

West Klickitat County Historical Society

Newsletter

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Gorge Heritage Museum 202 East Humbolt, Bingen, WA.

The Open Season for the Museum is from Memorial Day weekend (May) to October 12. The Museum hours are from 11:30 AM to 4:30 PM Thurs-Sun. Tours may be scheduled during the off-season or for closed days by calling 509-493-3228 or 509-493-1349 and requesting a visit.

Newsletter Staff:

Editor/Writer – Geneva Meyers

Webmaster/Publisher – Jim Farrell

Message from the President

Hi everyone. Just a few quick notes to let you know what we've been up to. In November we held our Annual Board Meeting. The revised and updated by-laws were voted on and approved. All the hard work of the Board Members in the effort is greatly appreciated.

The December meeting was cancelled due to snow. The ballots for 2009 Board Member candidates will be mailed before the end of December. The election will take place in January.

Initial planning was begun and several meetings were held concerning the possibility of having a Home Tour this coming summer. This has been a great fundraiser

in the past. To make this happen we need at least 12 more volunteers before the January meeting. If volunteers do not come forward the tour will be cancelled. If you would like to help out please contact me at cccs@gorge.net or 509-493-1349 or Chairperson, Peyt Turner, at peyt@gorge.net or 541-490-2574.

Finally, I would like to wish everyone a Happy Holiday Season! Judy Farrell

Thoughts from the Editor

Happy 2009 !! Hope all has gone well for you this Holiday Season. It seems that we just recently passed the much dreaded *Millennium*, and the years have been whisking along at a rapid rate.

I would indeed be remiss if I did not mention the sad loss, this past year, of a dear friend of the community as well as a major benefactor to our Museum, Mary Hoyt Stevenson. She loved her community and shared immensely in its growth. She is a dear Soul who will be fondly remembered by all who knew her (or about her). We are greatly appreciative for all she has done for us, in Klickitat County, helping to preserve our heritage for generations to come. She was a native Washingtonian, and a wonderful Benefactress, whose interests and generosity ranged statewide and beyond.

In our West Klickitat County Historical Society By-Laws it states that the purpose of our organization is "To disseminate historical information by identifying and marking historical buildings, sites and trails." Thus....during my conversation with a local lady, regarding the location of an old-timer's residence, she mentioned the 141 Alternate. I replied, "Oh, the Underwood Cut-Off.?" She said, "Is that what it's called? I just know it as the 141 Alternate." (note: also marked as 141 Spur)

Thoughts from the Editor cont.....

I don't suggest that this description be removed, but would like to propose that a sign with **Underwood Cut-Off** be added to preserve its historical name. I was pleased to note that the Dock Grade name remains on that historic road, and would like to see the Cut-Off name preserved, also.

I recently attended a meeting of Society Members to help plan for another Home Tour this coming summer. We do need more interested people to make this work. This meeting was at the home of Peyt Turner who has volunteered to 'Head' this special tour of bluff homes. She gave us a tour of her home which is the previous home of our late, great historian, Keith McCoy. It was a most interesting tour, and certainly further 'piqued' my interest in a home tour. Can we get some of you, out there, to join us in our efforts to put together a successful 2009 Home Tour? If so, please contact Judy (as she mentioned in her President's address) or Peyt@gorge.net I recall Keith talking about his 'ever changing view' at this home, and believe me, it's fantastic! For those of you who visited this home while the McCoy's resided there, you should join our home tour to see the interesting and lovely remodeling that the Turner's have done to make the home their own.

West End Ramblings

Jim Tindall

This could be the beginning of something wonderful with your help. I was asked by the historical society to contribute to this newsletter with articles on local history. As I reflected on this, I soon realized too much of what might be written would in fact, be little more than regurgitation of original history from Keith McCoy.

So, to please both Keith and me, I am seeking your help. In the coming year I would like to write four pieces under the column title of West End Ramblings in which you, the reader, call or write or email me with tidbits that would help meet my obligations to the museum and its historical society.

These four pieces are tentatively titled, "Tales of Water Witchers", "Yellow Jacket Disasters", "Loggers of Extraordinary Strength and Agility", and "Snowstorms of Mythical Proportions."

Any facts or anecdotal narrative would be welcome

and useful in writing such a column. I am available by email at tindallj@embarqmail.com, or by phone at 493-2495, or by mail at 199 Oak Ridge Road, White Salmon, WA. 98672.

Please spread the word, let your neighbors know. Advise your loved ones who are tellers of true tales. Encourage grandma and the elders to give me fodder.

Here's another list of history trivia questions for you who are local history *buffs*:

Local History Trivia Quiz

- 1) Who was the first librarian for White Salmon's first community library?
- 2) Who organized the first funeral home in White Salmon?
- 3) Who was the first White Salmon based state senator (1940-1980)?
- 4) What White Salmon resident was elected to the Washington State legislature in 1938?
- 5) Who were the proprietors of the early, silent film theater, the Leo Theater?
- 6) Where is the highest geographical point in Klickitat County?
- 7) What's the name of the lake formed by the John Day Dam?
- 8) What's the name of the lake formed by the Dalles Dam?
- 9) What Klickitat County town is the "self-proclaimed" Blue Bird Capitol of the World?
- 10) What Klickitat County town was previously named Fallbridge?

How did you do? Check out the answers to be found on the last page.

Henry Balsiger Remembers.....

his brother, Joseph Richard Balsiger, who was born to Henry L. and Pauline (Hearn) Balsiger on November 8, 1943. Joe was raised in White Salmon and graduated from Columbia High in 1963. He passed away in 2008.

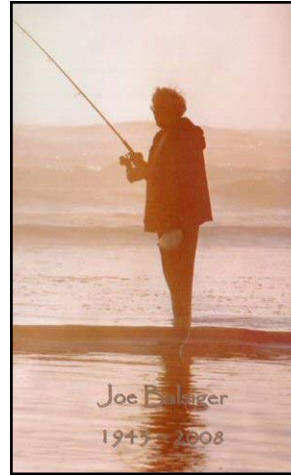


Joseph Richard Balsiger 1949 being the younger brother, Joe was being chased. After running around the yard, Joe came upon the idea to hide in the outhouse. Remember this was about 1946, so Bingen did not have a sewer system. Closing the door, Joe thought he was hidden. I had seen him close the door and proceeded to open it. Upon opening the door, Joe, standing on the bench seat said, "One more step and I jump!" I took the step and Joe jumped! Picture two small hands and the top of Joe's head showing through the open hole.

Needless to say, the Balsigers did not go to town that day.

Joe and His Fashion Statement: (from niece Julie Owen) Julie would come spend some of her summers with Joe and family. Tracey, Lisa and Julie would want something for Heidi's; and would ask Joe to take them. Joe's fashion statement would be similar to the following – High boots with even higher socks. Cut-offs and a ragged shirt. Joe, also, had a full head of hair, and when not wearing a hat, his hair was quite wild. Upon reaching Heidi's, Joe would head for the door. One of the following would happen to the girls. Either they would jump out first and run to the door of Heidi's before Joe had 'turned off' the car, OR they would hide below the windows until Joe had gotten inside, then proceed to go calmly inside. As one remembers being a teenager, we know that sometimes we wished to not be seen with a parent.

Joe always had great Halloween costumes, too. Joe's pickup was stolen once; and unknown to the thieves, it contained a coffin, used in a Halloween skit. When found, Joe had some explaining to do. Fortunately he worked for the City of White Salmon and got some help from them.



Joe's Fishing Worms For Sale:

Help yourself to the worms, leave money in the jar, was the way that Joe's sale would be handled. Worms were kept in the refrigerator on the porch of the house. Worms were gotten from any yard that Joe wished to use. Usually in the City parks, about midnight, one could find Joe and members of his family hunting worms by flashlight. Many of you readers may have used this method, also, or used Joe's Worm

Store. One day Randy had come home to get worms. To someone's surprise, the first person to open the door of the Worm Store that day had found a Large Worm, IE – a rattlesnake. It was not alive, but that did not matter. As one who lives in this area, we all know that word travels quickly. After the Big Worm was removed, sales continued briskly, but the door was opened ever so carefully.

Joe and The Apple Cider: Joe and his buddies decided to make apple cider. Each had their own jar or jars to take home with them. John LaFollette may have his own version of this story. Joe put his jar under his bed. To the jar of cider was added raisins, believing this would help turn the cider hard. Tasting was done from time to time, I am told by John. The cider did not taste very good, so it must take time to harden. Being Joe, he got to doing other things and seemed to forget to loosen the lid on the jar. While at school, one day, the jar blew its top! Imagine, if this were to happen under a bed at your home, what a MESS!!! Mom probably had words for Joe, but it was not mentioned....very often.



A Tribute to Mary Hoyt Stevenson

by Etta Hepner



Gorge Heritage Museum lost a special friend and member on November 7, 2008.

Mary Stevenson was a very giving individual and was most generous with our museum. This summer she gave the museum a computer system and museum software for our collections. Her generosity will make our collection available to

anyone who wishes to research our files. With four terminals, guests will be able to search and read the information we have, as well as request copies of our pictures and other printed matter for a nominal fee. Her Gift will continue to give for years to come.

The New Computer File System

Etta Hepner

Have you ever wondered what the Museum has in its files? Do we have something about you, your relatives, your neighbor, perhaps a picture or a copy of your birth announcement?

Our Museum collects information about people, places, businesses, special events, festivals and many other happenings that help to make Western Klickitat County and Eastern Skamania County the unique areas they are today. Our Collection goes back over the past 150 years.

In the summer of 2008 we acquired a computer system through a donation from the Mary Hoyt Stevenson Foundation. Three of the terminals will be available to the public to do historic research.

We need help in getting all the information into the system so everyone can view it. Not only will one be able to see all of the pictures in our collection, but can also view photos of the objects in our collection. So, when family members come to the Museum, they are able to see objects that a relative donated, years before.

Henry Balsiger has scanned more than 27,000 photos to add to our system. You just might be in one of those pictures! In addition, we have taken pictures of

all the items that have been donated to our collection. That information is, also, being entered into our database.

I am asking for volunteers to donate at least six hours a month for the next six months to help us input all of this information into the system. If you can type, we can use your help. It is actually fun and very interesting to see what people have collected to add to the puzzle of the history of this area.

Currently we have one person doing 20 hours per week and others when they can. However, I need to schedule more people so that this project can be completed by the summer of 2009. One is not left alone, while working on this. I will be there to assist when you have questions. One does not have to be concerned about deleting something important. The program protects itself.

Please call the Museum at 493-3228, and leave a message if you would like to offer your services. Tell us when you will be available. This could be one of the most interesting tasks that you have undertaken in a very long time.

*It's that time of year, once again, to
pay your membership dues....*

(See Application on back page)

*We'd like to thank all of the Members
for their membership and other contribu-
tions which help in keeping our local
heritage alive for future generations.*

*We hope to see you at our next
meeting on*

Wednesday, January 28, 2009

*at the Gorge Heritage Museum
7:00 PM*

Growing Up Near the SDS Mill My Memories By Doug Charters

I grew up in Bingen near the SDS Mill. As a child, I played around the mill including going to the river to fish and swim. Over the years in the 60's and 70's, the mill changed, getting larger.

The Chip system and Barge ship system expanded to the system the mill uses today. The Log Yard was always changing eventually developing in to the System used today. The Band Mill was in use with The Old Barker and Pound System with a Green Chalk to sort the lumber.

I worked in the Truck Shop in the early 80's and the Stud Mill in the mid 80's. The old Stud Mill is now the Fabrication Shop. I went to work in the woods sometimes under the Yarders, such as the Skookum, Midill and Skaget yarders (hard work).

In the late 80's and early 90's, I worked at KSDC, then known as Brownings, then back to SDS in mid 90's. The mill had changed. The new Barker Complex and Stud Mill were up and running. The Band Mill was being phased out; no more Mill Pond! The Lumber Division had new Log Vat's for the Plywood Plant, a new Dry kiln and Dry Shed.

During the last 14 years at SDS, has continued to upgrade the Plywood Plant including this winter's upgrade of the Green End. It is good to see the investment in the mill's infrastructure. This show's the Company's eye to the future.

This year, 2008, has seemed like a roller coaster ride with the up and downs, the year's good start with the economy looking good at mid year, and then all the banking problems

late this year. It slowed things some, but the Mill & Plywood Plants are still running. The management is working hard to stream line costs to keep operations profitable.

The lose of Mary (Hoyt) Stevenson is sad. She would often stop in at the Truck Shop if she had a need with her car. She was very nice lady and we will all miss her. On a good note, it is nice to see Wally & Priscilla celebrate their 90th birthdays this year.

We all are hoping 2009 will be a better economic year. The mill is running 1 shift when it usually run's a second shift. We all would like to see the employees and equipment working to capacity.

Trivia Quiz Answers

- 1) Miss Doris Aggers
- 2) Oscar & Mabel Gardner
- 3) Al Henry
- 4) Earl S. Coe
- 5) John & Ruby Lauterbach
- 6) 6,000 Ft. Indian Peak (near Goldendale)
- 7) Lake Umatilla
- 8) Celilo Lake
- 9) Bickelton
- 10) Wishram

Does anyone have an interesting story to share in regards to local history - personal or otherwise? Please submit it to the Museum to be published in a future issue of the Newsletter. We'd love to hear from you.

Gorge Heritage Museum

Print and mail this form with a check to:

West Klickitat County Historical Society
Gorge Heritage Museum
PO Box 394
Bingen, WA 98605

Museum memberships are available as follows

| | |
|-------------|--------|
| Individual | \$20 |
| Family | \$35 |
| Supporting | \$100 |
| Business | \$100 |
| Life Member | \$1000 |

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Membership \$ _____

Gift/Donation \$ _____

Total \$ _____

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P.O. Box 394, 202 East Humboldt St.
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