



# Highline Historical Society News

Volume 33 Preserving the Roots of the Community October 2004

The Mission of the Highline Historical Society is to collect, preserve, exhibit and interpret the history of the Highline region and its people, and promote appreciation of the region's heritage.

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Historical Society  
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## Dorpat Examines Highline



Seventy-five members representing the Normandy Park Community Club and the Historical Society met on September 29th at the Cove to enjoy an evening with Paul Dorpat. A gifted storyteller, Dorpat gave an engaging presentation of vintage slides in the “Then and Now” format that readers have become accustomed to from his page in each Sunday’s *Seattle Times* rotogravure section.

A particularly attractive feature of this year’s presentation was the addition of slides about Burien, Normandy Park and Des Moines. A Dorpat program is always a ‘give and take’ sort of thing, with him saying, “Who knows what this is?” and

audience members answering the questions and discussing local history with one another. All in attendance enjoyed his humor and the large amount of state history that his slides covered. And everyone left having learned a few more interesting facts about the place where we live.

The Society also installed an exhibit for the evening featuring 100 mounted photographs of Burien, SeaTac and Normandy Park. The earliest photos dated from 1870. The Normandy Park photos from this exhibit are on permanent display for the public at Normandy Park City Hall.

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## From the President



The heavy fog this morning took me back to a day in 1944. I had just started high school and was able to land a job busing dishes at the New Washington Hotel dining room. I told them that I was 16, which was not true. They asked me if I was strong enough to carry trays of dishes to the dumb waiter, which transported them to the dishwasher below. I demonstrated I could so I was hired. The job hours were from 4 - 9 PM so it fit with the school schedule nicely. World War II was still in progress so the blackout of coastal cities was still in effect. The street lamps were clear light bulbs housed under corrugated metal

reflectors and were painted black except for a slit at the bottom where a small beam of light trickled out. Headlights on all vehicles were treated the same. Blackout curtains shaded windows. All this left the city quite dark. Leaving work at 9 PM on a very foggy night I was enveloped in darkness. When the bus arrived with the label reading 36 Highland Park I was happy to get aboard. I caught the bus on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue in front of the Bon Marche, heading south on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The fog grew thicker as we approached the old First Ave South bridge to get across the Duwamish River. The bridge was a two-lane affair that was secured to a turntable that was in the middle of the river. The bridge was perpendicular to the flow of the river. When opened it would rotate on the table until the entire bridge was in the middle of the river, parallel to the flow.

To get onto the bridge one took a sharp left off Michigan, up a ramp and then a sharp right turn onto the bridge. It was so foggy the driver couldn't see a yard in front of the bus. He gave one of the passengers a flashlight to guide the bus up the ramp and onto the bridge. The bus, moving at the pace of a man walking, crawled across the Duwamish and we were safely transported to the other side. The bus was always filled to capacity - standing room only - so it crawled up Highland Park Way in low gear at about 2 MPH. Highland Park Way was known as Boeing Hill by all of the locals. At the foot of the hill was Boeing Plant One where China Clippers were built.

With this little bit of history about surviving a heavy fog in Seattle in the year 1944, I am reminded that to clear our way to a new museum in 2004, we need all of you to keep working on membership. Bring a new member to us and our projects will be completed all the faster!

*Alexander G. Sasonoff*

**“Blackout curtains shaded windows.”**

*Highline Historical Society  
News*

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Comments or information  
for publication may be sent  
to Editor, at the Society  
address,  
call 206-246-6354  
or email at  
editor@highlinehistory.org

Note: The Highline  
Historical Society  
respects our donors' and  
friends' confidentiality.

We do not make our  
mailing lists available to  
other organizations.

### Upcoming Society Events & Programs

Nov. 7 - 2:00 - 4:00 PM -  
10th Annual Meeting and  
Salute to Pioneers

Jan/Feb. - Date not deter-  
mined - The Life & Times  
of General George Pickett.

Febr. 15 - New exhibit opens  
at SeaTac City Hall.

March 19th - Founders Day  
Dinner and Silent Auction.

March & April - Student  
Heritage Projects exhibited at  
the area City Halls.

Saturday, May 14 - Highline  
Garden Tour.

The Society is a proud member  
of  
Discover Burien,  
the Assn. of King County  
Historical Societies,  
the South King County  
Cultural Coalition  
the  
Washington Museums Assn.  
and the  
American Association of  
State and Local History.

Don't miss the Society's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary **Annual Meeting and Salute to Pioneers!** Join us from 2:00 – 4:00 PM on Sunday, November 7<sup>th</sup>. The subject is politics, and not only can you talk with our political panelists and learn about the ins and outs of past local political campaigns, you will have the opportunity to enjoy the Society's newest exhibit at SeaTac City Hall. SeaTac City Hall is located at 4800 S. 188<sup>th</sup> Street. Parking is free and refreshments will be served.

### **The Life and Times of General George E. Pickett - On a date yet to be determined in January or February, 2005.**

Who was the "leader of the charge" and why is he important to Washington State? Find out from Pickett himself during The Life and Times of General George Pickett. In a 2-act play, Mike Vouri, as Pickett's "ghost," playfully shares his loves, challenges and adventures during his boyhood, his time at West Point, the Mexican War, the Civil War, and his time on San Juan Island. The show, accompanied by live music, reveals the flawed character of a well known but maligned Civil War hero. It gives humorous detail of an international military dispute which took place in Washington Territory; it explores the emotional dichotomy of war from the view point of a mediocre soldier; it provides glimpses into the condition of women and Native Americans of the time; and it provides a personal perspective of the Mexican-American and American Civil wars.

### **Founders Day Dinner and Silent Auction - March 19, 2005**

Mark your calendars! The Society will again honor an individual that has contributed to preserving the history of our region, and host a dinner and auction to support the building of our new museum.

Selected Student Heritage Projects from Highline Middle Schools will be displayed at their representative City Halls during the last half of March and the first half of April.

### **Highline Garden Tour - May 14, 2005**

The Society has been asked to manage the Burien Garden Tour. We think this is a great opportunity to display gardens located all over Highline! The proceeds of this event will fund the continuing projects and programs of the Historical Society. We will be looking for volunteers to help us make this a wonderful annual event.

### **Wish List**

Can you help with any of the following items? If so, please contact the Society at 206-246-6354.

1. Good extension ladder
2. Heavy duty shelving
3. A metal file cabinet with extra-deep drawers, 14" - 15" deep
4. Good quality 35 mm camera with close-up lens, red, yellow and polaroid filters



## Oral History - Remembering Piero

*In this issue we are pleased to reprint excerpts from an Oral History interview recorded with Piero Balzarini on January 14, 2003, by Gene Pugh. Piero Balzarini passed away this summer at the age of 93.*

Piero: “I was born August 15<sup>th</sup>, 1911. We came to Seahurst when I was only a year old. My dad was going into the nursery business when we were in Seahurst. But that location was out of the traffic and it was not a good place for a business. The ground there at Seahurst was rocky. Five Corners was not named at that time, so he named it. My dad was in truck farming and orchards at Seahurst. He had fourteen acres there. Out here in Five Corners we had 10 acres, less the county road, which made it about eight. This was good ground. Over the centuries the topsoil had washed down. Yes it was good ground,... There were no other farms or nurseries over here at that time. At Sunnyside there were farms because that was good ground. The business was established in the mid-twenties. I was about 72 when I sold the business, about 1982 to Fred Konkell.

I spent two years in a Georgetown school, and then went to Lake Burien School. The first year that Highline High School was built (1923-4) I went into the eighth grade at HHS. We had three rooms of eighth graders. We had more students in the eighth grade than they had in the whole high school. My brother, **Angelo**, was in the first graduating class at Highline (1924). I think there were seven or eight students in that class.”

His son Rob: “When they first went to the Lake Burien area, there actually was no school. My uncle (Angelo) was very young, almost an infant, but they had him come to school so that they would have enough kids to get a teacher. My aunt Martha was said to be the first white child to be born in the area.”

Piero: “They had a ‘Toonerville Trolley’ that came right out to Seahurst. But the line only ran to Riverside. The kids from the whole area here went to West Seattle

High School before they built Highline High School. I was unhappy, because I thought I would be going to West Seattle, but I had to go to Highline. My brother, of course, went to West Seattle for two years. The streetcar ran on 152nd out to Seahurst, stopped at the top of the hill.

There was a grocery store at the end of the line, named **Wheeler’s**. There was a drugstore too. Actually, I don’t think we had a meat market at Seahurst at first. My dad used to go to the Pike Place market to bring in produce. So he did a lot of our shopping downtown. He used to peddle produce to people at Three Tree Point. He had a horse. At first dad used a rowboat, packed his produce on it and rowed around the Point. He sold vegetables. We used to have a lot of pie cherries, put up in ten-pound baskets and bring them in to Seattle to the market....

We had chickens, we had ducks, we had two cows a horse, Old Bob. I had it kind of easy. My brother did more chores than I did because he was older. He was three years older. But when I got older I did more than he did.

.....When I was younger, friends of ours would come out on summer week-ends. They would bring food, and they would drink some wine. And we kids would play on the beach (at Seahurst). My dad was a good wine-maker. I never did drink, still don’t. He would squash the grapes with his hands. They brought in grapes from California; Zinfandel, and different kinds of grapes. They would take two grapes and make two wines and then mix them, called marrying. They do a lot of that now, a lot of experimenting. Most of our friends lived in Seattle on Beacon Hill. Actually we did not know the Italians who lived in the White Center area. They were from a different part of Italy.”

## Recent Donations

A donation of cotton sheets from **Sally Teller Buswell** to the collections for wrapping textiles.

A donation to the collections of scrapbooks and paper materials from the estate of **Pastor Michaels** of Des Moines.

A donation to the archives of a box of educational materials dating to 1954 from **Hazel Valley Elementary School**.

A donation to the collections from **Donald Johnson** of a 1954 Highline High School parking pass.

A donation to the archives from the estate of **Loretta Gajweski** of her late husband's WWII letters, medals and military papers.

A donation to the library from **Edward Weigelt** of a copy of *The Many Roads to Highline*.

A donation to the archives from **Doris Harlacher** of copies of *Hi-Lines* dating 1939 – 1944.

A donation to the library from **Calvin Stearns** of a 1995 Highline High School alumni directory.

A donation from the **Highline High School Class of '44** reunion organizing committee of \$125 for museum operations.

A donation to the archives from the **Highline High School Class of '44** of the publications relating to their recent reunion.

A donation to the schools collections of a 1967 world globe from **John and Cyndi Upthegrove**.

A donation from **Warren Pugh** of a tool box for use in the collections work area.

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**A special thank you to  
Wizards Casino for their  
generous sponsorship of our newsletter!**



## Join The Highline Historical Society

Benefits of an annual HHS Membership Include...

- Quarterly newsletter
- Bi-Monthly E-News about heritage-related events
- Patron members receive the quarterly magazine of the Washington State Historical Society
- Free admission to Society programs
- Free admission to our future museum

### Become a Member Today

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 This application is for **new members only**.  
 Renewing members will be notified by mail.

## Red Hat Society Supports Historical Society



On Saturday, July 31st, forty two ladies of the Highline Red Hat Society joined Trustees and members of the Highline Historical Society at a fund-raising luncheon hosted at the home of Trustee Joe and wife Janet Wozniak. Salads and desserts were donated and the male members of the board served and cleaned up. Barge rides on Lake Burien were a favorite feature of the event, with the unexpected plunge into the lake of Normandy Park Councilmember Stuart Creighton providing added excitement. The proceeds of the day, almost \$4,000, went toward the Museum building account. Readers will find a collection of photos from the event on the Historical Society web site located under “Programs”. We offer a hearty “thank you” to all who attended and participated.

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## Button Exhibit Opens

On September 14, the Society opened a very interesting political exhibit at SeaTac City Hall featuring some of the political buttons owned by long-time SeaTac resident Don Speckhals. The buttons and pins exhibited represent only a small part of his extensive (30,000+ pieces) collection, which has been developed over a 70-year period and is among the largest in the country. Now retired, Mr. Speckhals is a former Air Freight Supervisor for United Airlines. The City of SeaTac and the Society thank him for sharing this collection with all of us. Members are encouraged to visit SeaTac City Hall (4800 S 188th Street) to see this exhibit. You will be sure to see familiar and long-forgotten names.



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## Solve History’s Mysteries!

Curator Micki Ryan could use more help! With the addition of a professional curator to our otherwise-volunteer staff, the Society is moving forward with correctly organizing, cataloguing and archiving the photos and papers in our collections in preparation for the move to our new museum archives. A morning at the collections is interesting, the company is great, and training is provided for anyone interested in working on a local history project. If you are available on a Tuesday or Wednesday morning through the fall and winter months and would like to learn more about our volunteer opportunities, please call Cyndi Upthegrove at 206-246-6354.

Thanks to Guy Harper for sharing this early 1936 advertising flyer with us.

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5:45 A.M.	6:00 A.M.	7:15 A.M.
7:15	7:45	9:15
8:45	8:55	11:15
10:05	11:05	1:10 P.M.
	11:00	2:15
12:05 P.M.	1:15	4:15
3:00	2:10	7:45
	4:00	8:15
5:30	4:10	8:45
	5:40	7:30
7:15	5:15	7:15
	7:55	10:40
	10:10	12:10

T - Three Tree Point Trips  
S - Seagary Heights Trips  
W - Lakeside Seagary Heights 9:30 via Three Tree Point for Seattle.

**SUNDAYS AND HOLIDAYS**

Le. Three Tree Point	Le. Kasloona	Le. Seattle
7:05 A.M.	7:10 A.M.	7:40 A.M.
9:05	9:15	10:40
10:30	11:00	12:45
	12:10 P.M.	1:15 P.M.
2:05 P.M.	2:15	4:10
4:30	5:00	7:10
6:50	7:00	7:45
8:30	8:35	7:15
	10:00	10:40
		12:10

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From the Collections



1985 – Bob Sealey, then-Superintendent of Highline Schools, visits with an unidentified student at Hazel Valley Elementary School. Can anyone identify this student?

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- Contact person changed*
- Address wrong*
- Duplicate mailing*
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