

House Calls to High Tech: Renton's Hospitals

By Anne Halloran

Humble Beginnings

Medical care was a luxury in the hardscrabble early days of Southeast King County. A handful of doctors crossed rivers and mountains (usually on horseback) to reach their far-flung patients. Equipment was scarce and limited to the highly portable, but courage and ingenuity often produced marvels in the hands of pioneer physicians, just as they do for today's practitioners.

In the late 1800s, most of the medical care taking place in Kent and Renton consisted of emergency services. Accidents in logging camps and coalmines - such as the infamous Franklin Mine near Black Diamond where an 1889 explosion killed 37 people - the the main source of employment for doctors.

Mine physicians often looked after families and other community residents. Reminiscing decades later, Renton pioneer Grace Neal described treatment for her painful toothache: "This was around 1890. The mine doctor pulled my tooth even though he wasn't a dentist. They were very busy people, but I don't recall one of them ever refusing to come to the house, even for trivial ailments."

Continued on page 4



Masthead Photo: Nurses at Bronson Memorial Hospital - 1940

Dr. Adolph Bronson - c. 1910



Renton Historical Quarterly

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Hours:

Tuesday - Saturday 10:00am - 4:00pm

By appointment:

Wednesday-Friday 1:00pm - 4:00pm

Admission:

\$3 for adults

\$1 for children

Always free to members and to the general public on the first Wednesday and third Saturday of the month.

Board Meetings:

January 26 6:00pm

February 23 6:00pm

March 23 6:00pm

Please call the museum for location.

President's Message

By Bob Hunt, President

I've been thinking about change lately.

Without it there would be no need to preserve history, we would be the same place we were, all of the time. The rate at which Renton changes can be stunning. The people and the place evolves continuously, and we try to get some snapshots along the way. Even the way we tell stories changes over time, reflecting a better understanding of the snapshots or some new information about a time in our community.

Many of you were gracious enough to attend our open house on November 10. Museum staff developed two new displays honoring Renton participants in The Great War and World War II which replaced two of the older, permanent, exhibits in the main gallery. I cannot thank everyone involved in this work, but you will notice Doug Kyes artwork in the trench scene. Hosted by the Fundraising Committee, this event was co-sponsored by local business and community patrons noted elsewhere in this issue. The crowd (160+) was impressive and emphasized that we are not prepared to entertain large groups in the Museum. Seating was limited and even walking became a challenge. While we hope to have more events in the Museum soon, we will have to rectify these issues for the comfort of those in attendance.

Some elements of the new exhibits were drawn from the Century-to-Century exhibit, which was modified to add some replacement artifacts. Be sure and take some time to see what the staff has done (including a new WW I dogfight flight simulator that will be moving to become part of the Boeing display). The staff has also been working on updating the Duwamish Indian display with some more artifacts, so keep an eye open in 2005.

Speaking of change, most of you have probably noticed that the advertising murals on the south side of Uptown Glassworks (next to the Veterans Park) have continued to degrade despite efforts to preserve them. We managed to get some good pictures, but the owners have expressed a desire to replace them with something in better shape. They asked if we had any alternatives and we had to admit that there was little that could be done to save those images.

One of the Society's trustees, Marge Richter, was recognized as one of Renton's Outstanding Citizens for 2004 along with Norma Cugini in a ceremony honoring Marcie Maxwell as Citizen of the Year. The City, the Chamber and the Renton Rotary Club jointly sponsored the awards. Marge has been a member of our board for several terms, but we apparently don't have exclusive rights. She seems to pop up all over the place! As I looked over the list of previous recipients, I saw a number of Board and Society members mentioned. Marge joins an honorable community. Congratulations Marge!

Our holiday party was held at the Carco Theater on December 7th. Volunteer Coordinator, Dorota Rahn arranged a marvelous evening with a delightful spread of finger food and a singing quartet named "Heartbeat." It consisted of four local ladies with remarkable talent who are internationally recognized. Their pieces included some fun holiday tunes along with old classics and a few specialties all their own. The weather might have kept some of you home, but those in attendance can fill you in on a grand evening.

Finally, some of you may have seen the news that Harry Blencoe is retiring from the CEO position at First Savings Bank of Renton. He will remain on the that board as well as with Renton Community Foundation. A long time supporter of the Renton Historical Museum, Harry has no small part of history himself. For evidence, see the pictures Steve has of Harry as a young man fresh out of WWII Naval service and ready to apply his energy to a new club here in town called, I think, Rendango.

As you can see, change remains a constant companion. Sometimes we get dizzy trying to keep up, but this is what adds wonder to our lives, puts sparkles in kids' eyes and makes great stories. I want to thank all of you for being part of this Society and helping to build and change the Museum as we try to capture a few moments.

The best to you and yours in 2005!

Bob Hunt, President

Dr. Christopher Mehrens

Dr. Christopher Mehrens, a member of the Renton Historical Society, now resides in Terre Haute, IN, where he is a member of the staff of Indiana State University.

Christopher purchased a historical landmark home in Terre Haute and is active with the Vigo County Historical Museum. To benefit their Museum, a tour of homes was held on December 5th. Six homes and the Museum were all decorated for the tour.

The highlight of the open house at Christopher's home was a framed jeweled Christmas tree containing antique jewelry. The tree was made by his mother, Gloria Mehrens of Renton, who was in attendance, along with her husband George. It was estimated between 300 and 400 visited the home for this one day event. The Mehrens are all members of the Renton Historical Society. Gloria Mehrens' mother, Gabrielle Girou Longville, was a pioneer of this area and taught at the Newcastle school in the 1920's. Gloria's father, Emil Longville, was a building contractor in Renton.

Noted from the King County Journal December 5, 2004

Don't be surprised if you spot Attilio (Til) Franceschina, a Renton area resident, sporting a copy of Smithsonian magazine this month. After all, he's in it.

Franceschina, 77, who was born to Italian immigrants in Minneapolis, worked in the terrazzo industry. A few years back, the Smithsonian published an old photo of Italian workers polishing terrazzo at the museum.

"They were all from the part of Italy my parents came from," he said. The information attached to the photo hinted that the museum lacked a "Galera," a special tool used to polish terrazzo in the 19th century. As it happens, Franceschina had one and offered to donate it. The museum accepted. The December issue includes a photo of Franceschina and "a little blurb," he said.

GIFT SHOP

The gift shop has a new shipment of caps, T-shirts, sweatshirts, and hooded sweatshirts with the logo of a miner's face. We also have white T-shirts with the painting of the Smither's farm.

Additions to the gift shop include miniature teapots with matching cups and saucers; vintage keyplate photo frames and Victorian design scissors in a case.

A variety of books and a few centennial afghans are also available.



Notes



Received

Hi! I'm a blue light special! My name is Daren Tarwater and I was born in the old Renton hospital in 1965 the current site of the "new" McLendons. What I consider to be the "old" K-mart. McLendons is putting up a bulletin board with baby pictures. Which has spawned a renewed interest in my home towns history. Especially the "old" hospital. My Mother was born there aswell. Out of 6 brothers and sisters she was the only one born there. My Grandparents moved to Earlington hill in 1935 where my Grandfather built there home on south 135th above M.L.K. Way. So you might say I'm a local boy curious about his home towns past. Or I just want to know what dept at McLendons I was born in.

Thank You
Daren Tarwater

More info, articles, photos, etc. of Renton in the 30's, 40's, 50's and 60's in your flyer/newsletter this year, please!

E. Brozowski



Renton's Hospitals continued from page 1



Bronson Hospital before remodeling - 1925

They may have been tireless, but the mine physicians weren't known for their diplomacy. Dr. Owen Taylor found a chilly reception when he tried to set up practice in Kent in 1895. Taylor wrote later that he was curtly dismissed, because "we have more than enough doctors, so you can keep moving." Dr. Taylor returned anyway, but the next time was armed with precious surgical training. Several published accounts call him "the first in the Pacific Northwest to perform a successful appendectomy."

Another physician would lay the foundation for today's medicine, presaging the role of Valley Medical Center. Iowa-born, and the graduate of a California medical school, Dr. Adolph Bronson initially cared for neighbors and residents at his home on Main Street in Renton starting in 1905. In 1911 he constructed the area's first hospital, across the street from his house. For decades this two-story brick building served as the region's medical cornerstone. For much of that time it constituted the only hospital between Seattle and North Bend.

In addition to a standing hospital, the arrival of nurses represented another medical milestone. Up to five of these extraordinarily hard-working women lived on the second floor of Bronson Hospital. One later described her famous boss as "exceptionally generous and compassionate. And he never refused anybody. If you didn't have any money, you didn't have it," Josephine Scoll would later report. Similar to his nomadic predecessors, Dr. Bronson continued to see workplace injuries. Scoll remembered a "fairly regular" stream of accident victims from the logging camps.

Admissions records for the hospital between 1911 and 1923 (on display at the Renton Historical Museum) offer a remarkable glimpse into the daily lives of early Southeast King County residents. Influenza, pneumonia, and childbirth were frequent causes of death.

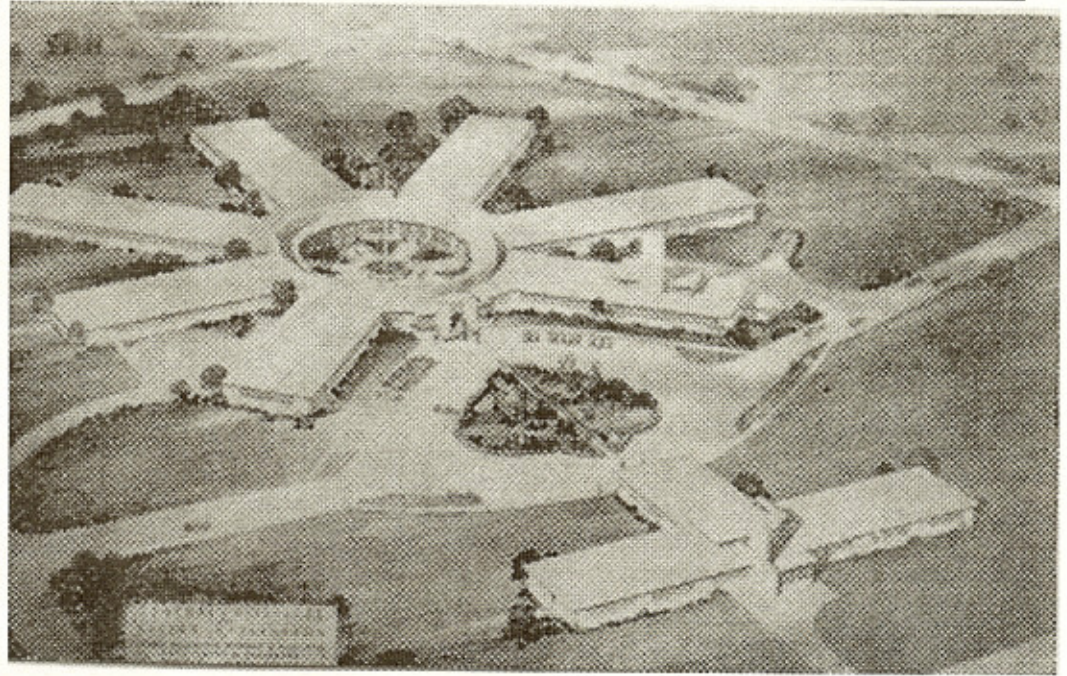
In the decades that followed, it would take more than clinical skill to maintain high-caliber medical care in the region. A single physician could no longer build and run a hospital. The dedication of the pioneer practitioners would need to be matched by the political savvy of the next generation.

During the 1940s the population of Renton would swell to 40,000, largely as a result of heightened military activity. Civic leaders, including members of the Renton Chamber of Commerce, capitalized on the wartime presence of the federal government. In an attempt to acquire a "modern" hospital, this determined group helped secure funds for a brand-new institution.



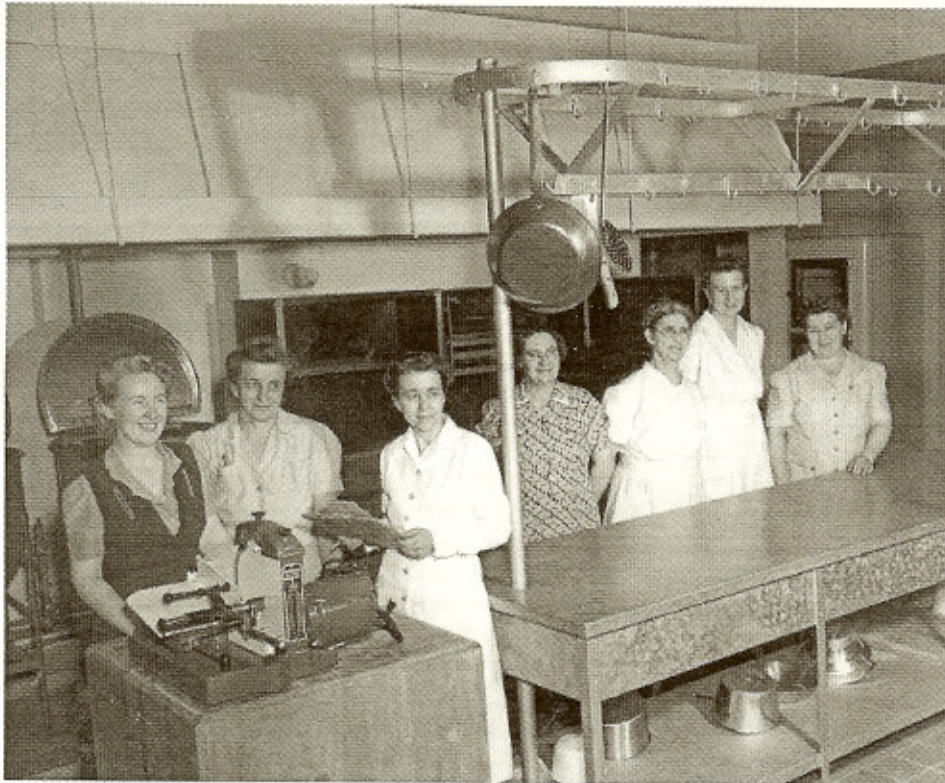
Charge nurses at the "wheel" hospital in Renton - 1945.

Opened in 1945 on Rainier Avenue, Renton Hospital was never intended to be a permanent facility. But the \$600,000 building was, nevertheless, the source of considerable pride, and it boasted features considered state-of-the-art for the time. Its designer was prominent Seattle architect George Wellington Stoddard, who had previously built the first Husky Stadium. The distinctive spokes of the hospital's seven wings eventually earned the nickname "Wagon Wheel Hospital," but boosters at the opening ceremony gave a different interpretation: they said the arrangement symbolized Renton's reputation as a "Hub City."



"Wagon wheel" hospital in Renton - 1945.

According to newspaper stories, the attributes of the 100-bed Renton Hospital included "pleasing soft colors" and a central patio where patients could "raise their faces to the healing powers of the sun." Also praised were the presence of Venetian blinds and running water. Separate wings, each containing an individual area such as emergency care, maternity services, and physical therapy, had only a single bathroom. The layout would "decrease the workload of the nurses," one article read.



Kitchen staff at the "wheel" hospital in Renton - 1945.

Reva Charbonneau, who retired in the 1960s, disagreed. The nursing aide said in an interview that the Venetian blinds created oven-like temperatures, often drenching patients in sweat. And the running water only extended her duties because nursing staff would now be required to scrub down beds and sheets, sterilize thermometers and a wide range of other equipment. Charbonneau's tasks also involved hauling heavy oxygen tanks and chopping ice slivers from large blocks with a pickaxe.

The first patient at Renton Hospital was a Boeing worker who had suffered a foot injury. And suggestive of the high-tech links that would quickly take root in the community, the first baby was the son of a Boeing engineer.

Continued on page 6

The birth of the facility would be protracted and complicated. While it was willing to construct Renton Hospital, the federal government declined to operate it. Fearful of seeing control of their healthcare fall into outside hands, local leaders again stepped forward. This time the result was the nine-member, not-for-profit Valley Hospital Foundation. Emergency funds were hastily sought to seed the foundation and they were rushed to the community by a rising Congressional star, Senator Warren G. Magnuson.

Like the hospital itself, the foundation was conceived to be a short-term solution. Following a special election the previous year, Public Hospital District Number 1 was formally established in 1948. Several months later voters approved a bond issue. Its effect was to purchase Renton Hospital outright, ensuring at last that, at least in the matter of medical services; the community would control its own destiny.

Today there are 56 public hospital districts in the state of Washington. The first, and the largest, is Public Hospital District Number 1. Having already demonstrated foresight in the creation of a public hospital district, community members would continue to think in ambitious ways. As the structure of Renton Hospital began to deteriorate in the 1950s and 1960s, concerns were raised about financing yet another medical center. This time it was decided to join forces with adjacent Kent.



Dr. Charles L. Dixon, in his office - 1948.

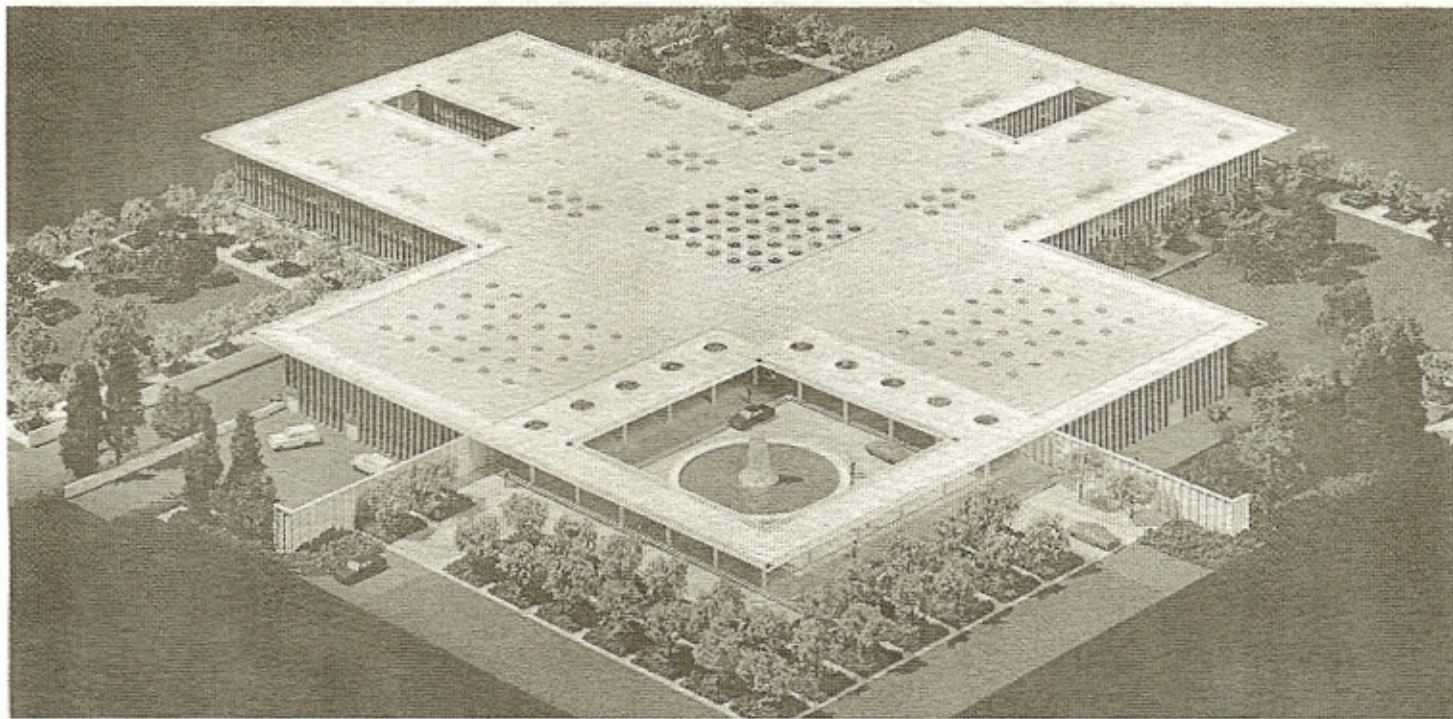


Administrators at the "wheel" hospital in Renton - 1945.

In 1965 the name of the hospital was changed to Valley General Hospital. The next year voters agreed to extend the boundaries of Public Hospital District Number 1. Today the borders include parts of Auburn and Tukwila besides the cities of Renton and Kent. The hospital's growth and direction is governed by a five-member, publicly elected board of commissioners.

The enlarged board of commissioners would in short order surmount the most difficult challenge yet to local healthcare. But before a startling and striking new campus—designed by world-renowned architect Edward Durrell Stone—would serve its first patient, the board put its figurative house in order. It passed core philosophies that still guide Valley staff. These included calls to policies which are progressive and nondiscriminatory; which foster prevention, education, and research; and which promote economical practices, careers in medicine, and cooperation with other healthcare institutions.

Model of Valley Medical Center - opened in 1967



Glory Days

The debut of the modern Valley General Hospital on 180th Street in November of 1969

prompted congratulatory messages from around the nation. Senator Warren Magnuson wrote that “no area is more deserving of the newest techniques in medicine and hospital care which will now be possible than your area, which has given the United States so much in the way of new air and space technology.”

The congressman wasn't exaggerating. Throughout the 1960s the technical innovations taking place in Renton and Southeast King County were steadily earning the world's regard. Boeing boomed into the jet and space age with commanding roles in NASA's Apollo program, Lunar Rovers, AWACs, the Supersonic Transport (SST), hydrofoils, and many other inventions. The result was an influx of jobs, people, housing, confidence, and optimism.

Another Renton company was responsible for one of the icons of the age, the Space Needle. Built to highlight the 1962 World's Fair, the Needle is supported by steel manufactured at Pacific Car & Foundry. Later renamed PACCAR, the international firm would also supply the steel for the World Trade Center.

The Space Needle had a unique link to Valley. Longtime hospital board member and Renton resident Don Jacobson worked on its construction. Jacobson would also help plaster the interiors of the new Valley General, following in the footsteps of his father, who performed similar assignments for Renton Hospital.

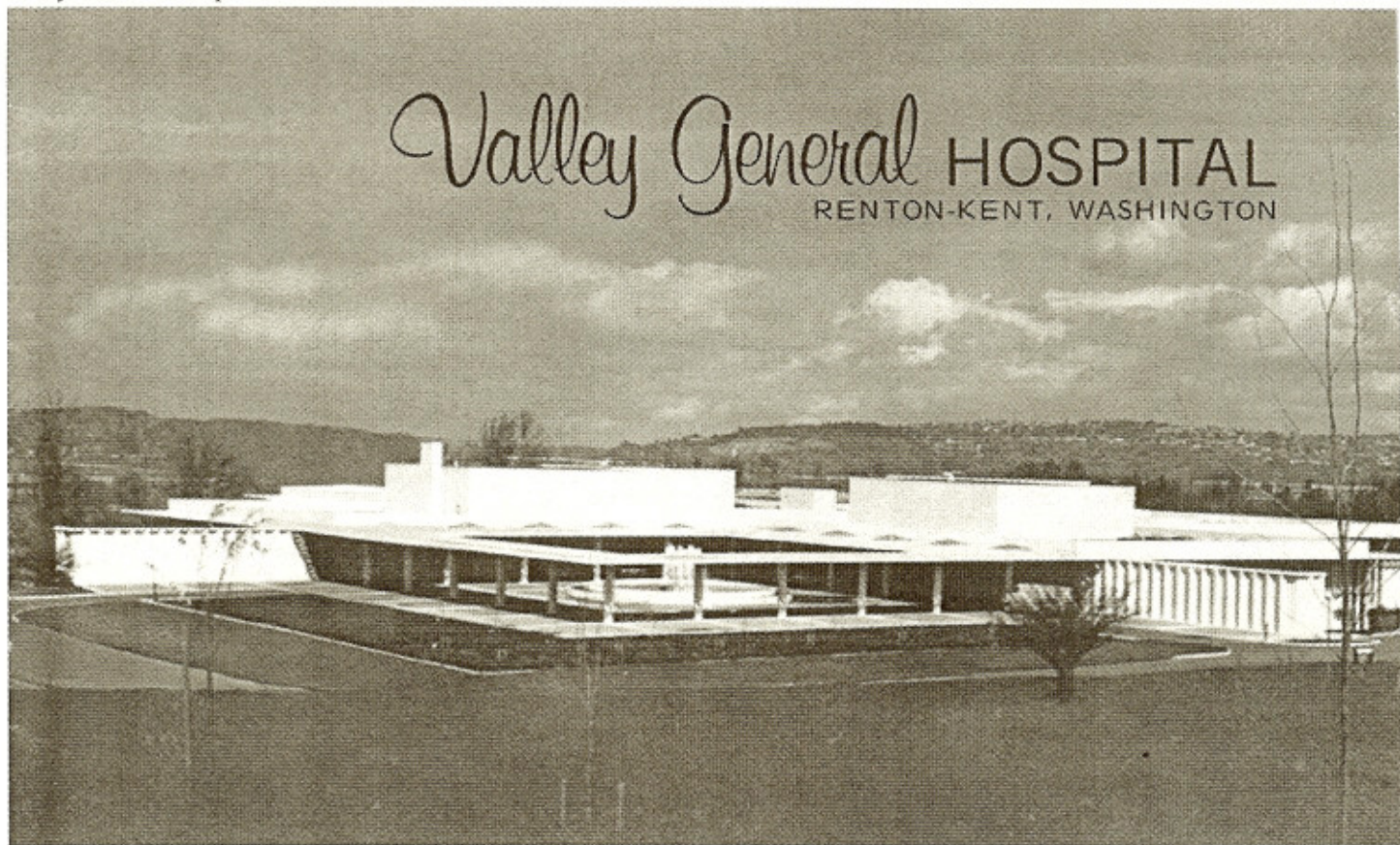
Jacobson recollected that the look of the new 254-bed hospital sparked widespread interest. While much attention centered on architectural distinction, the opening signified a great deal more to local residents. “For many of us this represented an incredible step into the future. We'd grown from a small country facility into a modern medical center that could compete with anybody in the region,” Jacobson said.

The building introduced all manner of technology and equipment. Gases and oxygen were piped in. Doctors carried portable radios to eliminate cacophonous loudspeakers. Elaborate monitoring systems, closed-circuit television, and security measures were added. Numerous automated processes were developed. The building was air-conditioned and totally fireproofed. There was an efficient heating system and pneumatic waste disposal.

The choice of architect was another example of the hospital's evolving standards. Edward Durrell Stone was arguably the most famous designer in the world, celebrated for his work on the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, the National Geographic Headquarters, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the American Embassy in New Delhi. While Stone earned international kudos for those projects, the Renton hospital continued a new chapter in his artistic life, according to scholar Robert Skolmen, of Palo Alto, California.

“By the 1960s Stone had really tired of architecture on a cold, immense scale. He took a drive across the country and was disturbed by what he saw. He felt Americans were desecrating their beautiful natural landscape with ugly sprawl and overdevelopment. That perspective changed the way Stone looked at the practice of architecture. Now he believed it ought to take advantage of natural materials and wooded sites.”

Valley General Hospital



Stone had written that architecture was becoming too serious and that it should instead please people. The approach was precisely what Valley administrator William Murray and the boards of commissioners were looking for. They'd already visited and admired a Stone hospital in Monterey, California. What they saw expressed their own convictions about patient comfort, uplifting design, soaring spaces, and the role of art. The idea that healing should happen in a soothing environment is common in 2005. But it was visionary in the 1960s.

Voters had the chance to see a model of the Valley Hospital design before they passed a \$7 million bond issue in 1967. Architecture critics - and the public - were united in their enthusiasm for the single rooms, 80 skylights, and tranquil outlooks over landscaped gardens. The building captures some of Stone's best ideas, Skolmen believes. "The pergola at the entrance, the fountains, the slotted overhangs that play with shadowed light - these are found in his most famous structures." Fountains have remained a mainstay at Valley, where several have been added since Stone's time.

His embrace of a softer style wasn't the only thing different about Stone. The imperious personality of the past had also dissipated. Murray remembered Stone as cooperative and down-to-earth, accessible and helpful to the community and to the hospital staff.

The reaction to Stone's architecture was immediate and similar to the response that recently greeted Rem Koolhaas's Downtown Seattle Library opening. Murray estimated "over 12,000 people" toured Valley Hospital in its first days of operation. Within a year the members of the hospital medical staff had grown from 43 to 184, including a neurosurgeon.

Unfortunately, neither the community of Renton nor Stone would live atop a pinnacle for long. Within three years, Stone's business had all but evaporated. Reverses at Boeing—combined with a national economic downturn - forced the loss of more than 50,000 jobs. And the Puget Sound region would plunge into a deep recession lasting for much of the 1970s.

As for the hospital, it was renamed Valley Medical Center in 1984. VMC weathered the fluctuating conditions as it had other challenges. Leadership remained stable. In fact, since 1945 there have been only four administrators: Charlotte Dowler, J.C. Lund, William Murray, and Rich Roodman. Foundations laid in early decades sustained the hospital through the introduction of Medicare, uncertain finances, and demographics that were ever changing.

The Road Ahead

The Valley ER didn't rate much space in newspaper articles touting the 1969 opening. (Some stories expressed more interest in the workings of a pneumatic waste-disposal system.) Within just a few years, however—again fueled by advancements originating in King County—the quality of emergency services would take an exponential leap. Emergency care would evolve from a medical afterthought to a distinct practice, one with its own physician board specialty.

Emergency care was provided at Valley from the institution's earliest days, but the service wasn't offered around-the-clock until the hospital moved to 180th Street. Quarters at the Renton Hospital were cramped but they at least included an ambulance bay, where the number of auto-accident victims began to increase during boom-time war years. When the area's population had stabilized in 1953 and 1954, around 3,200 local residents sought care in the Valley ER. In 1972 staff worried about "growth pains," because 16,000 individuals came for emergency care. In 1979 the number would be 38,000; by 1985 the total had climbed to 50,000 patients.

Valley's ER growth can't be measured just in terms of technical expertise, or even the number of patients treated. Like most of the nation's emergency departments, it has watched the scope of its responsibilities expand. Disaster preparation wouldn't have been conceivable in the Bronson era. Yet by the late-1950s this burgeoning field had been added to the list of public expectations. Valley staff routinely conducts drills in anticipation of earthquakes or other types of catastrophe. National emergency leaders are already formulating plans should the 2005 flu season worsen, aware of its likely intense effects on local ERs.

Beginning in the 1970s the quality of emergency care also rose in the prehospital setting. Historically, a victim's survival was completely dependent upon proximity to a medical center. But led by Drs. Leonard Cobb and Michael Copass, these odds were about to change. The two King County physicians believed that firefighters could be enlisted to perform life-saving techniques at the scene of accidents. The first class was trained at Harborview in 1970. The advances of Medic One—which has been affiliated with Valley for many years—were further magnified by another Puget Sound-area invention, the portable defibrillator. Patient survival rates now benefit from an integrated modern system, one that includes many levels of care.

Intubation to clear the airway, defibrillation to restart the heart: these valuable tools weren't previously available outside medical institutions. Their use in the field or en route to hospitals has dramatically improved emergency care, according to Kent Battalion Chief Paul Wright. But Wright, a veteran of 18 years of local EMS service, hastens to point out "the most miraculous work in the field can be to no avail if the hospital lacks crucial resources, equipment, training or staff."

Even if they survived the journey, yesterday's heart-attack patients might spend a week awaiting diagnosis and treatment. Explains Valley ER manager Kayett Asuquo, RN, "that's no longer the case. We call the period between the incident and treatment the 'door-to-balloon time.'" At Valley, this can be as short as minutes. Overall, our average is significantly under the national time."

Patients who have suffered heart attacks will be rushed into Valley ER's catheterization lab, which clears arteries. Asuquo describes her team's seamless clinical activity as "not unlike the actions of a symphony orchestra. It's the sort of instinctive speed that results from years of training and practice."

Will tomorrow's patients receive the same focused care? Asuquo expresses concerns based on the amount of growth. "In 2003 Valley emergency staff treated 75,000 people. The prediction for 2010 is 110,000. And a greater percentage of these patients will require the highest levels of care because our population overall is aging."

The last time the voters of Public Hospital District Number 1 approved funds to improve the emergency department was in 1977.

Asuquo is confident experienced emergency teams will continue to bring their best efforts to bear. "I do worry about how we will still meet the challenge if our resources stay the same. How tightly can we stretch the margin of safety and still achieve excellent results? None of us wants to see the margin stretched too thin."

Editor's Note: The endnotes and citations for this article were not included on purpose because of the length. Anyone interested in obtaining those can write or call the museum and we'll mail you a copy.



**Happy New Year
from the Renton
Historical
Museum Staff!**

Renton Museum Report

By Steve A. Anderson, Museum Supervisor

Relevance. Webster's Dictionary defines it as something that has consequence, importance, bearing, weight and significance. This past Veteran's Day, the Renton History Museum attained a measure of that significance for the 160+ members, guests and patrons who vetted the new "World Wars" exhibit.

For the record, as a staff we have struggled under the oppressive weight of the 15,000+ object Custer Collection since the beginning of 2001. This burden is lessening year by year as the staff slowly digests the varied elements within that set, and compares it to what we have in our permanent collections. For a museum of this size to deal internally with such a massive influx of materials created a crisis of sorts, and this situation has unfortunately presented to the public an appearance of inactivity – which was again borne out in the City's recent survey of its citizens.

But "relevance" is to become our watchword for 2005. The Museum's staff is preparing work plans to bring relevance to everything we do, be it exhibitry, collections work, public programming or mission related activities. I'm sure those who have visited the Museum since The World Wars exhibit opened in November can attest to that direction. The exhibit is an intimate, hands-on, interactive, named-filled recognition of the lives that Renton lost in both conflicts. It is also a testament to those who placed themselves in harms way to bring peace once again to the world.

With the retirement of our long time archivist Stan Greene, we find ourselves using the many different items, collections and cataloguing systems devised by those who began the Museum years ago – without the benefit of their presence. From the records they have left behind, we must now organize a singular and accessible system that shares "intellectual control" between a number of us here on staff. If we are successful, the shared knowledge will also be transferable to future staff members and patrons. With this "transportable" data comes controlled growth and a greater ability to apply the materials held to mission related projects – thus relevance comes into play again.

The World Wars exhibit process began in early 2004 with a thorough review of our military holdings, and those of the Custer Estate. Our Collections Manager Laura Crawford and UW intern Sarah Iles accomplished this internally. Their careful work revealed extreme shortfalls in some areas and vast excesses in others. The surplus of 15 WW I helmets countered the vacuum of accoutrement, boots, weaponry and other materials necessary to mount a good exhibit on the subject. Timely deaccessions of the surplus items and investment in acquiring the necessary missing pieces, filled out the collection to a point that we could actually mount an exhibit capable of telling and showing a story.

By October, we met as a staff to determine if we had enough to pull it all together. I found everyone eager to team up and show what we had to offer to the general public. So began the process of borrowing heavily from the Century-to-Century, the Renton at War traveling exhibit, and various other surplus cases and acrylic pieces. From this atypical group of sources, we managed to pull together a \$25,000 exhibit for less than \$6,000. Tom Monahan was able to locate several necessary pieces on Ebay, while Park Avenue Antiques owner "Andy" Anderson provided several important pieces and acted as our "militaria" expert. The in house artistic expertise of Doug Kyes added greatly to the WW I trench scene (shown below) and the flight simulator was reactivated as a "dog fight" simulator, bringing a much needed "hands on" element to the exhibit. McLendon Hardware pitched in with materials, and if you've seen the exhibit, you know the outcome.



The space we pirated for installing the exhibit had previously featured the history of Renton in the 1940's, but it focused largely on "home front" activities and subjects, and was light on artifacts. Another portion dealt with the school system. The Boeing exhibit was positioned exactly where it needed to be, but upgrades would make it better as well.

Along with the Board's fund-raising committee, Dorota Rahn's volunteer corps also jumped in on preparations for the event and helped with invitations, set up and clean up before and after the event.

I think that having exhibit openings such as this, brings relevance to the subjects they present, the site that brings them into fruition, and the people that are connected to that history. With "relevance" as our watchword, I'm certain that you'll be seeing more of this activity in the near future.

Again, my thanks for ongoing support of your Renton History Museum and Society, and season's greetings from the entire staff.

Cheers,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "Steve A. Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Exhibit opening - World War I Section



World War II Exhibit Opening

The staff of the Renton Historical Museum and the member of the Renton Historical Society wish to thank the following sponsors for the contributions to the developing of this exhibit.



Exhibit Opening - Patty Law & Don Persson



Exhibit Opening - Louise George & Daisy Ward

Doug Kyes

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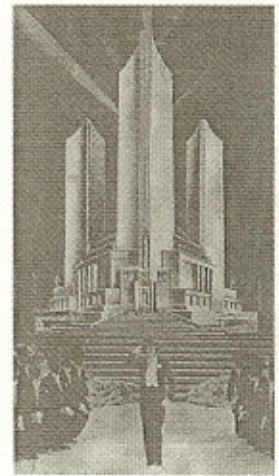
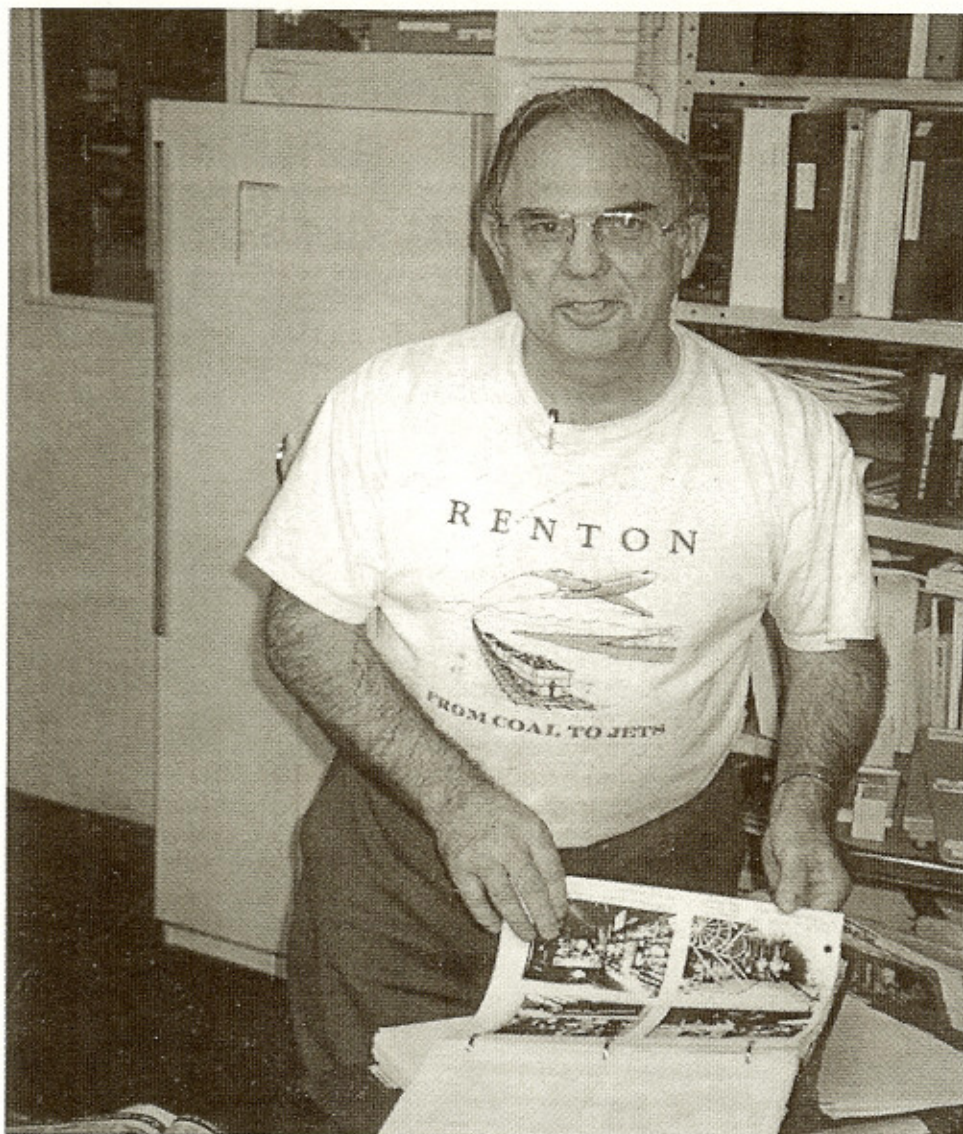


Exhibit Opening - Bob Hunt and James Wilhoit



Thank you Stan.



On October 19, the Renton Historical Society and Museum had a small retirement celebration for Stan and Rose Mary Greene who have given much time and energy to the Society and Museum these past 20 years. Rose Mary had already retired from the museum a few years ago but now Stan decided to join her. For 20 years he was a museum volunteer and his work represented exactly what the word volunteer should stand for: passion and commitment.

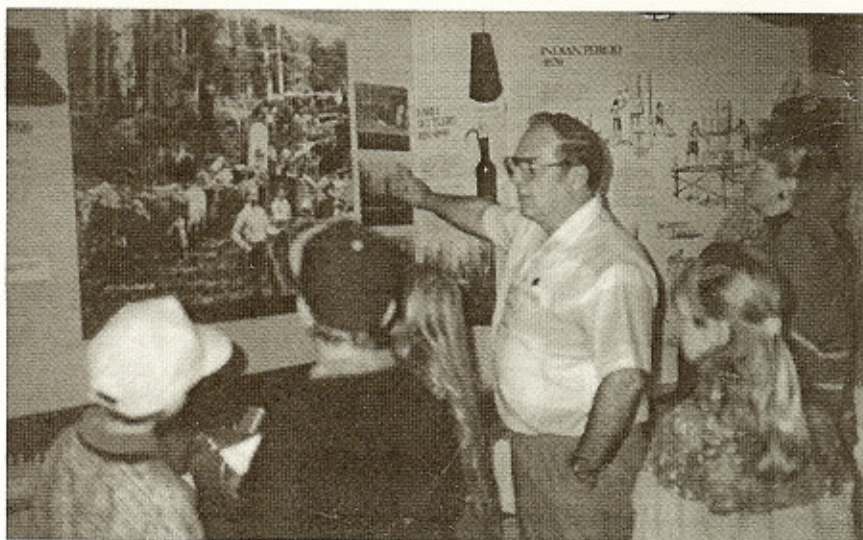
Stan was one of the past presidents of the Renton Historical Society. The history of Renton was and still is his great passion. He is the only person in the museum who can answer all kinds of questions about Renton without needing to search different sources. He has already read everything available and he talked to everybody he could in the past. There is no name of a person or street in Renton he doesn't know about. He is a living encyclopedia of the greater Renton area. The problem for people working in the museum is how to transfer his 20 years of

knowledge and experience into a written and easily accessible form. How can you do it effectively? You can not!

Stan spent thousands of hours volunteering for the museum. On average he volunteered over than 500 hours (sometimes 1,500 hours) a year doing research, managing the collection of photographs, providing technical support, and assisting in many ways the museum director and staff.

One could say Stan is a superman for the museum. He has always helped everybody who asked him to do so, no matter if it was a research request or printer fixing assignment. He took care of all the supplies, starting with very specialized museum materials and ending with cleaning supplies. However, he was also very human in making honest mistakes for which we will remember his work through some funny incidents.

One can not sum up in one sentence his 20 years with the Renton Historical Society and Museum. During the retirement party those people who have worked with him closely, currently and in the past, tried to show him their appreciation for what he has done. We had a very nice time recollecting Stan's achievements and listening to him speak about his work as well. Stan mentioned he will still be coming to the museum from time to time after coming back from his annual trip South in the winter. His passion and commitment are greater than his desire to enjoy well deserved rest. Thank you Stan for everything.



Happy Holidays!!!

Membership Rates Increased

By Patricia Law, Chair, Membership Committee

Within the past month, the Renton Historical Society Board voted to raise annual membership dues for 2005. This was a difficult decision to make and it involved a good deal of research and discussion. One aspect of that research revealed that total dues received did not cover the costs associated with the membership program.

Our membership dues have not changed since 1996, and with the continued increase in operating expenses (i.e., postage, envelopes, paper, event supplies), we felt it necessary to increase our dues slightly to help defray some of these rising costs.

The Membership Committee researched the dues structures of other historical societies of our size in Washington. We found that our membership dues are some of the lowest in the state. The current dues increase brings us in line with other historical societies of our size that provide the same benefits.

We are currently working on furthering the preservation of Renton's heritage while also completing the new Mezzanine project, which we plan to unveil in 2005. We are also working on ideas to increase activities for our membership and provide fun ways to fund raise and get connected with our members.

2005 Membership Rates

Student/Teacher/Senior	\$12
Senior Citizen Couple	\$20
Single	\$20
Family	\$30
Patron Benefactor	\$100
Lifetime Membership	\$1,000

**One time fee. Lifetime Memberships will be transferred to the living spouse.*

We appreciate your continued support in preserving Renton's past for future generations to enjoy. And we look forward to seeing you at future events sponsored by the Renton Historical Society.

The 2004 Holiday Party for members of the Renton Historical Society and volunteers of the Museum took place on Tuesday, December 7th at the Carco Theater. The day was very cold and rainy and the weather visibly jeopardized the party. However, there were about 80 guests present out of 120 who signed up. Their courage was rewarded in many ways.

The hors d'oeuvres prepared by the Volunteer Committee were delicious. Meatballs, cheese, fruit and homemade desserts were served with a juicy punch. The food was topped with a performance by HeartBeat. The singing group of four fabulous voices performed syncopated swing, jazz, tender ballads, traditional barber-shop, and an impressive collection of holiday favorites. Steve Anderson, the museum Director, was even called on the stage to be a rich guy for Sonja Mejlaender, one of the singers and Community Relations Specialist at the Mayor's office, who tried to convince him to buy her lots of very expensive Christmas presents. Our sources report that he is still thinking about it.

The guests left in the holiday mood shortly after the performance, to buy more Christmas presents, write more cards, and do the other Holiday stuff that keeps everybody very busy every year between Thanksgiving and Christmas. Hope-

fully this newsletter will find you relaxing and having some quiet time to read it. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!!!



Holiday Party - The Crowd



Holiday Party - Norma Lee Jones, Clark Petersen and Shaw Jones



Holiday Party - Bea Mathewson, Carrie Bergquist, Laura Clawson

New Memberships

Members

Ralph Dockham
Mike Cooper
Patricia Brown
Cameron & Chris Blake
Sandra Meyer
Donna Baxter
Jerrilynn Hadley
Jim & Gloria Sepal
George & Lillian Poff
Don Hemenway Family

Benefactor

Tom Leonard

Life

Gift of Life Membership
to Homer and Bunny Venishnick
from Olga Azzola

Contributions

Kevin & Norma McQuiller

Boeing Gift Matching Program

Basil Simpson

United Way King Co.

John Thompson
Greg Bergquist
Bob Hunt

Endowment

Lloyd & Fumiko Hoshide with
Boeing Gift Matching

\$1000 - Mezzanine Project

Ila Hemm

Honoring Loraine Custer's Birthday

Madelene Zanatta
Wilma Dallosto
Eddie & Angie Della Rosa
Mr. & Mrs. Dan Sarunich
Jean Franceschina

Obituaries

(August - November)

Francesco "Frank" Caniparoli
Doris (White) Hagen
William (Bill) Diambri
Maxine Vanderford
Jeffrey L. Ralph
Alice M. Shay
William Bingham
Dorothy Delo - Charter member
Jerilyn Willits
Shirley Andrews Scappini
James Mac Montgomery
Leland Staben
Margaret Clymer Cooper
Mildred Berend
Robert "Bob" Karinen
Wallace Ellingson
Leonard Davidson
Steven Sampson
James Bradbury Jr.
Curtis Holt Jr.
Richard Doddridge
Elinor Zappalo

John Hiles
Gerda DuBois
Sam Zerwoodis
Bernice Lewandowski
William Stidham
Irma Ballard
Terrance Sweet
Ralph Ozura
John Caraccioli
Marie Crew Norman
Doreen Smith
Kenneth Satterlee
Lillian Carlson Weber
Frances "Bunny" Venishnick
Mary Wolfe
Harvey Cole
Grace Maresh
Doris Shaw
John Livingston Jr.
Evelyn Fuller
Annelle Gosset Perry
Leroy Hokenson

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/Teacher Individual(\$12) _____
 - Senior Individual (\$12) _____
 - Individual (\$20) _____
 - Senior Couple(\$20) _____
 - Family (\$30) _____
 - Patron Benefactor (\$100) _____
 - Business (\$40+) _____
 - Corporate (\$1000+) _____
 - Life (\$1000) *One Time Only* _____
 - General Fund Donation _____
 - Endowment Fund Donation _____
- In Memory of: _____

Total enclosed: _____

Rentonians Remembered



denotes former Society Life Member



denotes former Society member

Leno Azzola

Homer & Bunny Venishnick

Zafira Azzola

Homer & Bunny Venishnick

Marie Belmondo

Anonymous



Mildred Hilliker Berend

Renton High School Class 1944

Angelo Busato

Jim & Fran Bourasa

Virginia Shook Busato

Jim & Fran Bourasa

Frank Caniparoli

Florence Delaurenti; Louise George; Mike Rockey; Beth & Mike Potoshnik; Katie Gilligan; Roy & Angie Malmassari; Homer & Bunny Venishnick

Joe Carbonatto

Robert & Gilda Youngquist

Bill Cocanower

Catherine Rutkowski

Margaret Cooper

Katie Gilligan

Anthony Culjak

Homer & Bunny Venishnick

Dorothy Wiberg Delo

Wilma Dallosto



Bill Diambri

Mr. & Mrs. Al Armstrong

Doris White Hagen

Katie Gilligan; Robert Gilligan, M.D.

Wayne Madsen

Anonymous

Ida Martin-Pierce

Verna Koshak; Jim & Debbie Koshak

Lottie Lewis Neely

Betty Sipila

Ellen White Pope

The Rose Turner Service Guild



William Richards

Mike Rockey

Mary Subic Rowe

George & Frances Subic



Shirley Scappini

Rose Camerini; Carmel & Don Camerini; Carrie & Greg Bergquist; Katie Gilligan; Homer & Bunny Venishnick



Laura Shook

Jim & Fran Bourasa



Felix B. Tajon

Ruth Tajon

Don Telquist

John & Eleanor Bertagni

Ralf Twedt

Class of 1944 Renton High School

Maxine Weeks Vanderford

Renton High School Class 1944; Homer & June Dolen; Audrey Weeks Storey Wallington

Frances "Bunny" Venishnick



Beth & Mike Potoshnik; Vivian Cook; Louise George; Florence Delaurenti; Louise Bertozzi; Peter & Hazel Newing; Lila Houser; Don & Carmel Camerini; John & Charlotte Cline; George & Margie Coder; Louie & Pam Barei; Ninfa Gregoris; Fred & Pauline Carpine; Madeline Donckers; Robert & Gilda Youngquist; John & Eleanor Bertagni; Jack & Katherine Ryan; Pauline Kirkman; Grace Giuliani Storwick; George & Frances Gambini; Wilma Dallosto; Dorothy Caniparoli; Gloria Nichols & family; Larry & Gaille Pollard; Bob & Betty Minkler; Ralph & Alice Drew; Dorothy Moore; Manio & Ann Phillips; Carrie & Greg Bergquist; Willis & Dorothy Wurdeman; Jean & Attilio Franceschina; Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth Loch; Betty Kilner; Linda, Dave, Ashley & Andrea Moore; Richard & Anne Butko; the Bucher family; Robert & Roberta Logue; Renton Lions Club; C. Floyd Hughes; Wyman & Vicki Dobson; Donald & Pearl Burrows

George H. Williams

Tom & Helen Stanlick; Homer & Bunny Venishnick



Memorials - \$100 and Over

Lois Anderson

Glenn H. Anderson



Jerome V. Fauli

Scott & Gaye Fauli McClellan



Frances "Bunny" Venishnick

Manio & Ann Phillips



Centennial Snapshot



The baby at left is John Riley Burrows. Born May 24, 1910. This photo was taken when he was 8-1/2 months old and belongs to Margaret Lewis.

If you have any information to share on Mr. Burrows, please contact the Renton Historical Museum at 425.255.2330.

Special thanks to
Valley
Medical
Center
for sponsoring this
edition of the
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Renton.
Ahead of the curve



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