

R.P.D. BLUE

By Tom Monahan

“Principled cop shuts down local book-making operation, but feels persecuted by a shady politician as well as officials within his own department”- *Does this sound like a description of your favorite episode of “NYPD Blue” or big budget Hollywood movie? In fact this “plot” describes a real life crime drama, which occurred on the mean streets of Renton in fall of 1934.*

Win, Place or Show?

Renton in the early thirties was a place where the police were kept very busy solving a wide range of crimes. Besides breaking up illegal bootlegging operations, which were slowly declining with the approaching end of prohibition, typical crimes like burglary and mugging were also dealt with regularly. The public opinion at the time held that private behavior, like drinking and gambling may have been technically illegal, but only to the extent that speeding and jaywalking are illegal; most people did them anyway and resented being punished for it.

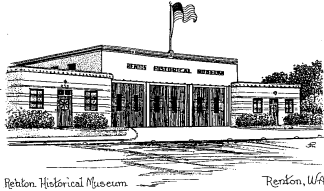


By 1934, prohibition had only just been repealed, and many legitimate businesses in downtown Renton augmented their income in the tough depression-era economy by illegal gambling. Backroom card dealers and bookies were considered to be a handy way for some people to increase their meager savings quickly. One such bookmaking operation was based in an unidentified tavern on Main Street, in an area known as the Hansen Corner.

Although it seems odd that people would wager through a bookie when they were so close to a brand-new racetrack where they could lay bets legally, there are some good reasons why this would be so. The average working class Rentonian would not be able to take a day off and go to the track. The racing season was shorter back then, and people often worked longer hours than we do today. The book making operation however, was only a phone call away. Likewise, people who could not be seen going to a racetrack because of their reputation or social status, would be free to gamble to their heart's content without fear of public dishonor. In any case, the underground bookmaking business at the tavern on Main Street was thriving, and just lucrative enough to draw the attention of the Renton Police Department.

Continued on page 4

In photo at left standing left to right: Dave Ried, Jim Chadwick, Domenic Carpice, Captain Dan Hogan.



Renton Historical Quarterly

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Renton.
Ahead of the curve

President's Report

By Barb Horton

Happy springtime!

Today, I'm thinking about how much my life will change here in the very near future. I'm nearing the end of a marathon tour of civic duty as your President and in other roles on the Renton Historical Society Board. During the time I been on the Board, we instituted term limits in our Bylaws. Term limits are important insurance for the overall health of the organization. They focus the incumbent on the important task of developing a successor, so that they don't come in to the role cold. They also ensure that there will be a steady stream of varying talent at the helm. I am at the end of my second two year term as your President. You will be seeing a new face in my chair soon!

My skills lie in the business world. During my presidency, we defined our organization and put it down in writing. We overhauled our Bylaws so that there is a clear definition of roles and responsibilities, clear definition of how we relate to the community and to the City of Renton. As we grew, it became more important for each of us to focus our attention on the tasks that we were assigned to do. It was SO easy for Board members to dive in and do Staff work, and vice versa. We wanted to do the best we could for the organization, even though we were confusing our constituency and ourselves. We are now a very focused organization, with very clear roles and responsibilities.

We have professionalized the Historical Society by doing the hard work of drafting and adopting governance documentation, securing the necessary talent to manage our money, our investments, and our mission and goals.

We now have a structure that attracts bequests. We have consistent financial documentation and a public Annual Report. When people write a non-profit organization into their wills, they want to be sure that the organization will be fiscally responsible with their gift. RHS is attracting bequests, and because of these, we have now have a growing nest egg for a new building.

I worked shoulder to shoulder with many talented people on the Board, in the Committees, and in the City to make this happen. It was no small feat, and a single individual certainly couldn't have done it. We are an all-volunteer army, and we all give way more time to this cause than we ever thought we would.

I plan to take a break from Board business to allow the next President to set the next direction, however I will remain active on a Committee. I have enjoyed serving the Renton Historical Society for the last 8 years. I've grown as much as it has grown. I feel like I'm graduating from college!

Sincerely,

Barbara Horton
President, Renton Historical Society

The Renton Historical Society Board meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m., at either the Renton Community Center or the Renton Historical Museum. Please call the museum for meeting locations on the following dates: April 28th, May 26 and June 23.

Public hours for the Renton Historical Museum are Tuesday - Saturday, 10:00am to 4:00pm and by appointment for archival and photographic research purposes Wednesday through Fridays, 1:00 to 4:00 pm. Admission: \$3 per adult, \$1 per child (ages 8 - 16) and Renton Historical Society members are always free. Free days: first Wednesday and third Saturday of the month.

Notice of Bylaws Revision

The Board of Directors of the Renton Historical Society is considering the following revisions to the Bylaws, approved May 28 of 2003. This is notice to the Renton Historical Society membership of the proposed changes. Comments may be submitted in writing by April 15, 2004 to:

Secretary, Renton Historical Society
235 Mill Avenue South
Renton, WA 98055

or in person at the April Board of Trustees meeting. Meeting location and time is:

Wednesday, April 24, 2004 at 6:00pm
Renton Community Center
1715 Maple Valley Highway

Three revisions are being considered and are as follows:

Revision 1: Article 5, Section 2b. To revise the terms of the Elected Officers of the Executive Committee such that said terms of are staggered, to ensure continuity of the Executive Committee and Board leadership. Revision to add text as follows:

Article 5 Trustees and Officers Section 2 Terms and Limitations

All Executive Committee Officers and Trustees shall be elected by a simple majority of the general membership in attendance at the Society's annual membership meeting. Executive Committee Officers shall be elected for a term of two years and are required to be Society members in good standing.

ADD: The positions of Vice President and Treasurer will be for the period of 1 year (2004-2005), and then up for re-election in odd numbered years (2005, 2007, 2009, etc.). The positions of President and Secretary would be up for re-election in even numbered years

Trustees other than Officers shall be elected for a term of three years and are required to be members in good standing. There shall be 3 groups of Trustee terms. The terms of these 3 groups will be offset by one year, to provide continuity. There will be 4 members in each term group for a total of 12 trustees, not including the Officers Executive Committee Trustees.

No Board of Trustees Executive Committee Officer shall be eligible to serve for more than two consecutive terms in the same office. The President of the Board of Trustees may not serve on the Board of Trustees for a period of one year following the conclusion of his/her term in the office of President. Other officers may retire from Executive Committee service and be re-elected to the Board of Trustees if an opening on the Board exists at the time of elections.

The retiring Officer must notify the Nomination Committee of his/her interest in being re-elected to the Board of Trustees.

The President is not eligible to be elected to, or to serve on, the Nominations Committee.

f. No person will be considered eligible for election as for President of the Board of Trustees, until they serve as a Trustee for a minimum duration of two years to become versed in the overall business of the Society.

g. Any member of the Board of Trustees, who is absent from three consecutive meetings without presenting just cause, shall be deemed to have resigned from the Board. This person is subject to reinstatement only by majority vote of the Board.

h. Any member of the Board of Trustees may be removed from office with or without cause for incompetence or misconduct, by a two-thirds vote of the Board of Trustees present at any regular meeting of the Board. This action may only be taken provided that at least 10 days before the meeting, at which such action is taken, notices in writing that such action will be moved or proposed applied for, be mailed to the officer or trustee, and to each member of the Board of Trustees, by U.S Mail by the Board Secretary.

i. The members of the Board of Trustees shall not be personally liable to the Society or its members for monetary damages for conduct as a member of the Board, except for acts or omissions that involve intentional misconduct by a Board member or a knowing violation of the law by a Board member, or for any transaction from which the Board member will personally receive a benefit of money, property, or services to which the Board member is not legally entitled.

Revision 2: Article 9, Section 2. To revise the date of the annual meeting of the Society membership from May to June, as brought before the Board at the February Board of Trustees meeting. Revision to delete and add text as follows:

Article 9 Meetings / Quorum Section 2 Membership Meeting

There shall be an annual meeting of the Society membership in ~~May~~ June of each year, at which the officers and/or trustees for the succeeding year(s) shall be elected. Additional membership meetings may be scheduled as requested by the membership, via petition to the Board of 30% of the voting members, or may be called by the President or the Board of Trustees with at least 30 days of advance notice to the Membership.

Revision 3: Article 11, Section 1. To revise the Board Officer to receive Monthly Committee Reports from the Board Secretary to the Board Vice President as is the current practice and in accordance to duties and powers. Revision to delete and add text as follows:

Article 11 Communications Section 1 Monthly Committee Reports

Monthly Committee Reports - Each month, the Chair of each committee, both standing and ad hoc, will submit a report in writing to the Board Secretary Vice President that summarizes committee activities. If no meeting is held, or there is no activity, the report may state this. Reports may be submitted to the Secretary electronically.

Thank you for the privilege of serving,

Derek Almo, Secretary
Board of Trustees
Renton Historical Society

Continued from page 1

Raiders of the Lost Bookies

On the night of October 14, the Acting Police Chief, James Chadwick, led a raid on the tavern. Acting on rumors that bookies had been taking bets on horse races inside, Chadwick, Floyd Lawrence the Acting Mayor, and two other unnamed officers made the bust. Upon charging into the back room of the tavern, they surprised several men in possession of paraphernalia linked with bookmaking. Six unidentified men were taken into custody according to reports in the *Renton Chronicle*. While the ultimate fate of the six alleged bookies remains unclear from available records, the fate of Acting Chief Chadwick is well documented. He was summarily dismissed from the Renton Police Department shortly after the Raid.¹

Besides being extremely unusual that an Acting Chief of Police would get fired just days after a successful and highly publicized raid, it also seemed fishy to many people that his dismissal coincided with the return of Mayor E.P. Wilson and Police Chief Patrick Hogan, who had been away from town on a hunting trip together when the raid took place. It is fairly certain that the Mayor and the Police Chief had no knowledge prior to leaving on their trip that the raid was going to occur during their absence. This fact led many friends and supporters of the fired officer to wonder whether or not that particular gambling operation had been under some sort of “protection” from either the Mayor, the Police Chief, or both. While it must be stated quite clearly that no evidence was ever publicly reported linking the Chief or the Mayor to the bookies, the mood of many Rentonians was justifiably suspicious.

The newspaper barely mentioned the major change in personnel, giving only the inaccurate and brief statement, “Ernest Isackson, a popular Rentonite, has replaced James Chadwick, who has resigned from the police force.”² Officer Chadwick was so incensed by the whole situation that he took his grievance to the Renton City Council. The council agreed to hold a formal hearing to determine what the actual reason for Chadwick’s dismissal had been. The city quickly began to gear up for a major showdown.

Trial of the Century

While the subsequent hearing before the Renton City Council can hardly be labeled the “Trial of the Century,” it certainly was a big deal by Renton’s standards. Over 100 people crowded into the council chambers on November 14, restlessly waiting to hear the reading of two letters, one read by Mayor Wilson, and the other by Chief Hogan. Both were allegedly written after the firing and before the incident became public knowledge. Foremost in the minds of the spectators that night was how the Mayor and Police Chief would explain this situation, which appeared to be so unfair. The Mayor’s letter to the Chief read,

*“My Dear Chief,
It has come to my attention your dismissal of officer Chadwick, and as of yet I have no report upon the reasons for your action. Trusting the same is justified, I would ask a personal submission of said report for my personal file.
Respectfully, E.P. Wilson, Mayor”*³

In a letter dated November 2, 1934, Chief Hogan had responded to the Mayor’s request, citing eight robberies, which had taken place on nights when Chadwick had been in charge over the last year. Hogan closed the letter by describing Chadwick as a “fine fellow, but not particularly adapted for the stringent exacting duties of a police officer.” He also stated directly that there was nothing political or personal motivating his dismissal.⁴

This clearly didn’t sit well with the majority of the council members. In his letter, the chief mentioned that Chadwick had been “reprimanded and cautioned” about leaving doors unlocked and property unsecured while investigating incidents of prowling, but there was still a question in the mind of many council members about the timing of Chadwick’s dismissal.⁵ Why had his firing come at this particular time, when he had just accomplished a fine bit of police work, rather than months before, when the robberies had occurred on his watch? There were no good answers given for the council’s inquiries. One last fact that seemed to damage Officer Chadwick’s case, however, was when he admitted that he had raided another gambling operation in the same location prior to this incident, with the knowledge of the Chief and without any negative consequences.⁶

Mayor Wilson’s letter, although appearing to indicate that he had no prior knowledge of Chadwick’s impending firing, did little to clear the black cloud of suspicion which rested over the Mayor’s office in the minds of many people. Most of the city councilmen were not convinced by the Chief’s insistence that Chadwick was fired for repeated past mistakes, either. At the end of the council meeting, a shocking vote was taken in



Mayor Ernest P. Wilson

Continued on page 5

favor of giving Officer Chadwick a formal letter stating that he had been dismissed because he broke up the off-track betting ring. Five of the seven council members voted in favor of the resolution, with two abstentions. To smooth over some of the negative publicity which this incident brought on City Hall, the council further voted to grant Officer Chadwick one month's severance pay.⁷

Immediately after the hearing, the Mayor met with reporters from the *Renton Chronicle* and issued a statement:

" Mr. Chadwick was appointed his job in good faith by me, and I naturally expected him to be a diligent officer. The report of Chief Pat Hogan shows that there were no less than eight burglaries committed during the time that Mr. Chadwick was on duty and in charge of the police shift. Right at the time when Mr. Chadwick and Mr. Lawrence made their sensational raid on the alleged horse-race betting place on Main street, and hauled two Renton boys through the streets to jail, Forrest Todd was mourning the loss of \$300 worth of merchandise which thieves had looted from his place, during a night when Mr. Chadwick was supposed to be in entire charge of policing the town. And I submit that both Chief Hogan and myself might well be pardoned if we felt that Officer Chadwick was not sufficiently diligent in the discharge of his duty, and that change in personnel of the police department would be for the good of the service."

Despite the Mayor's obviously sarcastic tone, and his belief that Chadwick deserved to be fired, the City Council refused to hold Officer Chadwick responsible for allowing the Todd burglary on the night of the raid. They evidently believed that crimes can still occur no matter who is in charge, and that the criticism by the Mayor was unfair. It is also noteworthy to point out that the Mayor's allusion to "Renton boys" being "hauled through the streets" seems a bit over sympathetic for someone who allegedly had no personal ties to the "boys" in question, caught red-handed in criminal activities.

The Aftermath

Some interesting events took place, which help shed light on the whole incident, and the feelings of the citizens of Renton toward the people involved. Mayor Wilson served one term of two years as Mayor of Renton. It was very much the pattern for Mayors during this time to serve two consecutive terms, almost as a foregone conclusion. In 1937, he attempted to run for Mayor again, but was soundly defeated. Interestingly, the man who Wilson gave Chadwick's job to, Ernest Isackson, was reportedly the campaign manager for Wilson's abortive comeback attempt. According to the *Renton Chronicle*, Wilson didn't really want to get back into politics, but was persuaded by "hundreds" of letters from supporters, asking him to run.⁸

It is impossible to know how much the memory of the Chadwick incident caused Mayor Wilson's plans for a second term to fall short. Soon thereafter, he left politics to concentrate on his career in banking full time. Many people who supported Officer Chadwick's conspiracy theory felt at least partially vindicated, when former Mayor Wilson was convicted of embezzling a quarter of a million dollars from his own bank in 1941 and sentenced to a term of 10 years at the Federal Penitentiary on McNeil Island.⁹ These subsequent events seem to make Officer Chadwick's claims of corruption all the more believable. When a new city administration took over in June of 1935, Police Chief Pat Hogan was replaced. The newly elected Mayor, O. N. Cochran, appointed Vince Stewart to be Chief of Police for Renton. Stewart had been police Chief for many years prior to the Wilson administration, and had served under several Mayors. Bringing back this popular leader went a long way in helping to restore citizen's trust in their Mayor and Police Department. Stewart ended up serving for several more years as Renton's Top Cop.¹⁰

To the surprise of no one, James Chadwick was re-instated as a Renton police officer on June 5, 1935 by Mayor Cochran, and served with distinction for twenty-five more years until his retirement in December 1960.¹¹



Floyd Lawrence, acting mayor.

¹ Article, "The Great Gambling Raid", Author & Date unknown. Found in RHM clipping file.

² *Renton Chronicle*, November 1, 1934 pg. 1

³ *ibid*

⁴ *ibid* pg. 4

⁵ *ibid*

⁶ *ibid*

⁷ "The Great Gambling Raid" pg. 2.

⁸ *The Renton Chronicle*. December 1937. pg.1. Interestingly, the *Renton Chronicle* was a vocal supporter of E.P. Wilson through his entire time as mayor and throughout his subsequent legal troubles. It was far more common at the time for newspapers to be openly partisan, and less neutral. Virtually every article appearing in the paper about Wilson had a positive spin, even the one announcing his conviction for misappropriating funds.

⁹ *The Renton Chronicle*. September 25, 1941 pg.1

¹⁰ "The Great Gambling Raid" pg. 3.

¹¹ *ibid*

Volunteer Corner

by Dorota Rahn, Volunteer Coordinator

I am back in the museum after three months of being physically away and mentally far away. One exception was the holiday party for volunteers and members of the Renton Historical Museum and Society at Carco Theater in December. It was my idea but nothing would have happened if not for the hard work of the volunteer committee. Del George, Ila Hemm, Sarah Jane Hisey, and Shirley Phinney, and Bea Mathewson did an excellent job preparing food and decorations. Naomi Mathisen gave away tickets for door prizes. Thanks to them I could relax and concentrate on delivering twin girls, Sylvia and Charlotte, and on changing diapers and breast feeding day and night.



Natalie holding Charlotte and Sylvia.

My new daughters are obviously pretty and cute when they cry, poop and pee. My husband calls one "dumb" and the other "fat". Not to offend anybody, the first cries a lot and the second gains weight much faster than the first. Natalie, the older sister, desperately tries to fit in the picture. By the way, all well wishers were wrong. She is not helping to change diapers. However, she passionately sticks pacifiers in her sisters' mouths while they are crying. She jumps up and down very loudly pretending she doesn't remember there are some small creatures soundly sleeping in the room. She complains about lack of our attention and plays it nicely to get what she wants. So much for a little helper.

The real helper is my mother, who came from Poland. It doesn't matter that she tells me I am starving the babies by not feeding them every time they start crying, and that I am not crying together with them. She is at home all the time so I can come back to the museum, go grocery shopping and to the fitness club in a desperate effort to shed some of the pounds I put on. However, I didn't loose even one pound in contrast to stories about painlessly losing weight while breastfeeding. Not me!

On the bright side, I am back in the museum working with people I really admire and hope my work will add to the museum's value.

In Memorium



DEL GEORGE 1937-2004

We just learned that the museum volunteer, Del George, passed away on March 4th. He was born on March 31, 1937. Lately he was a president of the Renton office of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, coordinator for the American Association of Retired People, and treasurer of the Unitarian Church among others.

Del became a museum volunteer in July of last year and had already managed to positively impact our work. As a former chef he prepared all the delicious hors d'ouvres for our Holiday Party and had planned on becoming a docent and Board member. We lost a very devoted and hard working person with a great sense of humor.

Volunteer Hours for 2003

Sixty-three volunteers completed 2550 hours of service at the museum in 2003. Volunteers in our museum do a variety of tasks: some put information about collections in our database.

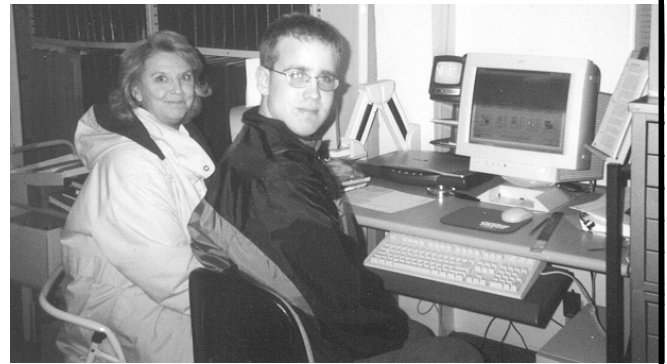


Laura Crawford and Sarah Iles work on collections.

Others greet visitors on Saturdays as well as do re-search, build exhibits, do

accounting, guide tours, organize and prepare museum events and help during Renton River Days, just to mention the most common activities. The museum wouldn't exist without volunteer support. The museum staff and the Renton Historical Society Board take this opportunity to thank volunteers for their unprecedented involvement.

Jeanne and Chris Noel doing data entry.



Memberships

New Members

Patricia Hardie Borek
John & Penny Burkhalter
Ted & Elena Burkhalter
Shirley Weger Lindahl
William K. Loken
David Mitchell
Linda Moore
Dell & Jewel Roark
Jan & Ronnie Rogers
Herb Wendland

New Benefactor

Patricia Auten
Robert & Roberta Logue

New Life Members

Judy H. Hastings
Robert Rivily
Elisabeth Rivily

Renewals

Subscriber

Allen County Public Library

Business

Cugini Florists
Edlund Associates, Inc.
Garland Jewelers, Inc.
McLendon Hardware
Renton Main Post Office

Organization

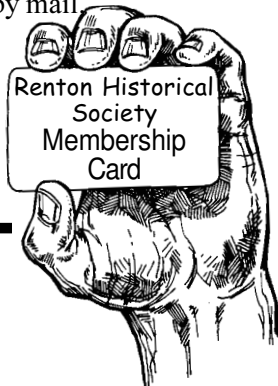
American Legion Auxiliary #19
PEO Sisterhood Chapter DK
PEO Sisterhood Chapter EI
Renton Education Association

Organization/Benefactor

Rentonites, Inc.
Soroptimist International of Renton
Renton Fire Fighters Local 864

Membership Dues

Please check to see if your 2004 dues are paid. One of the benefits of membership is having the Renton Historical Quarterly delivered to you. Memberships not paid by April will not receive the next issue by mail.



The 2003 Holiday Party

The Board of Trustees of the Renton Historical Society and staff of the Renton Historical Museum invited members of the society and the museum volunteers for the Holiday Party at Carco Theater on December 9th of last year. Both



Participants at the holiday party.

parties wanted to show appreciation for everybody who supports the museum and the society. The Volunteer Committee did a great job of planning and preparing the party for an unexpected number of 150 guests. It was a very encouraging number and we hope to make the event a tradition

Guests gathered in the lobby of Carco Theater for some delicious hors d'ouvres prepared by Del George, a new volunteer, with a great help of the Volunteer Committee members, Ila Hemm, Sarah Jane Hisey, Shirley Phinney, and Bea Mathewson. The ladies created a holiday atmosphere with some Christmas decorations. Additionally, they helped to clean up after the party.



Participants at the holiday party.

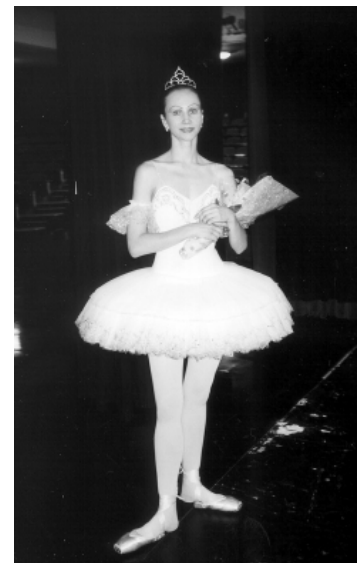
There were some exciting moments before the party ended. Some guests had an opportunity to meet people they didn't see for a long time. Others had a chance to get acquainted with new ones. There was a lottery for door prizes donated among others by Charles Schwab, Del George, and Uptown Glassworks.



Dancers of Ballet Bellevue Company after performace.

Ballet Bellevue Company presented scenes from the *Sleeping Beauty* with original choreography by Marius Pitipa, which was performed for the first time in Saint Petersburg in 1890. Professional and non-professional dancers, including some children, gave us a joy of watching them and listening to the Tchaikovsky's great music.

Thank you everybody for coming and enjoying the time. In general it was a great event and the Board of Trustees and the museum staff hopes you will join us at the annual picnic in June.



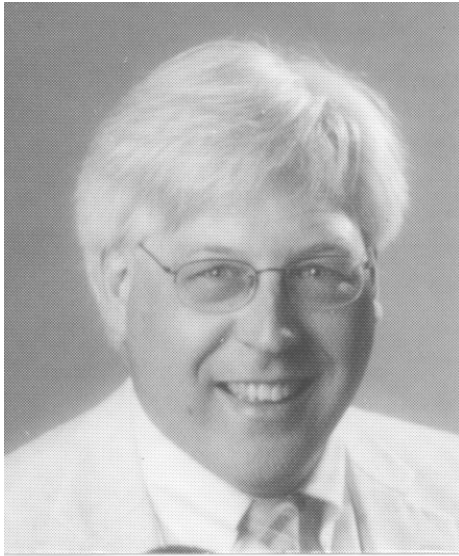
Victoria Titova, the artistic director of Ballet Bellevue Company.

Renton Museum Report

By Steve A. Anderson, Museum Supervisor

Now, I know what you've been thinking: "Gee, hasn't it been a long time since I've heard anything from the Museum or Society?" Well, take comfort in the fact that yes indeed, it has been awhile, and there are good reasons for the delayed mailing of this *RHQuarterly*.

First off, we've been busy wrapping up year-end activities and getting several new initiatives off the ground. Secondly, we've moved the publishing dates of this quarterly back one month in an attempt to avoid conflicts with other publica-



tions being produced within the city. Further, it allows us to move the publishing dates away from busy periods of the Museum's life, and into more reasonable time frames for reporting on activities within the organization. Also, we can capitalize on the graphic material available to support several holidays that we have not been able to use previously, such as St. Patrick's Day! The new publishing dates will be the 15th of March, June, September and December. Thirdly, we've been imposing a higher level of "intellectual control" on the collections of objects and images we possess here at the museum – but more on that later.

In terms of our mailing schedule, membership renewals and year-end fund-drive mailings will continue to be sent separately from the *RHQuarterly* as the membership has expressed an appreciation for that method . . . and how! This past year-end combined membership renewal/fund drive netted a grand total of \$9,508, with membership dues pulling in \$4,737, endowment contributions equaling \$1,670, general fund giving \$2,593 and capital projects fund raising \$508. All this will go towards preserving and presenting Renton's heritage during the year and for years to come! Thank you all for your most generous contributions to these activities within the Museum and Society.

I mentioned that we've been busy. I guess "busy" is not exactly the way to describe all of what's been happening as our Volunteer Coordinator Dorota



Rahn took maternity leave in late November to have twins, Sylvia and Charlotte – who arrived in early December, 2003. Dorota has just returned to semi-active duty at the Museum in late February, but I'm sure her home life has changed dramatically. Shortly before that, the Museum's administrative assistant Daisy Ward fell at home and broke her leg,

which required a hospital stay, intensive therapy and much home rest. Daisy has just returned to the Museum within the last month, working a limited schedule until her strength returns. To pick up the slack, we obtained the help of Amy Neff (pictured above) who is employed at the Main Library and is currently working towards her Library Sciences degree. Amy, who handled the process-

ing of most of the membership renewals these past few months (along with Louise George) will continue with us until Daisy's back to full speed. One other significant change was the addition of Sarah Iles (pictured below), a University of Washington Master's candidate in museum studies. Sarah has been with us since the first of the year and will remain, working in the collections area with Curator Laura Crawford, until the end of March. Sarah's contributions have been significant, as she has rebuilt the artifact donor base from the 1970s and 1980s, utilizing our collections management software Past Perfect. She has also been involved in working through several other smaller collections and conservation projects that are giving us a better understanding of what we possess. Our archivist Stan Greene, has been enjoying the past five months on the California/Mexican border, and we expect our snowbird to return sometime in April.



As mentioned above, we are slowly beginning to impose a higher level of shared "intellectual control" on the historical objects and photographs entrusted to our care. Consider "intellectual control" as the ability to know what you have at any given point *and* be able to get to it quickly. This is increasingly important as the our senior volunteers step back from participation in the ongoing activities associated with artifact collection management. As the "intellectual control" held by these individuals becomes unavailable through retirement or health issues, large gaps in understanding what we have and where it is located have begun to form. In essence, it has become a struggle for those of us following their footsteps to know where these objects

Continued on page 9

are located and their context to other pieces in the collection. As you might have guessed, “intellectual control” is something that is gained over a long period of time, unless a system for sharing that knowledge is developed. We have been using Past Perfect software for about three years now, but only within the last six months have we really begun to “dig in” and (prompted by the Custer Estate donation) explore the full length and breadth of the holdings of the institution. What we’ve found is surprising and astounding us: multiple systems of cataloguing; incomplete records; considerable duplication and a large number of uncatalogued objects. However, we’ve also discovered what must be declared as some of our most important holdings, massive collections currently unknown to even our most senior members and a variety of wonderful, distinctly “Renton” objects that can and will now be utilized in our mission and cared for properly. The process involved in getting this material in an accessible format is not something that will happen this year. Perhaps, not even within the next three years. However, in beginning work on our historical materials now, we are establishing a beachhead on the collection and with each new entry into the Past Perfect system, our combined “intellectual control” of the collection grows. This will be a type of control that is shared amongst the entire staff – not just one or two individuals – *and which can be easily learned*. This is important if the Museum is to grow into an institution that answers to the demands of current and future generations of Rentonians.

We would like to invite anyone interested in helping with this cataloging project to contact the Museum. Numerous volunteers have already spent hundreds of hours entering data and we’re already beginning to reap the benefit of their efforts. It has been a busy winter, but I feel very satisfied in the work that has progressed thus far and see no roadblocks to further progress in the near future.

Until next time,



Steve Anderson,
Museum Supervisor

Contributions

General Fund Contributions

Eileen Austin
Anne Bagby
Charmaine & James Baker
William O. Belmondo
Jane & Paul Bentley
Helenanne Botham
Harley & Cathy Brumbaugh
Don & Pearl Burrows
John & Beverly Butler
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Bert & Shirley Custer
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Kenneth J. Tonkin
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Inez Edlich
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Lloyd & Fumiko Hoshide
\$500 or more
Sylvester Cugini

Boeing Matching Gift Fund

Lloyd & Fumiko Hoshide
Basil & Eleanor Simpson

From The Collections

By Laura Crawford, Curator/Collections Manager

While I've had the pleasure of meeting many of the dedicated volunteers and members who support the Museum's efforts through their activities and other contributions, I would like to take this opportunity via the newsletter to share some of my own background and aspirations with those of you whom I have yet to meet.

I'm a relative newcomer to the Pacific Northwest - at least by Renton terms. While I have lived in different parts of the country for professional or educational purposes, this is the place I truly call home. Upon completing my undergraduate degree in anthropology from the University of Arizona in the 1980's, I moved 'back east' and was employed for several years at a banking and investment firm in Boston, Massachusetts. A career in the museum field continued to appeal to me, and I gained entrance into the Museum Studies program at the Harvard Extension School. Just shy of completing that program, I relocated to the Seattle area in 1995 and continued employment as an accountant at a major Seattle broadcasting company until 2001. Still determined to complete a formal program in museum studies, I enrolled in the Certificate Program at the University of



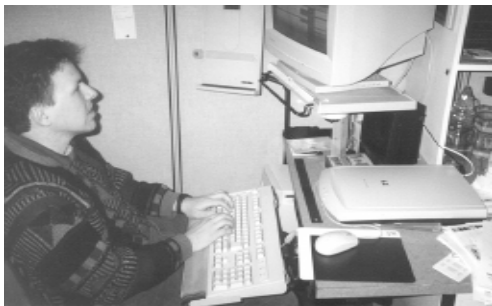
Washington, which I completed last year while volunteering at the Museum in 2002. Following successful completion of the University of Washington program, I was accepted into a Master's Degree program in Museum Studies via distance learning, which I will complete in 2005.

I continue to be employed for a few hours per week as an accountant at a Renton-based technology company while spending some very happy and busy afternoons working as the Museum's Collection Manager. While I have lived in the Renton area since 1995, last summer my husband and I officially became residents following our purchase of a small home in the Renton Highlands where we hope to spend many happy years. Aside from a truly wonderful commute, I realize that not only working - but especially living - in Renton gives me additional insights into not only its history, but also its future. I consider myself truly fortunate to share in this.

Collections Area Highlights

2004 marks the beginning of a new year and a new focus: collections management activities will be geared toward making the best possible use of existing materials and resources while identifying areas where an investment will be required to safeguard Museum staff, volunteers and collections. By addressing current and future needs we will then be better enabled to develop and implement community programs and exhibits that will increase the Museum's visibility - and sustainability - in the community.

The Collections Area has had the assistance of several very helpful and dedicated volunteers over the past few months. Special mention should go to Arthur Allen (pictured at right), who has been scanning the Museum's photographic collection over the past several months and has successfully created a digital record of over 2,300 photographs to date!



Girl with Banjo
c.. 1895



These images, made available on Past Perfect, the Museum's Collections Management database, will prove invaluable to Museum staff and researchers.

To date, over 870 images from the Charles L. Custer Estate have been catalogued and scanned into the Museum's database. A recent inspection of the storage area housing the remainder of the artifacts yielded additional images, and while many of these are duplicates of those already catalogued, those remaining provided valuable information on several of George W. Custer's construction activities, including construction at Kerriston and Barneston. A number of wonderful cabinet photographs were also discovered (such as the image above) which will be retained in the Museum's collections pending further research and identification.

The Collections Management staff has been hard at work over the past several weeks examining the contents of the high density storage area to determine what improvements can be made to more efficiently protect and store the many artifacts and archival materials the Museum is entrusted to care for. Over the coming months, we will continue to assess our holdings and future needs. Anyone interested in working with the Museum's photographic collection (scanning, data entry) or light sewing of dust covers or hangers for clothing in storage - please give us a call!

George W. & Annie Lewis Custer Endowment Program Report

The Endowment Committee met on the 27th of January 2004 with the Chair, Ken Becker presiding and committee members Naomi Mathisen and Steve Anderson attending. The fund's total is currently \$1,267,592 (December 31st numbers), with 39% residing in fixed income investments and 61% invested in equities – this follows the distribution of the money from the Charles Lewis Custer Estate in equity investment to establish a preferred equity/fixed investment ratio. Discussion involved the annual transfer of interest to the Society's general fund and fund allocations. At the current levels of investment, it was determined that approximately \$15,000 in earned interest income will be available for transfer to the Society's general fund to offset expenses at year's end.

There remains several vacancies on the committee, so Chairman Becker requested that the committee members provide names of any individuals that might be interested in serving; all candidates will be considered by the Board. Any Society member who has an interest and time to spend on this aspect of the Society's business is urged to contact Steve Anderson at the Museum (425.255.2330). As there were no other investment decisions to be made, the meeting adjourned. The committee meets quarterly, with the next meeting on April 28, 2004.

News has recently come to the Museum that the estate of Clinton Betz includes a large cash memorial bequest to the Society. Please know that all memorials, life membership dues and directed gifts go toward the endowment fund's working capital. All gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law. Consult your tax advisor. Only the interest generated by these invested funds will be used as sustained support to the Renton Historical Society. Please call 425.255-2330 for more information, or email at saanderson@ci.renton.wa.us for more information regarding including the Renton Historical Society in your living will or bequest.



Clinton H. Betz (pictured left)

This pioneer of Renton passed away on January 30th at the age of 93. Clinton was born in Renton in 1910 to Edward and Louise Betz.

He graduated from Renton High School in 1929, and because of the depression, was unable to pursue higher education and thus joined his father Edward in the florist and greenhouse business already established in Renton.

True to his roots, Clinton opened a florist shop in downtown Renton in 1947 which he operated for 26 years. Many local florists began their career in his shop.

This pioneer gentleman had a lifelong interest in the maritime field, photographing ships along the Pacific Coast. Much of his work in this field is a permanent part of a collection at the Museum of History and Industry in Seattle.

Join the Renton Historical Society Today!

Name: _____

Membership Level: _____

Business Name: _____

Address: _____

City:State: _____ Zip: _____ + 4 (_____)

Please make checks payable to the Renton Historical Society.

VISA/MASTERCARD# _____ Ex.Date: _____

Your Signature: _____

- Please share your e-mail address with us: _____
- Please send me a volunteer application form. (32/1)

Mail To: Membership Secretary, Renton Historical Society
235 Mill Avenue South, Renton, Washington 98055-2133

Please Choose Membership Category & Any Donation You Wish To Make:

- Student Individual(\$8+) = _____
- Senior Individual (\$8+) = _____
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- Senior Couple(\$12+) = _____
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- Benefactor (\$50+) = _____
- Business (\$40+) = _____
- Corporate (\$1000+) = _____
- Life (\$250+) _____
One Time Only
- General Fund Donation _____
- Endowment Fund Donation _____
In Memory of: _____

Total enclosed: _____

Rentonians

Memorials shown were received from those noted in reduced print from November 2003 to February 20, 2004.

Remembered



denotes former Society Life Member



denotes former Society member

Lee Anderson

Florence M. Murray

Beulah Armstrong

Al, Shirley, Wayne H., and Sharon Armstrong

Wayne E. Armstrong

Al, Shirley, Wayne H., and Sharon Armstrong

Kenneth Baker

Mrs. Connie Kerr Baker

Leonard Bakken

Hazelle DuBois

Sylvia Bakken

Hazelle DuBois

Virginia Barei

Louise George; Beth & Mike Potoshnik; Mr. & Mrs. D. W. Custer

Belmont Beattie

Donna Bausano

Eleanor Bausano Beattie

Donna Bausano

Clinton Betz

Martha Kingen

Grace Miskimens Bridge

John & Eleanor Bertagni; Renton High School Class of 1940; Zelima Vidmar

Agnes Clark

Mike & Sue Moeller

Charles (Bud) E. Cooke

Barbara Mitchell Magnuson

Tino Cugini

Sylvester Cugini

Emma Cugini

Sylvester Cugini

Alec Custer

Donna Bausano

Jack J. Daly

Mr. & Mrs. W.T. Borek; Beth & Mike Potoshnik

Anthony Del Guzzo

Helen E. Hawkins

Marie Del Guzzo

Helen E. Hawkins

Matilda Delaurenti

Lorraine M. Goodwin

Diane Ford

Florence M. Murray

Johnny Gardin

Carrie & Greg Bergquist; John & Eleanor Bertagni; Anne Butko; Rena Crosariol Beck; Robert & Gilda Youngquist; Bob Gilligan; Sean Gilligan; Katie Gilligan; Patti & Joe Critchett; Larry Popovich; Grace Jean Smith; Maria Sartor; Gino & Fiorina Sartor; Carole Aldred; Arlas Babcock

Aaron Goodwin

Lorraine M. Goodwin; Richard & Patricia Goodwin Sell

Daisy Goodwin

Richard & Patricia Goodwin Sell

Eva Attleson Goodwin

Charles Goodwin & Joyce Goodwin Peterson; Richard & Patricia Goodwin Sell

Leona Goodwin

Beth & Mike Potoshnik

Lorraine Olsen Goodwin

Louise George; Florence Delaurenti; Gloria Duffey; Angeline Molinaro; Vivian Burmester; Beth & Mike Potoshnik; Lillian Rosenstrom; Eileen Button; Rose, Carmel & Don Camerini; Vivian Cook; Madeline Donckers; Mervin Thomas, Grayce Thomas, Gary Thomas & Jeff Thomas; Jerry & Barbara Shellan; Renton High School Class 1940; Rachel Thomas; Martha Kingen

Robyn Goodwin

Richard & Patricia Goodwin Sell

Ermo Gregoris

Louise Bertozzi; Dorlene Bressan; Mr. & Mrs. George Gambini; Norma Nirk; Beth & Mike Potoshnik; Mr. & Mrs. Leo Zanga

George Grubescic

Joellyn Richter; Frances Potocnik; Beth & Mike Potoshnik; Betty Richards

Ann Hamlin

Florence M. Murray

George Hannah

Florence M. Murray

Jim Hardie

Patricia Hardie Borek

Margaret Hardie

Patricia Hardie Borek

Percy Hardie

Patricia Hardie Borek

Floyd Hewitt

Robert & Margaret Wicks

Virginia D. Holman

Gary & Sharon Hendricks; Snookie Hendricks; Vickie Jean Worthington

Thomas Kerr

Connie Kerr Baker; LoRayne Kerr

E. Jane Lawrence

Ethel Swanson; Renton High School Old Timers Assoc.

Lance Mathisen

Carrie & Greg Bergquist; Naomi Mathisen

Joe Matthews

Mr. & Mrs. D. W. Custer

Beatrice McGarrigle

Past Matrons Nesika Chapter OES

Rentonians Remembered

Velma McKean 
Larry Brossant; Anne I. Butko

Alice McNabb 
Mike & Terri Sloan & Bob McNabb

Michael F. Miller
Bertha Miller

James G. Murray
Florence M. Murray

Shirley Newing
Peter & Hazel Newing

Lee I. Newton
Lee & Judy Baker

Thelma Dinning Newton 
Lee Newton & Sons

Anna Nielsen
Olga Munro

Otto Nielsen
Olga Munro


**Carol Ann Laviolette
O'Neill**
Louise George

Slavo Philip (Ozzy) Ozbolt 
*Anne Butko, Richard Butko &
Vicki Lozor; Gloria Duffey; Louise
George; Beth & Mike Potoshnik;
Evelyn Rosenstrom*

Barney Poli
Florence M. Murray

Dan Poli
Florence M. Murray

Esterina Poli
Florence M. Murray

Ellen White Pope 
*Anonymous; Zena Feltrin Cochran;
Ron & Barbara Dengel; Lorraine M.
Goodwin; Mrs. Bea Mathewson; Beth
& Mike Potoshnik; Louise George;
Joan & Roy Smith; Tom & Helen
Stanlick; The Bill, Tom & Michael
White Families; Jack White; Norma
Nirk; Betty Richards; Eileen Button*

**Josephine (Josie)
Marie Potter** 

*Edith Ballestrasse; Louise Bertozzi;
Dorlene Bressan & Family; Louise
George; Grace Storwick; Mary &
Louis Sutter; Frances Potocnik &
Joellyn Richter*

Flora Pratt
Louise Bertozzi

William C. Prentice
Senator Margarita Prentice

Mary Quincey
Anna E. Thurston

Vernon Quincey
Anna E. Thurston

Tiny Ronk
*Jeanie & Larry Crook & Laurretta
Natucci*

Albert Rosenstrom
Evelyn M. Rosenstrom

Alice Samuelson
Bertha Miller

Franco Sangalli, M.D. 
Anonymous

George Sharpe II
Lee Newton

Dorothy Benson Slade
Floyd Benson

Elmer Edward Spring 
Carolina V. Spring

Mae Plano Starcevich
*Rose Camerini; Catherine
Rutkowski*

Louie Taclay
Katie Gilligan

William G. Thomas 
Rachel Thomas

**Dorothy McLendon
Thompson** 
Ethel Swanson

Evelyn Toschi
Ethel Swanson

Hugo Toschi
Ethel Swanson

Agnes White 
Jenan McNeight

Hugh White 
Jenan McNeight

George H. Williams, Sr.
Tom & Helen Stanlick

Phyzia Williams
Tom & Helen Stanlick

Thomas H. Williams 
Ethel Swanson

Marion Witt
*Dorlene Bressan & Family; Mary &
Louis Sutter*



Rentonians Remembered

Ellen (White) Pope

This lovely lady recently passed away in December of 2003. Ellen was born in Renton, Washington in 1916 to pioneer Renton parents, Jobie and Jeannette White.

She was a graduate of Renton High School and also attended the University of Washington as well as the Sherwood School of Music in Chicago. Because of her love of music, she became an accomplished pianist.

Ellen and her husband, W. Stewart Pope, were strong and faithful supporters of the Renton Historical Society and Museum. Sometime ago, this couple graciously contributed a substantial amount to the Society in memory of their parents.

This amount has increased in value over the years and we are sincerely appreciative of the generosity shown by Ellen and Stewart.



Dr. Bertram D. Thomas

Dr. Thomas, former president of Battelle Memorial Institute in Columbus, Ohio, died at the age of 100 on February 15, 2004.

Bertram Thomas was born in Renton, WA in 1903. He was self supporting from the age of 12 selling newspapers, the Saturday Evening Post and then working in a local drug store. Graduating from high school at the age of 16, he was employed as a bookkeeper at the Pacific Car and Foundry in Renton. Dr. Thomas received his B.S. degree in chemistry from the University of Washington in 1928 with a major in chemistry, mathematics, and physics, and a Ph.D in chemistry in 1933. He pioneered work on the chemistry of sea water.

Dr. Thomas joined the research staff of Battelle in 1934 and established the Institute's Division of Chemical Research in 1939, was named assistant director in 1940 and became acting director in 1942. He was president of Battelle from 1957 until he retired in 1968.

Dr. Thomas was a member of the boards of trustees of Ohio State University and of Case Western Reserve University, and was awarded honorary degrees by Ohio State, Michigan Technical University, Otterbein College, and Cleveland State University. In 1967 he received the Distinguished Alumnus Award of the University of Washington.

Dr. Thomas also served on the boards of the Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts, the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, the Aspen Music Festival and the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, as well as serving as president of the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. He was skilled at wood carving and spent many of his retirement hours building violins. As a musician he played the violin and the piano.



Rentonians Remembered

Obituaries

Vanecia Adderson (Life member)

Allan T. Akesson

Kenneth Baker (Member)

Virginia Barei

Clinton Betz (Life member)

Furman Carter (Member)

LaVera M. Curry

Phyllis L. Eckerman

Johnny George Gardin

Lorraine Olsen Goodwin (Member)

Leona (Lee) Green (Member)

Ermo Gregoris (Member)

George E. Grubescic

Carl V. Hanson

Floyd Hewitt (Member)

Lola Johnson

William E. "Swede" Lundberg

Joseph L. Mathews, Sr.

Lance Mathisen (Benefactor)

Ben O. Mathison

Beatrice McGarrigle (Member)

Lee I. Newton (Member)

Carol Ann O'Neill

Slavo Philip Ozbolt (Member)

George A. Pasco, Jr. (Member)

Ellen White Pope (Life member)

Josephine Potter (Member)

LaVerne Riley

Barbara Schemnitzer

Mae Starcevich

Carlo August Suffia

Eleanor V. Thompson

Betty Plano Tucker

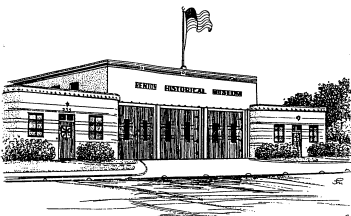


Centennial Snapshot



As coal mine disasters and accidents frequently killed many locals living in King County's coal mining district, safety was a major issue. In the latter 19th Century/early 20th Century, when this photograph was taken in Black Diamond, the area had just been struck by several of the worst fires, cave ins, and explosions ever. Here, you can see members of the United Mine Workers Union visiting Black Diamond with the "Mine Rescue Car" that was packed with rescue and safety equipment, including the "hard hat" breathing apparatus worn by the two men on the left. This railroad car, and the attendants shown here (including Renton's Manchester Walters and Martin Jorgensen), visited Franklin, Black Diamond, Newcastle and other area mines to promote mine safety.

Renton Historical Society Image #1565



Renton Historical Museum
235 Mill Avenue South
Renton, WA 98055