COUDEN**, our society's secretary, past president and founder, the changes in wording are numerous, but they boil down to just a few items.

The primary change would be to expand our Executive Board by one position — to 11, from a total of 10.

This change is prompted by the increasing workload of the Secretary position. To make the job workable, the Secretary's job would be split in two:

- General Secretary, who would record and deliver meeting minutes and notices and maintain all necessary records and legal documents for the society.

- Membership Secretary, who would process all new memberships and renewals and maintain an up-to-date roster.

The 11 Executive Board positions would then look like this: President, Vice President, General Secretary, Membership Secretary and Treasurer (all one-year terms), and six Trustees (all three-year terms, two of which are up for re-filling each year).

Also among the proposed by-laws changes:

- Creation of an Operations Manual for the Executive Board. It would be a reference for all Executive Board members, consisting of all rules and policies approved by the board as an extension of the bylaws.

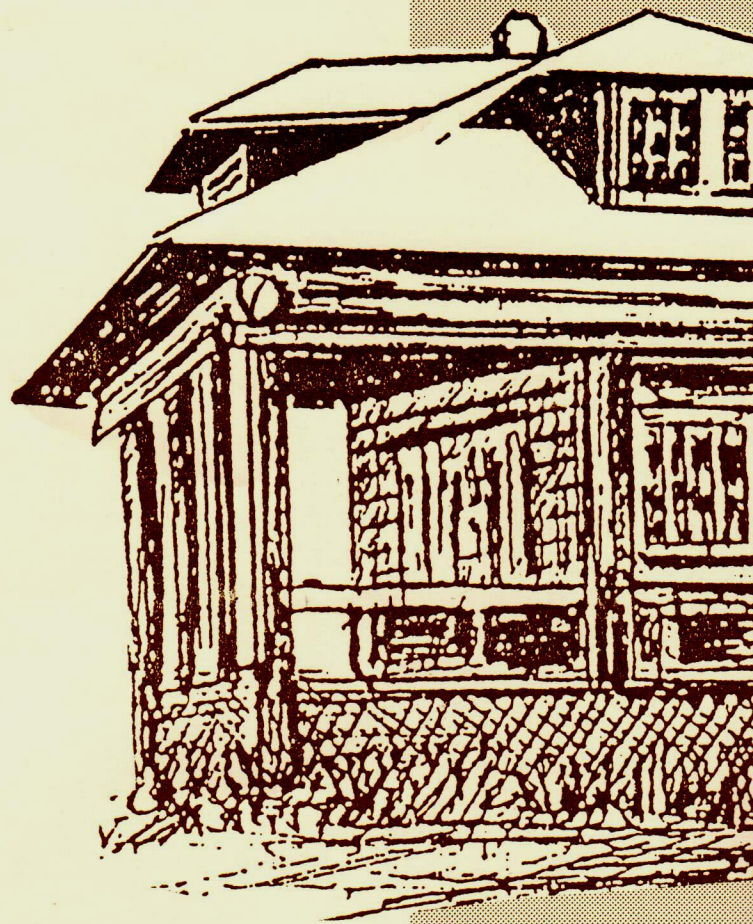
- Requiring that a minimum of 25 voting members of our society be present at the Annual Meeting to take any binding action. The current minimum is 15. (Our current active membership is well over 200.)

- Lowering the membership fee for for-profit businesses to \$25 from \$50. Elliott feels we can secure more business members at the reduced rate.

Our Executive Board recommends approval of all the changes, which are recorded in detail on an insert enclosed with this issue of Footprints

I have lived in West Seattle ...

for 45 years. ■ I grew up on Alki. ■ I reside on Alki now. ■ I have been a real-estate agent and broker in this area for 16 years. ■ I grew up surrounded by the history of the area. ■ I lived near the three-story log home at 59th and Andover, originally a large family summer home, later a boarding house, now occupied by a single family. ■ I played sandlot ball at the field across the street, site of the original Alki one-room schoolhouse, soon to be filled with proposed scattered-site low-income housing. ■ I played with a friend at a log house on the corner of 62nd and Stevens — *BULLDOZED*. ■ I visited and played at the original Ferdinand Schmitz home — *BULLDOZED* in 1967. ■ I walked home past the log house at 61st and Spokane — *BULLDOZED*. ■ I remember the little rock house near Alki Point, featured in "Ripley's Believe It or Not" in the 1930s — *BULLDOZED*. ■ I attended school functions at the old Alki Fieldhouse — *BULLDOZED*. ■ I saw the old Natatorium at Alki — *BULLDOZED* in 1953. ■ In my lifetime I've seen a lot of our community's heritage disappear in the name of progress. We can't stop progress — nor should we try, because our community needs to survive — but we also need to preserve our history. ■ West Seattle has something unique to our city. We are the acknowledged Birthplace of Seattle. ■ I remember participating in the centennial celebration of the pioneer landing at Alki in 1951. I was a third-grader at Alki Elementary School. One of my drawings with a story about the pioneers was included in the items in a time capsule buried north of the Birthplace of Seattle



The author

This is the text of a speech delivered by Merrilee Hagen, Beach Drive resident and member of our society's Executive Board, at a September meeting regarding the Alki Community Improvement Fund.

The purpose of her presentation was to persuade the fund's citizen committee to place the log house on the February Metro ballot, but Merrilee's appeal also compellingly sums up why Alki residents should vote for the proposal.



monument that day. At the time I didn't realize who the speaker, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, was, but I remember all the pomp and the crowds and how proud everyone was of our place in Seattle's history. ■ There are now as few as half a dozen of the original log cabins left in the West Seattle area. Some have been modernized beyond recognition as log homes. If we don't make an effort to save at least one, in 10 or 20 years they all will be gone and we will be left with only a memory of what was there before the bulldozers came to make room for another apartment house or condominium complex. ■ The only way we can guarantee preserving any of these homes is to own it. We now have that opportunity with the Metro mitigation funds available. ■ The log home at the corner of 61st and Stevens is available for purchase. The seller was offered full price one year ago by a developer. The seller refused the offer, even though he was in dire financial straits, because the developer planned to remove the house from the site and take it by barge to VASHON! ■ The property has since been traded to the seller's partner. He has agreed to sell it to us, to be used as a museum to be run by the Southwest Seattle Historical Society. ■ This log house was originally the carriage house and maid's quarters for the owners of the log house used as the original Seattle Auto Club (1907), which is now the Alki Homestead Restaurant. The carriage house is in nearly original condition inside and out, with the exception of necessary changes such as indoor plumbing and cooking facilities. ■ Use of this site as a museum not only will preserve part of our area's history, it also will give our school children, residents and visitors access to old photographs and artifacts — collections currently stored by the historical society and the Museum of History and Industry. ■ We are asking your support of this project to preserve and display our community's history while we have the chance. ■

-- Merrilee Hagen



The pleasures of
Harbor Avenue through

Elvida's Eyes

A ship captain's kindness

[Editor's note: The following is the last in a series of articles appearing in Footprints this year written by Ada Hallberg, a Beach Drive resident and society member. The series records the childhood memories of Harbor Avenue resident Elvida Ellingsen Brewster, as told to Ada. This installment focuses on a friendship sparked by a generous tavern-going captain.]

By ADA HALLBERG

"My dad was what you would call a templar," Elvida told me.

"He wasn't supposed to drink, but he fell off the wagon. My mother was furious. She went down there, went right in there. 'Elly, you're coming home now!' She'd get a little angry with him sometimes. But like I say, there wasn't really too many drunks or fights or arguments."

Elvida's luminous, dark eyes twinkled, and her wonderful red-painted lips parted in an open smile, and she laughed. She always was happy remembering her parents.

"But I want to tell you about Capt. Andrew Solstrom. I was about 7, or maybe 6, years old, when Capt. Andrew Solstrom bought a paper from me. I sold the Star. They were a penny apiece. He put a \$20 gold piece in my hand."

She remembered her immediate response:

"Yowee!"

Elvida said she ran out of the tavern, through the back

yard and into her house.

"Ma! Ma! Look at this!" she said, quite excited.

"You've been in that tavern?" asked her mother.

"No, ma, just to give the captain his papers. That's really mine!"

"Elvida, I've told you ..."

Her mother then grabbed her by the hand, and back to the tavern they went.

"We went right into the saloon and tried to give it back to him, but no, he wouldn't have it. Just like I said, my gold piece was mine. Mine. Mine. He had given it to me, just like I said, and he wouldn't have it back. Well, that was Capt. Andrew Solstrom."

Elvida showed me the gold piece. She had treasured it all of her life.

"He was Swedish and my mother Norwegian, so she got acquainted with him, and he used to come and eat with us. I remem-

ber in the wintertime when he would come down here from fishing, and he would come over to the house.

"One time he told mom, 'Tootsie will be going to school pretty soon, now. I'm going to take her downtown and buy her something to wear to school.'

"Well, we went downtown, and he bought me a dress. He bought me a coat. He bought me some shoes. I'd never had any store-bought clothes before Capt. Andrew Solstrom took me to town and bought me my school clothes, and I thought they were just right.

"But it turned out they weren't right. Those kids on the hill were different. They dressed just so ... all neat and tidy...."

"Something was just different. They didn't like me. The teacher didn't like me, either, and you know that wasn't right.

"Finally, I left school. I never went higher than the low seventh."

[Anyone wanting further information about this series can contact Ada at 937-4396.]

'We went right into the saloon and tried to give it back to him, but no, he wouldn't have it. Just like I said, my gold piece was mine. Mine. Mine. He had given it to me, just like I said, and he wouldn't have it back.'

'He bought a paper from me. I sold the Star. They were a penny apiece. He put a \$20 gold piece in my hand.'

Historic 'Clipper' scouts out a home on the Duwamish

[These are turbulent times for the West Seattle Sea Scouts. John Kelly, a native West Seattleite and member of our society, has appealed to the Port of Seattle and the Greater Harbor 2000 Committee to preserve space along the Duwamish River for the program. Here's an edited text of his presentations to the committee.]

By JOHN KELLY

Sea Scout ship Yankee Clipper's history on the Duwamish dates back 63 years. That may put us in the category of semi-pioneers on the river.

I am one of more than 500 people who have been involved in the program. As a teenager, I was a crew member for several years, was Mate and Skipper for 30-plus years and am Committee Chair for the sponsoring organization, the West Seattle Lions Club.

I have a keen interest in helping to protect the Yankee Clipper's place on the river so that we can continue to offer a vital marine-related leadership program for our youth, who more than ever today desperately need constructive activities to help them develop into productive citizens.

We operate a Sea Explorer program under the Boy Scouts of America. Our co-ed advancement program for high-school students 14-18 years of age provides opportunities to learn leadership, teamwork, various skills, community service and environmental awareness in a nautical setting.

Aboard our 44-foot sailing ketch, we conduct sail-training exercises and annually provide nautical experiences to more than 200 other youths and their families. We participate in historical reenactments and other community and seafaring events.

Presently, we occupy a Port of Seattle building at Alaska Street, off West Marginal Way, in the middle of a proposed habitat restoration area. Our shore base building is used for storage, as a workshop and for crew training. Our ketch is moored nearby at Harbor Island Marina.

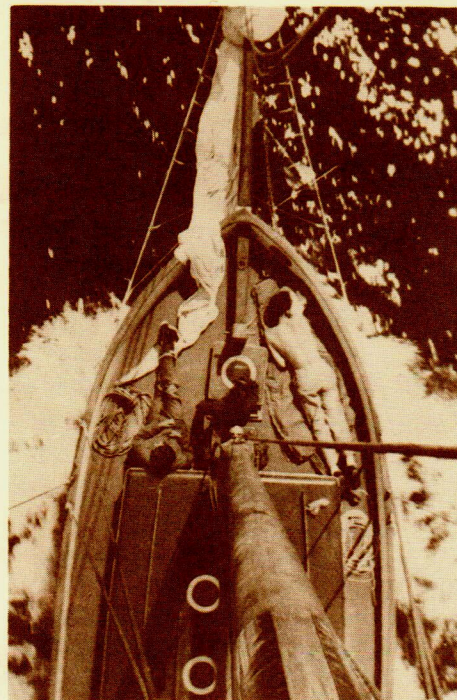


Photo courtesy of John Kelly

A CROW'S-NEST view from 1952 shows the Yankee Clipper during a cruise on Puget Sound. The ketch needs a permanent moorage and shore base.

Duwamish Head, which is overcrowded and subject to wave action.

We hope for reactivation of a boating facility, including wet and dry moorage, boat launch and a meeting/storage building back at the Pioneer-Riverside site, still standing empty after their elimination 10 years ago.

Faced with a financial crisis by the recent demand that we start paying \$3,240 a year to Harbor Island Marina, we hope the new facility might have a berth for the Yankee Clipper. It would be an interesting homecoming in a sense. Her 40-foot predecessor first moored there in 1942 for a time. The present vessel underwent her major remodel there beginning in 1948 and moored there until 1965.

Please contact me at 932-0971 if you have questions or can help us!

We need to maintain our presence there in harmony with proposed projects for cleanup and habitat development. We also favor increased public access to Elliott Bay/Duwamish via a small boat-launching ramp with boarding floats to cross mud flats at low tide. This would be convenient for launching Duwamish Tribe canoes, kayaks and small sailing dinghies.

The only two alternative small boat-launching ramps are at First Avenue South, which is very steep and often littered with debris, and Don Armeni ramp at

Don Armeni ramp at

Harbor Avenue plan recognizes historical roots

After a long, rigorous process, the Greater Harbor 2000 Committee has completed a final plan for Harbor Avenue Southwest.

And happily enough, the plan includes a strong historical emphasis, reports **Arlene Wade**, member of our Executive Board who serves as vice-chair of the committee.

The committee arose out of the need to plan ways to mitigate the Port of Seattle's enlargement of Terminal 5 to accommodate an expanded American President Lines.

The consensus points in the plan include a recognition of the need to reduce traffic noise, protect the environment and preserve the heritage of the area, both Native American and pioneer.

The Native American element includes establishment of a Duwamish Tribal Cultural Center and Longhouse. The pioneer element includes support for a series of markers that recognize significant historical sites along Harbor Avenue.

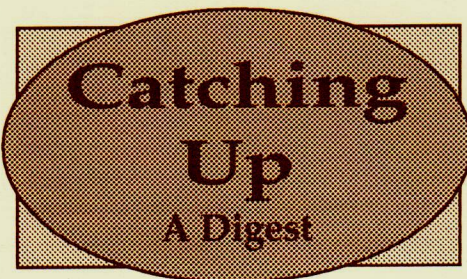
Working in collaboration with the Seattle Design Commission, the Greater Harbor 2000 Committee is scheduled to publish a series of recommendations in the Nov. 5 edition of the West Seattle Herald and White Center News.

The plan will be discussed and further input will be sought at a public meeting to be held on Nov. 16 at Salty's on Alki restaurant, 1936 Harbor Ave. S.W.

For more information on the meeting and the plan, contact Arlene by calling 937-7494.

Dewar's show wanders to Alki

The West Seattle Wanderings exhibit of 25 history-based drawings and paintings by West Seattle artist **Kay Moore Dewar** will be on display for two months at the Alki Cafe, 2726 Alki Ave. S.W.



The show will run from Nov. 15 through Jan. 15 of next year, said Kay, who sought the new location so that her show could reach a different group of people.

Missing from the exhibit will be four works that were sold during its successful run at the ArtsWest gallery at Jefferson Square last summer. The four depicted the Admiral Theater, the Villa Heidelberg, a Victorian home in the Admiral district and a table-top scene called Latte Frontier.

Added to the display will be two new works. One depicts a twisted tree at Lincoln Park, while another shows two tomatoes arranged on a copy of the West Seattle Herald (check out the display to find out the punny title for that one).

Kay also is at work on a drawing of the log house at 3003 61st Ave. S.W. that will be used on a campaign poster for our society (see stories, pages 1, 2 and 4-5). For more information, call Kay at 937-7784.

In memoriam

We honor the memory of several members who have made contributions to local history and historic preservation:

* **John F. Stepich**, charter member #5, who died May 9, 1993. He played a significant role in White Center during and after World War II.

* **Phares H. Metzler**, honorary charter member #75, who died Aug. 11, 1993. He was a member of a pioneer White Center family.

* **H. Chris Erickson**, charter member #8, who died Sept. 1, 1993. A longtime White Center resident, he, along with his wife Erma, has strongly supported the South Seattle Community College Foundation.

* **Betty Dudley Beers**, widow of the late **Norman (Normie) Beers**, honorary charter member #27, often referred to as Mr. West Seattle, died Aug. 23, 1993. The two

assisted in the production of the West Side Story history book and strongly supported the SSCC Arboretum.

Short stuff

* The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation selected the Southwest Seattle Historical Society for an award for Footprints, our quarterly newsletter. The award was announced Sept. 18 at the Trust's 1993 Annual Awards Banquet downtown.

* **Emmett Watson**, an honorary member of our society, has just published his third book, My Life in Print, a comprehensive collection of his delightful newspaper columns from the Seattle Star, Seattle Post-Intelligencer and Seattle Times and other writings.

* About 20 people attended our annual membership picnic on June 27 at Mee-Kwa-Mooks Park on Beach Drive. Drizzling rain threatened to wash out the event, but as the clouds cleared and the sun came through, former Executive Board member **JoAn Schmitz Fulton** gave a presentation on the history of the Schmitz estate. Extra thanks go to former Executive Board member **Neal Lockett** for serving as cook and keeping us dry with an impromptu tarp.

* Two more historic Junction murals, depicting the old Lincoln Park mudhole, (**Mike Svob**, artist) and the old West Seattle Herald office (**Alan Wylie**, artist), were formally dedicated on Friday, Sept. 17.

* Executive Board members **Carol Munoz** and **Marietta Pane** and Vice President **Clay Eals** have new work phone numbers. Carol's is 248-2900, Marietta's is 764-5371, and Clay's is 667-2753.

* **Flo Lentz**, former Executive Board member who led our annual Tour of Homes in 1989, has moved to Ellensburg. The well-respected historic-preservation specialist and author can be reached by calling 509-925-3944.

Help us grow!

Do you know anyone else who would like to join our society? We are more than 200 strong, but we need new members, and their ideas and help -- particularly with the log-house campaign over the next few months.

Individual dues are just \$10 a year, and entitle members to Footprints, our quarterly newsletter, as well as support society projects.

Call Secretary **Elliott Couden**, 932-2290, to obtain a membership application.

FOOTPRINTS

(Editor: Clay Eals)
Newsletter of the Southwest Seattle Historical Society
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