



LACEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

PO Box 3324 Lacey, WA 98509-3324

LaceyHistoricalSociety.com

Late Spring 2026 Edition

LACEY HONORED TO HOST "THE WALL THAT HEALS" Chambers Prairie Elementary School June 23 - 27

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Standing seven and a half feet tall at its highest point and stretching more than a football field in length, it is a three-quarter size replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. and honors the 58,281 service members who lost their lives in the war in Southeast Asia between 1955 and 1975.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (WVFM), founders of the Memorial which has over 5 million visitors each year at its location on the National Mall, also created "The

Wall That Heals" in 1996 to provide an opportunity to experience the wall for those unable to travel to our nation's capital. The replica memorial travels to as many as 30 cities each year in a 53-foot trailer, which doubles as an Education Center (see page. 2)



**SAVE THE DATE: SEPTEMBER 8, 2026
A COMMUNITY CELEBRATION
250TH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR NATION
60TH ANNIVERSARY OF LACEY'S INCORPORATION**

“THE WALL THAT HEALS”
Chambers Prairie Elementary School
June 23 – 27

The Education Center contains artifacts, photographs, and information about the Vietnam War and those who served, as well as two large digital displays: one containing information about service members listed on The Wall who were from Lacey, and another, called the “In Memory” program, shows the photographs of those local service members who returned from the war and have since passed away. Together, The Wall and Education Center tell the story of the Vietnam War, those who served, and the American experience back home in a historical and cultural context. Guided group tours are available for visitors who want to experience the exhibit more in-depth.

Only about 10% of those applying to be hosts each year are selected and it can take six or more years to be successful. That Lacey succeeded in gaining a date on its first attempt is a testament to this community’s support of veterans and the tremendous efforts of a dedicated volunteer committee led by Jorge E. Castillon, Sierra Committee Chair; Michael Steadman, Logistics & Site Coordinator; Greg Urquhart, Volunteer Coordinator; Chris McFadden, Media and Publicity; Bob Whitney, Education & Tours; Crystal Beeler, In Memory Coordinator, and Escort Captains Allen Ocosta, Travis Heckelsbert, and Bud Bateman. The committee chose the theme of “Giving Vietnam Veterans the Welcome Home They Deserve” to focus on the experience, treatment, and perception of the American people towards those who served in Vietnam.

The committee acknowledges that without assistance from Cyrus Overbey, Director of Facilities at North Thurston Public Schools along with Chambers Prairie Elementary School the visit of The Wall That Heals would not have become a reality, as location changes bumped Lacey’s spot on the tour schedule multiple times and threatened to cancel it altogether.

Event organizers estimate the cost of hosting this stop on this year tour is approximately \$30,000, with donations needed to defray the cost of parking attendants, generators to power the Education Center and illuminate the Wall at night, printing, and the rental of necessary facilities. For more information on how to donate, schedule tours, or volunteer to help set up or take down the wall on Wednesday morning, June 24 and Sunday, June 28, please e-mail thewallthathealslaceywa@gmail.com or visit www.thewallthathealslaceywa.org

The Wall That Heals Lacey Schedule

3:00 p.m. TUESDAY, June 23rd – The Wall That Heals arrives at Chambers Prairie Elementary School, after having been escorted from Spanaway by an honor guard comprised of selected members of Veteran and civilian motorcycle clubs.

8:30 a.m. WEDNESDAY, June 24th – Set up of The Wall That Heals begins. Event opens to the public at 2:00 p.m. Volunteer Training begins at 6:00 p.m. and includes a special tour.

9:00 a.m. THURSDAY, June 25th – Group guided tours begin (see “Tour” section of website for scheduling). *Welcome Home Ceremony* begins at 6:00 p.m. with an invocation, the singing of the National Anthem, guest speakers, including Laura Kern, who served as a nurse in Vietnam and is featured in the book “Women in

War” by David Yuzak, and a land blessing by the Lower Elwah Tribe. TAPS played at Sunset (approximately 9:11 p.m.).

9:00 a.m. FRIDAY, June 26th - Group guided tours begin (see “Tour” section of website for scheduling). Candlelight Ceremony in observance of PTSD and Suicide Awareness begins at 9:30 p.m. (approximately), with TAPS played at the end of the ceremony.

9:00 a.m. SATURDAY, June 27th - Group guided tours begin (see “Tour” section for scheduling). TAPS played at Sunset (approximately 9:11 p.m.).

No tours on **SUNDAY, June 28th** – Time of Closing Ceremony TBD. Breakdown of The Wall That Heals begins at 2:00 p.m. (see website if you would like to help).



The Trustees of the Lacey Historical Society recently unanimously voted to replace the organization’s logo (far left) with a more visually vibrant symbol, (center) that retained the familiar Bell Tower from the Old Lacey School as a central focus. The other newly adopted symbol (on the far right) is a QR (quick response) code, essentially a bar code on steroids, containing the data necessary to instantly access the Society’s webpage without having to type the site’s URL.

Meet your 2026 LHS Board of Trustees

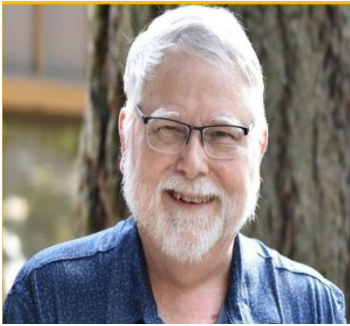
YVETTE OLIVA BURROUGHS was born and raised in Thurston and King Counties. She was educated in Olympia and Lacey, graduating from North Thurston High School in 1968. She completed two years at St. Martin's College. She has a certificate as a medical assistant. For the next 6 years she lived on the East Coast, in the Northwest and Hawaii. She worked as an administrative support in private businesses throughout the US, for State and County government locally, including working in records management and archiving at State Ecology, and at her family real estate development company in Thurston County. Yvette and her Oliva and Burroughs family development company was very instrumental in the development of both the Lacey and Olympia area from the 1940s to the 1990s. Yvette has been very active in several community groups including: High School Future Nurses, Junior Children's Orthopedic Group, Hospital Volunteers at both Exeter Hospital, New Hampshire and St. Peter's Hospital, Olympia, Lacey Kiwanis, Red Hat Women's Group, Random Acts of Kindness Group, and the Make a Wish of Washington organization. Her hobbies include reading, short story writing, décor and cooking. Personal attributes: She is articulate, compassionate, loyal, detail oriented and organized, and she is serving our community by helping LHS preserve our history.



SUSIE COOMES was born in Seattle, raised in Burien and graduated from Highline High School in 1961. She was one of four girls. Her father was a milk man for Riverview Farms. Her family moved to the Lacey area in the late 1960s. Susie worked in social services for Harborview Hospital in Seattle, doing nursing home placements for patients in conjunction with State Health. She then worked at the Thurston-Mason Health District which became the Thurston County Health Department, where she became the office staff supervisor. She was married to Jim Coomes, a thirty year employee of the City of Lacey Public Works Department until he passed. Susie's mother's family (Leigh) were early settlers of East Olympia. Her father's family (McKinley) lived in the Littlerock area for many years prior to moving to Seattle. Susie has lived in Lacey since 1980.



JOHN DZIEDZIC, 2025 Ken Balsley LACEY Historian of the Year, moved with his



parents, Gene and Shirley (long-time Trustee and President of the Lacey Historical Society), and six brothers and sisters, to Lacey from Walla Walla on Labor Day 1960. John was a member of the last graduating class from the Old Lacey Grade School, and graduated from NTHS and WSU. He was a Management Analyst with the Washington State Employees Credit Union and a Deputy for Secretary of State Ralph Munro. He received a UPS

Presidential Scholarship to attend UPS Law School, graduating *summa cum laude*. After law school, he was a law clerk for Washington Supreme Court Justice Gerry Alexander, an Assistant Attorney General, a legal counsel for a Senate standing committee, and a hearings officer for the Department of Licensing. He and his wife, Shelley, a former elementary school teacher and librarian in the North Thurston School District, met in the Stephenson Residence Complex dining hall at WSU, and were honored to be married at the Abbey Church at St. Martin's College in 1980. They are currently retired and recently returned to Lacey, after residing atop Tumwater Hill, on Totten Inlet, and in the South Capitol neighborhood.

LARRY GANDERS came to Lacey in 1986 as the Western Washington Bureau chief for



the Tri-City Herald and McClatchy Newspapers based at the state capitol in Olympia. He continued to be located here for 28 more years as an assistant to the WSU President for Government Relations, serving under Presidents Sam Smith, Lane Rawlins, and the late Elson Floyd. He left WSU in 2015 after supervising a statewide professional journalism internship program and working on a radio history museum for the Edward

R. Murrow College of Communication. He coordinated a UW-WSU capitol intern program in 2023 for the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association. Before retirement in 2019, Larry was a sales specialist in appliances and millworks for Lacey Lowe's. He is a board member and 2024-2026 President of the Olympia-Lacey Centennial Amtrak Station Association, the only all-volunteer station in the U.S. that has operated for 33 consecutive years. He headed a project to locate, preserve and display vintage photographs of Thurston County train stations. Since childhood, he has been an O-Gauge Model Train collector and operator (GandersTrains.com). He also compiled extensive family history web pages including SwissFamilyFraunfelder.com. He is married to Robin Ganders, who was the admissions director for Providence Mother Joseph for 28 years.

JON W. HALVORSON was born and raised on a dairy farm in Wisconsin. After serving in the USAF from 1967-1972, he and his wife Janet have lived in Lacey since 1975. They have one daughter and two granddaughters. Jon received a BA degree in Government and International Relations from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, an MA in Educational Psychology from Ball State University at RAF Chicksands, England, and a Masters of Social Work from the University of Washington. He and Janet both retired from the WA Department of Social and Health Services. Jon was elected to the Lacey City Council (1991-1999), and served as Mayor from 1993 -1996. Jon has served on the boards and been president of many private and public organizations, including the Housing Authority of Thurston County, the Lacey Planning Commission, Thurston County MEDIC ONE Council, the Capital Area Public Facilities District, Thurston County Parks & Recreation Committee, Olympia Kiwanis Club, Community Youth Services, the North Thurston Education Foundation, Retired Public Employees Council, Chapter 2 and the Sons of Norway, Olympia Hovestad Lodge. Jon was honored as Thurston County's Citizen of the Year in 2003, named a "Living Legend of Thurston County" in 2010 and was inducted into the North Thurston Education Foundation Ring of Honor in 2019.



DENISE (FUCHS) KEEGAN moved to Lacey in 1977 to complete her final years of undergraduate education at St. Martin's University. Lacey Mayor Karen Fraser hired Denise in 1978 to begin gathering research about Lacey's history and to help establish a city historical program. In that role, Denise spent hundreds of hours visiting with older residents – collecting oral history recordings, photos, and other historic materials for the city. She served on the first Lacey Historical Society Board and helped start the Lacey Historic Commission – serving as their Chair for several years. She worked closely with Shirley Dziedzic on the annual Historical Society's tree and plant dedication programs. Denise earned her master's degree in public administration from The Evergreen State College in 1997. Denise and her husband, Chris, have three grown children all of whom live nearby. Denise has stayed very active in community activities – most recently serving as the 2021 – 2022 Tumwater Rotary President.



TIM McGUIRE moved from Snoqualmie, Washington in August 1967 to attend St. Martin's College, became a resident fireman (Volunteer) for the Lacey Fire Department, and continued as a volunteer for a total of more than 12 plus. He graduated with a degree in accounting from St. Martin's in 1971, and then went to work for the city of Lacey in 1970 and worked there for over 41 years. Tim has also volunteered for the Supervisory Committee for both Twin Star Credit Union and Crime Stopper's for over 15 years. He and his wife Terry have been married 53+ years, and together they have two children, 7 grandchildren, and 4 great grandchildren.



MIKE PETTIT moved to Lacey with his parents, Del and Verna Pettit, along with his two brothers and sister. He began his schooling at Mountain View Elementary School, starting in the first grade. On the opening day of Lydia Hawk Elementary School, Mike continued his elementary education. He later attended Chinook Junior High School and graduated from North Thurston High School in 1970. After completing high school, Mike served for eight years in the United States Army. His primary duty assignment was as a Military Police Investigator. Following his military service, Mike and his wife Jessica returned to Lacey. Mike worked at Washington Natural Gas before establishing his own HVAC company. He also served as a Freeholder on the first Home Rule board of Thurston County. Now retired, Mike and Jessica have been married for 56 years. They are proud grandparents and great grandparents.



CYNTHIA PRATT and her husband moved to Olympia from California in 1966 and bought their house in Lacey in 1973 where they have raised their daughter and son. She worked for the Washington Departments of Fish and Wildlife and Natural Resources for 27 years, retiring in 2008. She ran, and won a seat on the Lacey City Council beginning in 2010. After three terms she retired from local government after serving as Deputy Mayor for 8 of the 12 years. The City announced her as their inaugural poet laureate at her retirement, beginning January 2022. She is active in Suffragette enactments around Thurston County.



ED SORGER's family moved to the Lacey area in 1959 and he attended 4th grade at the Old Lacey Grade School. When he was a senior at North Thurston High School, he became a Lacey Police Cadet, then a reserve officer, and finally a full-time officer with the Lacey Police Department (PD) in 1971. During his 35 years with Lacey PD he earned the rank of Commander and retired to become the Chief of Police at The Evergreen State College for the next 11 years. Highlights of his career include attending the FBI National Academy in Quantico Virginia and 44 years as a Lacey Lamplighter Lions Club member. Also, when the old Lacey Grade School was torn down, he worked with the Lacey Historical Society to preserve the gym floor.



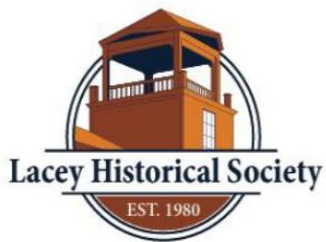
JOHN TURNER is the son of Henry W. and Evelyn Turner, owners of the Black Cat Nursery on Pacific Avenue in Lacey since 1945. Born and raised in the Lacey area, John began his public safety career in 1966 as a resident firefighter. After the city incorporated in 1966, it formed a new police department and asked him to help recruit nine others for a volunteer police cadet program. John continued to pursue his police training, first at St. Martin's College, and then at WSU, where he graduated in 1971. He then returned to Lacey and began a 14-year career with the Thurston County Sheriff's Office. In 1985, he moved to Snohomish County to serve as Police Chief in three cities, as well as stints with the federal Homeland Security Department and the Washington Attorney General. In 2020, he returned to Lacey with Margo, his wife of 50 years. They have one daughter, Jennifer. John has served four governors on five boards and commissions, most notably as Chair of the Governor's Clemency and Pardons Board. John is also past president of the North Thurston Kiwanis Club, and past chair of the Olympia area Salvation Army.



PAUL WEBB, 2024 Ken Balsley LACEY Historian of the Year, was born at St. Peter's hospital in Olympia, Washington, and graduated from North Thurston High School. His distinguished 45-year fire services career in western Washington included 38 years with the Lakewood Fire Department. He served two years as president of the Pierce County Fire Chiefs Association, and as president of the Clover Park Rotary Club where he remains an active member. He presently serves on the Board of the Sunrise Church of God of Olympia.



MARGIE (Worden) WYLLIE's grandparents came from Tennessee to Union Mills around 1910, which then was a company town, now just an area of Lacey. She was born at "Old Saint Pete's" to Herb and Cleo Worden and her sister Janis (Worden) Chastain who "ordered and named her." Her Dad was a Darigold milkman and her Mom sold World Books and Avon. She grew up in a "family compound" just two houses from where her Mom lived until she married. Life was fun with every nearby house filled with cousins. Margie had the same bus driver, Dean Huntamer (bus #7), from first grade at Mt. View and the "new" Lydia Hawk Elementary, to Chinook Junior High and graduated from North Thurston in 1969. Margie "escaped" Lacey for a few years but is now back and very active in many historical groups. She is very happily married to Gordon Wyllie and resides near Hicks Lake. She has one son, Larry Dicks, who is a Major in Intelligence and is currently at the Embassy in Jordan.



Lacey Historical Society presents a
Community Celebration of
America 250 & Lacey 60

Tuesday, September 8th, 2026

3:00pm - 6:00pm @

Lacey Community Center

6729 Pacific Avenue SE, Lacey, WA 98503

FREE PUBLIC EVENT. EVERYONE IS WELCOME.



The early beginnings of Panorama in Lacey

In 1792, George Vancouver, a British naval officer, dared to sail into the waters extending inland from the northeast Pacific Ocean, mapping the area for the first time for a European power of the time. Just over a decade later, in 1804, two American explorers, Merriweather Lewis and William Clark, ventured into the area to stake a claim on behalf of a new nation.

But for thousands of years before they were discovered by such visitors, the peoples of the lands abutting the inlets like the one they knew as S’Hotl-Ma-Mish (which now bears the name Henderson Inlet) of the southern-most watersheds of the Salish Sea, (or Puget Sound, as one of Captain Vancouver’s men called it,) caught salmon, harvested shellfish, hunted, and collected plants in the rich prairies to sustain themselves. They called themselves Nisqually and Steh-Chass.

It wasn’t until 1833, with the establishment a trading post by the Hudson Bay Company at Fort Nisqually, just 10 miles east of what is now Lacey, that the European presence in the area stopped being intermittent and exploratory and became commercial and permanent. Again, the Americans were not far behind and in October 1845, the first settlement in Thurston County sprang up at Tumwater. Within two years, powered by the waters of the Deschutes River, mills were sawing lumber and turning wheat into flour for a growing population.

About this same time, newly married David and Elizabeth Chambers set out from Missouri by wagon train for the Oregon Territory. What was to become the Territory (and ultimately the State) of Washington would not yet even exist for another three years, and then only as a subordinate part of the Oregon Territory, which itself had been “opened for settlement” just two years before. The United States government encouraged this relocation with the promise of land: 320 acres for each man, and twice that if he and his bride would make the west their home.

So, David and Elizabeth Chambers arrived at a small lake a few miles east of Tumwater in 1848, and promptly named it “Chambers Prairie.” The lake also ultimately came to bear their name. At that time, in what would become Olympia, there stood a single log cabin that had been built in 1846.

By the time Thurston County was officially created in 1852, with Olympia as its county seat, the Chambers had become a success at farming; and were able to add 1000 acres to the family's land claim, where they raised cattle and grew fruit trees. David later opened a butcher shop in nearby Olympia.

By the 1880s, logging and industry were added to the economy of the new county, and with the coming of Washington's Statehood in 1889, many of the growing communities were platted. Two years later, through the efforts of one O. C. Lacey, the area then known as Woodland officially became recognized by the U.S. Post Office as Lacey (but that's a story for another time, which Lacey Museum Curator Erin Quinn Valcho has ably documented). Construction began in 1893 on the first buildings of St. Martin's College.

A portion of the Chambers farm was sold in 1917 to the Olympia Golf and Country Club, which established the Mountain View Golf Club on the site, providing the names for Mountain View Elementary School and Golf Club Road. Fast forward to 1962, when a real estate development group advancing a business model aimed at meeting the needs of an aging population bought the Golf Club. They dreamed of opening a "model adult community" on the original Chambers property. They called it Panorama City. The first model home was celebrated with a grand opening in March 1963. The first residents of Panorama City moved in on November 1, 1963. The "City" moniker was dropped after Lacey was incorporated as a real city 1966.

This brief history is adapted from the Preface of "Panorama History, the first 50 years," by Berta Kasmar. Used with permission

Have you renewed your membership?

Membership dues for the Lacey Historical Society are payable on a calendar year basis, and remain just \$10 per person. Payment may be made by mail to:

POST OFFICE BOX 3324, LACEY, WA, 98509-3324

or with a credit card on the society's website:

LaceyHistoricalSociety.com

Dues payments, as well as restricted or unrestricted donations are tax deductible.

Lacey Historical Society

PO Box 3324

Lacey, WA 98509-3324

Use this form to become a member of the Lacey Historical Society for 2026

E-mail: Lacey.Hist.Society@gmail.com

The Lacey Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization. Dues & donations are both tax deductible.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

Please **attach your check for your 2026 DUES:** **\$ 10.00**

You can now also join or
renew your membership at:
LaceyHistoricalSociety.com

(Optional Donation: \$ _____)

Total \$ _____

Check here [] if you would prefer to receive your newsletter by e-mail.