

# MUSEUM MEANDERINGS

A QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE LA CENTER MUSEUM ASSOCIATION

WINTER 2011

Website <http://www.thelacentermuseum.org>

B.G. Barnhart, Editor

## DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE. . .

Often as I drive across the bridge into La Center I try to imagine what the town looked like to its pioneer settlers. Of course La Center Road did not exist in the 1850's and it was another few decades before the town was platted by John Timmens and began to take shape. There was no road between Vancouver and La Center in those days. Transportation was by foot or horseback over old Indian trails. River transportation was by canoe or bateau. In June of 1870 Mr. Arnold the owner of the Swallow is reported to have made the first trip up the East Fork of the Lewis River by steamboat. John Timmens built the first boat landing on the northwest shore. It was called Timmens Landing then and throughout the entire 20th century. Old timers still refer to the location by its name.

Timmens and his brother-in-law Andrew Brezee owned adjacent homestead claims on the north shore of the river in the area of the present day bridge. Main Street began at the river's edge with Timmen's property on the west and Brezee's on the east. Sternwheeler Captain William Weir built the first house along the banks of the river and also established a trading post nearby. He also purchased the Swallow and scheduled regular passenger service to Portland in 1872. La Center -- sometimes spelled "La Centre"-- soon gained fame as Clark County's inland port.



The first bridge - a long, wooden one - built by John Peterson and opened in 1883 is pictured on the left. Peterson later built a home on the hillside above Timmens Landing. It stood there for more than 100 years. The photogravure, "Photo by Heins" titled "Washington --La Centre General View"-- appeared in *The West Shore* magazine's January 1888 edition.



In his recollections of the early days growing up in La Center, Pete Weir, Capt. Weir's son, reminisced: "La Center became a lively place due to the regular steamer service, the influx of settlers and the easy communication by water



### Directors and Officers

Dr. Barbara Barnhart  
President

Baine Wilson-Micheletti  
Vice President

Candi Irish  
Secretary

Judy Hickman  
Treasurer

Simone Auger, Director

Ed Brannfors, Director

Liz Cervený, Director

Virginia van Breemen,  
Director

Myrna Viles, Director

Jan Wilson, Director

Tom Wooldridge, Director

### Corporate Membership

J.S. Perrott & Co. Inc.

### L.C. Museum Association

33920 NW Pacific Hwy.

La Center, WA 98629

Telephone: (360) 263-3308

E-Mail [BGBLaCentr@tds.net](mailto:BGBLaCentr@tds.net)

LA CENTER HISTORICAL MUSEUM

410 West 5th Street ~ La Center, WA 98629 ~ (360) 263-6609

Open: 1st & 3rd Saturdays of each month ~ Wednesdays by Appointment



from Portland. When the original long bridge was built across the river at the place used for steamboat landings, the people would use it for promenading and footracing. At these times, Woodland would send over their fleetest runners but La Center always won, as she had young men from Portland and other places who poured into town on all those occasions."

At its peak there were more than a dozen logging enterprises in the hills east of La Center. Flumes, or water chutes, carried timber and railroad ties to the East Fork where they were loaded on scows and sent to Portland. Timmens Landing was often jammed with water traffic. A photo below shows the sternwheelers Mascot and Governor Newell waiting to load or unload passengers and freight. The scow on the left awaits railroad ties for shipment to Portland. Dockside, also, were warehouses, a trading post, flour mill and ship building and repair services.



Benjamin F. Anderson with his horse and behind him are sons Clinton and Guy, 1903



Sternwheelers and Scow



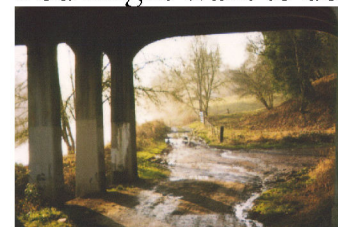
A Bustling Business District



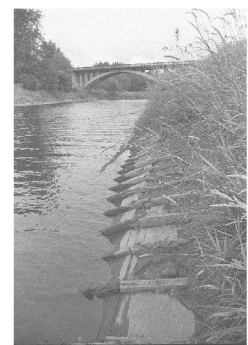
Logging Flumes on East Side

La Center's old Main Street ran in a northerly direction from the banks of the river as far as today's 4th Street. A variety of businesses lined both sides of the dirt road leading north. On the east side the River View Hotel, OK Barber Shop, Office Saloon and Livery were all built on stilts -- some as much as 12 feet in height. Near the water's edge on the west side a two story building housed a mercantile on the first floor while the upper story was used by the Patrons of Husbandry who founded the first Grange in Washington in 1874. Adjacent to the mercantile in the south end was the Lewis River Post Office and just a bit further north was Tom Headley's first blacksmith shop.

I have walked down the steps leading to Timmen's Landing -- and have also driven down the road past the sewage treatment plant, then under the bridge and parked at the boat landing -- to better envision La Center's historical footprints down by the riverside. You might want to do the same sometime. Many pilings in the water serve as a reminder



of the buildings they once supported. Another almost ghostly image is the remains of the sternwheeler Leona that caught fire in 1912 while undergoing extensive alterations. She was cut loose and drifted to the south shore of the East Fork where she burned and then sank.



The sternwheeler Leona's remains.

The "bones" of the Leona's hull can be seen during low water times in late summer. ~ B.G. Barnhart



## La Center Museum Association

### Board Members Retire

The L.C.M.A. wishes to express its sincere appreciation to five recently retired members of the Board of Directors for their dedication, talent and support. Thank you to the following:

#### Margaret Colf Hepola

Founder, Historical Resource, Benefactor,  
Service: 2004-2010

#### Janice Fillman

Founder, Organizer, Historical Resource  
Service: 2004-2010

#### Jay Cerveney

Founder, Site and Finance Committees  
Service: 2007-2010

#### Candy Falk

Pioneer Family Histories - Centennial Scrapbook  
Service: 2007-2010

#### Claudia Long

Know Your History Programs, Cemetery Tour  
Service: 2007-2010

## OUR HEART FELT THANKS

to these wonderful

**La Center Historical Museum  
DOCENTS/VOLUNTEERS**



**who served between October 16 & February 5:**

**Baine Wilso-Micheletti, Candi Irish,**

**Judy and Ken Hickman,**

**Barbara Barnhart, Wendy McGraw,**

**Pat Murphy, Sandra Bennett,**

**Myrna and Ken Viles,**

**Simone Auger and Candy Falk**

**Please contact Volunteer Coordinator Candi Irish at 921-5201 (cell) if you would like to volunteer at the Museum on a 1st or 3rd Saturday of the month from Noon -4:00p.m.**

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

### TO BEGIN TERMS

Five new members of the Board of Directors of the La Center Museum Association were warmly welcomed at the January 2011 meeting:

**Simone Auger**

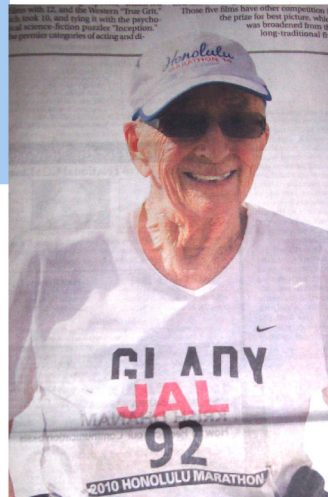
**Ed Brannfors**

**Liz Cerveney**

**Jan Wilson**

**Tom Wooldridge**

Each new Director brings to the Board his or her own special talents, leadership experience and love of La Center's history -- and ideas for sharing our city's legacy with you in the coming coming months. Please note the complete list of Officers and Directors on page one of this edition of "Museum Meanderings."



## "GLADY" MAKES HISTORY IN HONOLULU MARATHON

Her entry number and her age are one and the same -- 92! Gladys Johnson Burrill, a 1936 grad of La Center High School Class of 1936, will appear in the next edition of Guinness World Records.

Appropriately nicknamed "Glady Gladvator," she has become the oldest living woman in the world to complete the 26.2 mile race. The Honolulu Marathon was held on December 12, 2010. You can view the video of Glady's photo finish at [tinyurl.com/6ht6hqr](http://tinyurl.com/6ht6hqr).

While Gladys has lived in Prospect, OR for many years and part time in Hawaii, she returns often to her roots in La Center -- and she is a member of La Center Museum Association. Our congratulations to you Gladv Gladvator. We are so proud of you!

There is excitement in the air -- or cyberspace to be more precise!

**The La Center Historical Museum now has a website!!!**

[www.thelacentermuseum.org](http://www.thelacentermuseum.org)

**It will be up and running very soon. Web Designer Jennifer Cerveney-Miller created and organized the site from a myriad of materials provided from our collection of historical resources and in collaboration with La Center Museum Association**

**Directors Liz Cerveney and Barbara Barnhart.**

**Please visit us on-line and sign our guest book.**

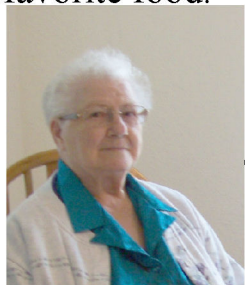
### **"DINNER TABLE FEAST FOR THE EYES"**

Last November, Betty Carpenter indicated that she would like to discuss donating a collection to the La Center Historical Museum.



The Cathlapootle Gem Club of Woodland had years ago gathered, cut and polished rocks and fossils that resembled food items that were found in Washington, Oregon, California and Utah. The Gem Club took the display on the road for many years to Rock & Mineral Shows displaying their collection on a dining room table replete with a lace tablecloth, plates, cups and saucers, serving dishes and utensils.

This unique collection is in the Museum now. You can't miss it. As you enter the building and look to your left, it appears as if a party is about to begin. The only thing missing is the delicious aroma of your favorite food.



Betty is in her late eighties and has lots of stories of people's reactions on seeing the the " Dinner Table Feast For The Eyes" at first glance. One is about a little boy and the

hamburger he just could not resist. You might ask her about it sometime. Thank you so much, Betty. The Cathlapootle Gem Club's display really "rocks!"

### **THANK YOU TO KEN AND MYRNA**

Two very special people who are dedicated to the La Center community are Ken and Myrna Viles. They always step up without hesitation. When Bette Carpenter stipulated that a cover was needed for the Cathlapootle Gem Collection Ken immediately said he would create a design for the casing. Myrna was with him every step of the way. Together they built a museum worthy case to protect the collection from dust and handling. They even found a bargain priced table on which to set the "Dinner Table Feast for the Eyes."

### **Benefactor Thank You's**

**Dr. and Mrs. William Bennett ~ \$200**

*Honoring Mayor Jim and Candi Irish*

**Dovy and Irwin C. Landerholm ~ \$100**

*Gifts are welcome at any time. If your employer offers corporate matching grants we would be happy to assist you with the application process. Call Barbara Barnhart at (360) 263-3308 or Judy Hickman at (360) 263-9060*

### **A Special February Display..**

The La Center Historical Museum will feature two Valentine collections during the month of February. The Valentines are from the Nelson and Barnhart Collections from the early 1900's.

**HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY TO ALL!**