

Lacey Community Museum, Dedicated 1980



Lacey Historical Society 2018 Summer Newsletter

PO Box 3324, Lacey, Wash. 98509-3324

'To be a voice for the early citizens of Lacey, & to be their stewards protecting the historical heritage they have given to us.

Lacey Historical Society Annual Meeting & Catered Meal!

Thursday Sept. 27, 2018

Lacey Community Center - 6729 Pacific Ave., Lacey, Washington

5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Theme: This is Your Life Shirley Dziedzic!

Please join us Thursday, Sept. 27th, 2018 at the Lacey Community Center as the Lacey Historical Society honors Shirley Dziedzic for her many years of leadership and devotion to the Society.

Shirley has been a commanding presence in the Lacey Historical Society from the moment she joined it in 1986. She took on responsibilities immediately, becoming a member of the museum research committee and assuming the important role of liaison with the City of Lacey's Historical Commission. She also chaired the tree planting committee. In 1992, she joined the LHS Board of Trustees & took over the presidency from Tom Huntamer in 1994.

From then until 2010, she steered the Society through busy times, writing the content of most of the newsletters, planning the annual meeting, advocating for the preservation of historic buildings, salvaging historic items from the Old Lacey School, championing the naming of schools after early Lacey citizens, & commanding respect for herself & the Society. She relinquished some of her duties when she became co-president in 2010. She resigned her presidential duties in 2014, but at the age of 90 is still a contributing member the Board of Trustees. It is time we honored Shirley for all her contributions!

Former Lacey City Manager Greg Cuoio will be leading the program as our Master of Ceremonies. We will follow the format of the old TV show "This is Your Life." Unlike the original show, Shirley will not be surprised, but like the show, host Greg will ask people to come forward and give short anecdotes about aspects of Shirley's life.

Because time is limited and a lot of people will likely have a lot to say about Shirley, we request that, if you want to be a presenter, contact us in advance by mailing your comments about Shirley to our PO Box along with your RSVP form. (A printed copy of the original RSVP form is fine.)

*****Please plan to keep the length of your remarks to 3 minutes or less*****

***If you do not plan to be a presenter, but would like to attend the catered meal, the business meeting and our general program, mail your RSVP form to our PO Box,
OR call Susan Hartman at (360) 704-0507.***

IMPORTANT: Please RSVP BEFORE Thursday Sept. 20th by mail, or call Susan Hartman at (360) 704-0507 so that we will have the correct number of people to give to the caterer.

Thank you very much—we really hope you can make it!





**Invitation to Become a Member of the
LHS Board of Trustees; or an LHS Volunteer**



We would like to invite you to apply for a position on the LHS Board of Trustees. If you are interested, please talk to a current board member during the upcoming annual meeting on Sept. 27, 2018. We would be glad to fill you in on what we do. If you cannot attend this event, talk to one of us outside this meeting. That's what we're here for.

The board meets once a month from Sept. thru November, and January through May of each year (8 months) at the Lacey Fire District Headquarters building which is located between Pacific Avenue and Lacey Blvd. Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month from 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm.

Each year the society participates in the Thurston County Through the Decades event, publishes 2 newsletters, and holds an Annual Membership Meeting in September. Among other things, we also collect memories and images from the past to share with our membership.

In addition, we have opportunities for volunteers to help with upcoming events and when needed sub-committee work. You would be able to meet other LHS members, as well as work with Lacey citizens who are also interested in our local history.

Please - ask questions!! That's what we're here for!



**2018 Officers & Trustees
Board of Directors**

Lanny Weaver, President (360) 459-2434

(*President-Emeritus, Shirley Dziedzic)

Richard Yates, Vice-President (360) 412-1632

Trustees:

Sue Goff, Treasurer, (360) 491-9024

Shirley Dziedzic (360) 491-0905

Susan Hartman, Secretary (360) 704-0507

Robert H. Krier (360)

(*Secretary-Emeritus, Bill Bush)

Amber Raney, (360) 915-4120



The most fabled of any historic dancehall in Washington, the Evergreen State, was the Evergreen Ballroom. It stood nearly seven decades along a section of Hwy 99 called the "old Tacoma and Olympia Highway." The Evergreen Ballroom (9121 Pacific Ave. SE) was situated just outside of Olympia where it became established as a favorite local dining and dancing spot for Olympians...as well as Tacomans who were willing to travel 20 miles south. The hall's real claim to fame though, was as a legendary tour-stop for a few decade's worth of America's top musical performers. The venerable dancehall brought in the best big-bands of the 1930s & 1940s, the country music stars of the 1940s and 1950s, and some of the earliest local shows by the first generation of 1950s rock 'n' rollers.

Among the unforgettable headliners to draw crowds to "The Green"...as locals came to fondly call it .. were such marquee attractions as: Louis Armstrong, Charlie "Bird" Parker, Hank Williams, Dinah Washington, Nat King Cole, Ray Charles, and Little Richard. Along the way the ballroom also served as a nurturing incubator for the Northwest rock 'n' roll scene, providing early dates for top local bands including the Wailers, Kingsmen, and Sonics. The Evergreen was destroyed in a possible act of arson in 1932, but was immediately rebuilt. It then weathered waves of musical revolutions ranging from country rock to heavy metal to hip-hop. It long served as a key community gathering place, but the beloved hall sadly did not survive a second fire on July 21, 2000.

The Kerosene Circuit

The geographic area where the Evergreen Ballroom would eventually be built was first settled in 1853 by pioneers Isaac and Catherine Wood....and was thus originally known as Woodland. A century later, in the 1950s, it would be renamed Lacey, but for many decades in between it was considered to be the northern outskirts of the state capital city of Olympia.

The Evergreen Stands Tall

Among the notable acts that played dances at the little outpost in the Northwestern woods were bands and orchestra's led by the likes of Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Harry James, Lionel Hampton, Tommy Dorsey, Woody Herman, Ralph Flannagan, Ray Anthony, Stan Kenton, Frankie Carle, Tony Pastor, Buddy Marrow, Perez Prado, & Guy Lombardo...not to mention those dancing aces, Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, and singing sensations like the Andrew Sisters and Joni James. The sound of these magnificent shows were spread around the whole region via live remote broadcasts provided by Tacoma's KTAC radio and host, DJ Bob Piquette. The crowds increased.



Passing the Torch

Perhaps one of the most memorable nights for some local country music fans was Thursday, May 4, 1950, when Roy Acuff and the Grand Ol' Opry crew came rolling through from Nashville, Tennessee with a new singer named Hank Williams.

Evergreen Revisited

When Interstate 5 was finally completed in 1967 it improved north-west traffic flow but also unfortunately steered the vast majority of travelers (and touring musicians) away from the old Hwy 99 route. Though the Evergreen was still bringing in acts with top 40 hits, the room was now off the beaten path and its fate was sealed.

Last Call

Finally, in January 2000, plans were announced to open a casino. Tragically, poor communication resulted in the building having no insurance...and on the afternoon of Thursday July 20, 2000, the old hall broke out in flames. The Lacey Fire Dept's crew arrived quickly but within 45 minutes the collapsed hall was a lost cause.

By Peter Blecha (A full version was posted on 3/14/2011.
It can be found on the HistoryLing.org , as Essay 9557)





The Story of Lacey: From Community to City (1949-1966)

It was official. On April 12, 1949, the Thurston County Commissioners passed a resolution "That the Thurston County Fire District No. 3 be established." The results of the special election held April 2 were not close; of the 483 votes cast, 440 were for establishing the district. It was just a fire district, but Lacey had begun a journey to find its own identity.

That journey included school children. Although there had been a school district in the Lacey area since 1853, it lacked its own high school. During the 1940s, it became more difficult for the Lacey students to feel comfortable at Olympia High School. "A lot of the Lacey boys just quit," said Lacey resident Albert Jensen during an oral interview. He explained "...if we'd have had our high school here, why I know that a lot of the guys would have [gone] right on through high school, because it would have been a lot better. But when you go through a whole new experience, you get these city kids and the country boys, they just didn't get together. You know, something was wrong there." The parents agreed.

The *Daily Olympian* of Nov. 11, 1932 reported that "by a whopping eight-to-one vote, residents of the Lacey & South Bay area yesterday approved merging of their school districts into a single unit to be known as North Thurston School District." The article mentions that plans to build a new high school would start as soon as possible. Although not on the ballot, the high school was considered the main purpose for consolidation. The article gave the estimated student enrollment for the school in 1955 to be 350. North Thurston High School was built in 1954.

1954 was also the year that the Washington State Supreme Court rules that state agencies which currently had their offices in Seattle had to move to the state capital. The ruling fueled population growth in both Olympia and Thurston County in general, including Lacey. Even before that year, developers had started to take advantage of available land in the Lacey area and new houses sprang

up in both small & large subdivisions. Among the more popular areas were Brentwood & Tanglewilde both of which offered not just affordable housing on ample lots, but also community parks. In 1963, the area also saw the first houses go up in what would become a retirement community comprising more than 180 acres, Panorama City.

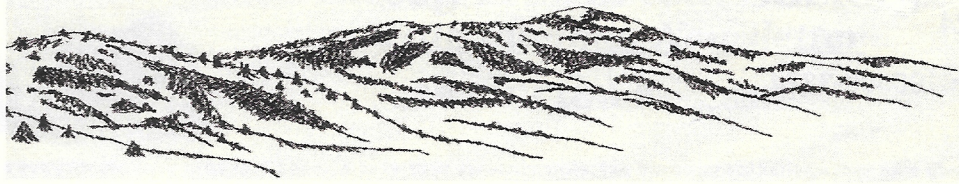
Growth begets growth. New businesses were attracted to Lacey. The Pacific Northwest Bell telephone books from 1949 to 1962 reveal the story. In 1949, Lacey could claim the Turner's Market, a beer tavern, the Evergreen Ballroom, a building supply store, building contractor Al Homann's many faceted business, a laundry, a cannery, Best-Line Lumber, the mushroom farm, two service stations, and several resorts. The 1962 book reveals a veritable explosion of businesses then calling Lacey Home. Included were more restaurants and taverns, bakeries, beauty



shops, a bowling alley, laundries, a dentist, doctor, veterinarian, and lawyer, appliance repair shops, florists, more grocery stores, hardware, hobby and jewelry stores, landscaping businesses, three motels, a music center, realty offices, multiple service stations, and a drive-in theater. The Lacey Builders ad in the telephone book said it best, "Watch Lacey Grow."

Despite the growth, the Lacey community lacked its own library. The biggest problem caused by this situation was that students didn't have easy access to reference material, but the closest library was Olympia and reference books could not be checked out. The once-a-week South Puget Sound Regional Library bookmobile was inadequate. Seeing a need, the citizens formed the North Thurston Library Association in 1963. Raising funds locally, the group procured an old bookmobile in 1965 to sit permanently in the Market Square shopping area. In 1966 the library expanded into rented space with an increased volume of reading material to meet the needs of the growing community.

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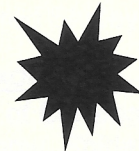
Page 2: The Story of Lacey: From Community to City, 1949-1966.

Just as Lacey was separating from its dependency on Olympia, Olympia was encroaching on Lacey and Lacey didn't like it. The April 22, 1964, issue of the *Daily Olympian* summed up the problem. "The sudden surge of incorporation activity in Lacey stems from moves to annex into Olympia a large area in the community's own back yard. Lacey folks fear annexation won't stop until all of their community belongs to the Capitol City." The areas for annexation included part of Lacey Fire District 3's territory. The district sponsored a meeting in April to discuss the issue and distribute petitions for incorporation. The Thurston County Commission granted the wish of petitioners and scheduled an election on the question of incorporation for Aug. 11, 1964; with the final count 505 for, 857 against, the measure didn't pass. Olympia breathed a sigh of relief.

Local developer Bob Blume, who had platted Brentwood among other subdivisions, had been buying up property in the western portion of Lacey around Sleater-Kinney since 1957. He filed articles of incorporation for the Capital Development Company in 1959, which identified its purpose as having everything to do with real estate, including construction. His real purpose was revealed four years later when he filed a second set of articles, this time under the title South Sound Shopping Center, Inc. South Sound Center was officially opened Oct. 12, 1966.



With rumors of Olympia sniffing for opportunities to annex more territory, Lacey residents again went on the alert. "The lure of sales taxes generated by the shopping center was a big factor in the incorporation of Lacey..." noted the October 10, 2007 issue of *The Olympian*. Bob Blume, the Lacey Chamber of Commerce and other groups joined Fire District 3 in pushing for incorporation. The City of Olympia mocked their efforts and predicted that the city would face insurmountable problems, but on Nov. 8, 1966, the citizens of Lacey voted to incorporate; 1586 for, 1345 against. The Thurston County Commissioners certified the election December 5th. It was official. The community of Lacey could now call itself the City of Lacey.



This was written for the City of Lacey's 50th Anniversary Committee by Lanny Weaver as part of a 3 part series.

This unedited version was also written by Lanny Weaver.

The original document can be found on ThurstonTalk.com