



Highline Historical Society News

Volume 59

July 2011

Lull in the Battle

The Mission of the Highline Historical Society is to collect, preserve, and tell the stories of the Highline region and its people to everyone.

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The four men had just battled an early morning house fire in a Seattle suburb when Jerry Gay, then a 27-year-old photographer with the *Seattle Times*, made this otherworldly portrait. Heroic imagery of firefighters is common these days, but this was October 1974, soon after the Vietnam War, a time that didn't often exalt bravely doing one's duty. "Americans were not seeming very honorable or very dedicated to the right principles," Gay recalls, "and here was this fireman picture that sort of spoke to a new American hero, a different kind of soldier." Titled *Lull in the Battle*, it won Gay a Pulitzer Prize. - *Smithsonian Magazine*, May 2002

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From the President

As this issue of the Historical Society Newsletter goes to print, I am reminded of how many people have helped us over the years that are no longer with us. Historical societies host a number of senior citizens. I don't think it is because we are more interested in our past than younger people, but that when retired, we have more time to contemplate our past and work on projects about history that sound fun.

Our Board of Trustees has had strong and engaged members that are no longer with us: Rosamond Wilson, Ken Selander, Jeanne Pfeifer, Vivian Matthews, Rita Creighton and Dick Dahlgard. This week we mourn the loss of a lovely lady we have all felt was an adjunct to our Board, Elsbeth Robinson, beloved wife of Trustee Jerry Robinson. She attended board meetings with Jerry for many years, and as her health declined she hosted our meetings in her home. Our condolences to the Robinson extended family for the loss of their wife, mother and grandmother. She will be greatly missed.



Terry Jarvis Anderson

Saving Old Film



Some days there are volunteers stuffed into every nook and cranny of our collections storage areas. Above is audio engineer Tony Cochran, who donated his time this Spring to inventory, clean and store vintage film. He then produced condition reports for the Curator. Thank you, Tony.

Highline Historical Society News

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



Programs, Events & Exhibits

**SeaTac Exhibit
“The Music
of WWI”**

The Music of World War I - until mid September. Visit Curator Nancy McKay’s exhibit in the lobby of SeaTac City Hall. This exhibit features a large collection of music from World War I. The sheet music reflects our communities of 90 years ago and complements the restoration of historic Des Moines Memorial Drive. This exhibit includes the sounds of the music being played. The City Hall is open from 9-5 PM weekdays. It is located at 4800 South 188th Street.



**Photo Exhibit
Burien Community
Center**

Stop by the Burien Community Center on S.W. 146th and 6th S.W. View the Society’s exhibit of 100 vintage photographs of Burien. This exhibit will be in place until August.

Fairs and Festivals!

Watch for the **Highline Historical Society booth** at the Burien Thursday Market and various White Center Festivals. Volunteers are needed to assist passing out materials and gathering information for oral histories. Call Cyndi Upthegrove (206-246-6354) if you can help for an hour or two.



**Volunteer Appreciation
Picnic
August 16**

Volunteers - Note that the date has changed. Save the date and watch for your private invitation to this year’s event.

**2011
Salute to Pioneers
November 20**

Sports in Highline - We are going to visit the role of sports in Highline through the years. We have church league basketball, little league sports of every kind, high school sports, and the rise of women’s participation in sports. Your memories and thoughts on these subjects are solicited. Let us know if you played - or coached - and if you have memorabilia and photos to share with the audience. (editor@highlinehistory.org) There will be more about this in our next newsletter. Save the date!

**PLEASE PATRONIZE OUR
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Now more than ever.

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A LIFE OF IT'S OWN
The 1975 Pulitzer Prize for Spot News Photography

That photo took on a life of its own. At first it was on the front page of the Seattle Times the day of the fire, Friday October 11, 1974 and those of us in it were all smiles as you might expect. We were all running around getting extra newspaper copies for relatives etc., after all, how often would you expect to have your picture on the front page of a major newspaper in your life? I thought the photographer was from the insurance company when he was snapping photos at the scene, none of us knew he was from the press, and we were nameless in the caption. A lot of ice cream was supplied by the four of us - a fire department tradition when your picture is in the paper or you are on the TV news.

So that was that - we made the front page, a once-in-a-lifetime thing, and after a short time it was all but forgotten. We

all felt at the time that we had taken a bow for all firefighters in a typically unsung job where we are seldom in the limelight and really do not seek that kind of attention anyway. After all it's just a job, one that we happen to love doing.

May 5, 1975 came 6 months later, and there on the front page of the Seattle Times is the picture, with the headline: "Times Photographer Wins Pulitzer Prize". For a second time we all went scrambling for newspaper copies. Tom Gudmestad was traveling in Europe the day it was awarded and found out by spotting the photo on a news vendor's stand. I really felt honored to be associated with the recognition the photo received for the job of firefighting. Once more we were all smiles, in the midst of buying more ice cream. Does life get any better than this at age 20?

Then came the phone call three weeks later from the US Air Force Graves and Registration, Randolph AFB in Texas.

A woman in Okoboji, Iowa saw the Pulitzer in the *Des Moines Register* newspaper, looked at me in the picture and declared I was her son, an Air Force fighter pilot shot down in Viet Nam. Her son was initially declared missing in action for several months, and had recently been updated to killed in action. She was accusing the Air Force of having brainwashed her son and he was now a firefighter in Seattle, Washington. They asked me all kinds of questions during the recorded phone call pertaining to my identity to prove I was Jim Flick and not this missing, killed in action, true American fighter pilot hero with a grieving, heart-broken mother and family. I hung up the phone and somehow couldn't smile anymore.

Six months after that the picture was used as the annual fire prevention poster during fire prevention week October 5th thru 11th 1975. It showed the picture with the words: "Fire - It takes something out of all of us". I ended up with a giant-sized version of that poster that I managed to get from then mayor of Seattle, Wes Uhlman. I still have it, 33 years later, hanging in my garage.

After that, the years went by and there were one or two local small articles that would surface now and then referring to the photo. One small filler column several years later in *The Seattle Times* said "Quick, name four local firefighters that were the subject of a Pulitzer Prize... bet you can't". It went on to point out that the famous picture had never been printed with the firefighters names. So to remedy that the article listed our names, left to right, this time without the picture.

On January 5th 1995 four Seattle firefighters make the ultimate sacrifice at the hands of an arsonist during the Pang Warehouse fire. The Pulitzer photo was displayed at their public memorial service. What an honor.

In 1996, 22 years after it was first taken, the photo was made into a limited edition lithograph, and we all got together along with photographer Jerry Gay and signed over 1200 lithographs so 911 smudge free copies could be offered. It was the first time the four of us had ever gotten together since the picture was taken the day of the fire. Later that year while visiting an art gallery during a vacation to the Oregon coast, there it was beautifully framed and affixed with a \$320.00 price tag.

9-11-2001 was the World Trade Center terrorist attack. Our country grieves and there is a resurgence of awareness of firefighters in the wake of the 343 FDNY heroes who sacrificed their own lives in the hope of saving others. I suspect it was that resurgence that resulted in an article in the May 2002 issue of *Smithsonian Magazine* in their monthly "People and Places" section titled "Heroes Then And Now." There were two photos, the Pulitzer and one taken in 1996 of the four of us when we got together to sign the lithographs, with the following article:

"You can't tell what time of day it is, the fog and smoke are so thick. Bare branches heighten the gothic mood. The ground is mud. An overturned wheelbarrow hints at chaos. One man turns toward the mysterious glow while the others—wet, soot-streaked, slumped—look down or away, spent. The central figure, incongruously, holds a burning cigarette."

"The four men had just battled an early morning house fire in a Seattle suburb when Jerry Gay, then a 27-year-old photographer with the *Seattle Times*, made this otherworldly portrait. Heroic imagery of firefighters is common these days, but this was October 1974, soon after the Vietnam War, a time that didn't often exalt bravely doing one's duty. Americans "were not seeming very honorable or very dedicated to the right principles," Gay recalls, "and here was this fireman picture that sort of spoke to a new American hero, a different kind of soldier." Titled *Lull in the Battle*, it won Gay a Pulitzer Prize."

"Gay is now a freelance photojournalist in La Conner, Washington. His just-published book, *Everyone Has a Life to Live*, contains unabashedly sentimental photographs—kids, old folks, newlyweds, road signs, birds—that show, he says, how "we all share in each other's lives."

"Of the firemen, Joseph Guild tore his knee responding to a fire in 1982 and left the service; now 55, he works as a greens keeper at a golf course. Chris Kitterman, 52, left fire fighting in 1989 after injuring his back on the job and now works for a sporting goods company. Jim Flick, 47 and a general contractor, served 19 years as a firefighter and paramedic. Tom Gudmestad, 49, is the paramedic operations chief for southern King County, Washington. The photograph hangs in his office. To Gudmestad, it has become a "touchstone of faith," he says. "I've been in the fire fighting business almost 30 years, and it always brings me back to what I did with that time and why."

That picture touched each one of our lives in so many different ways. Joe, Tom and Chris have their own stories to tell too, I'm sure. To date, there have been 68 Pulitzer's awarded for Breaking News Photography since the first picture in 1942. If you have ever seen all of the Pulitzer photos yourself, you will understand that to be included in the same company is a profoundly humbling honor.

Jim Flick
Firefighter/Paramedic
Bellevue Fire Department, Retired
Seattle, Washington

The Society thanks Jim Flick for sharing his story about the famed photograph taken at a fire on Maplewild Ave, SW in what is now Burien, and for the poster on page 1. - Ed.

Let's Take Care of Your Books

By Curator of Collections
Nancy Salguero McKay



Books play many roles in our lives. They entertain and inform. Some, like the family Bible, record the story of our family. Beautiful bound books are works of art and, as is the case with unblemished first editions, can be valuable. Depending on the quality of the original paper and binding, well cared-for books can grace a room with their beauty and increase in value for many years.

Proper care of books means protecting them from several hazards. The greatest threats are mold; the deterioration of paper hastened by exposure to certain chemicals or environment conditions and animal or insect pests; and damage to the structure or binding of the book.

Excessive light is another hazard for books. Prolonged, direct exposure to bright light from any source, but especially direct sunlight, cause fading and accelerates the chemical reactions that make pages, bindings, and even dust jackets deteriorate. You shouldn't store books in basements, attics or unheated buildings, nor should you keep them close to heat vents, radiators, hot lights, or fireplaces.

Make sure air can circulate around books, and remove grit, pollen, and urban dust frequently. Valued books should be dusted carefully, opened, and inspected for mold or signs of pest infestation at least once a year. You can vacuum them on low suction, with the brush attachment covered by cheesecloth secured with a rubber band.

Proper handling and display are important for preserving the life of a book. Here are some pointers on how to keep your books healthy while you continue to enjoy them. Book lovers always remove a book from its shelf by pushing back the books on either side, then grasping the spine between the thumb and fingers and pulling them by one finger at the top of the spine.

The structure of an old book may be weak. Don't force it open too far, and turn the pages with care. Leaving objects in books- things like rubber bands, flowers, paper clips, self adhesive notes, newspaper clippings, and even book marks – risk harm. These everyday objects can cause discoloration, rips, and even chemical damage.

Except for oversize volumes such as atlases, family Bibles, and coffee-table books, its best to keep your books standing upright, with another book of similar size or a bookend on each side. Books should not be packed too tightly together on the shelf, and there should be a few inches of open space behind them to allow air to circulate. Exposure to fresh air retards deterioration, so occasional careful handling is actually good for a book.

- Keep books at a constant, moderate temperature and relative humidity
- Dust and inspect books for pests at least annually
- Protect books from exposure to bright light, especially the sun
- Hold books with fingers along the spine
- Keep the pages of your books free of foreign objects
- Shelf books upright with books of similar size on both sides.
- Store large or heavy books lying flat
- Protect books from direct contact with wooden shelves
- Never use tape to repair books or covers
- Never oil, "dress", or polish bindings

A "Tidbit"

Before he died a number of years ago, former Superintendent of Highline Schools Carl Jensen passed along some "tidbits" for us to print in our newsletters. He said he was constantly surprised at how little people knew about local history. Here is a Carl Jensen "tidbit:"

"Long time bus driver Kathleen McAbee became a legend in bus driver history. A primary student riding in her bus could count on being checked for clean ears and clean teeth. Coming into the bus center one day she yelled at George Maillus, "Hey George, fix my horn will you? My brakes don't work!" She was loved by all parents and pupils."

Recent Donations

The following items were recently donated to the Society. Special thanks to these far-sighted individuals for helping HHS preserve authentic artifacts and archival materials of the recent and not-so-recent past, as well as for both restricted and unrestricted cash donations.. For more information about donating items to HHS, please call 206-246-6354 or send an email to editor@highlinehistory.org. You are helping to tell our stories.

From **May Pendergrass**, 73 items: family photos, books and artifacts for the collections and the archives.

From **Karen Beeson** for the archives and the collections, five photos, one book, a name tag, postcard, bookmark and a vintage bottle.

From **Virgil Domaon** for the collections, a Seattle Rainier's Scoreboard and a Seattle World's Fair 1962 flyer.

From **Craig Tweney**, 20 objects for the collections and the archives: Burien Historical Materials (reproductions) - Brochures, newspaper clippings, photo, and documents.

From **Arnold Troeh**, 20 items for the archives: **Catherine Herrold Troeh** (1911-2007) 18 photos, *A Guide to the Indian Tribes of the Pacific Northwest*- Third Edition book; Surgeon chronicles Native American history with dedication to Catherine Troeh.

Southwest Seattle Historical Society TRANSFER: Highline High school Class photo 1930-1931, Book paperbound cover "The Many Roads to Highline" by **Melba Eyster & Evelyn Yeager**.

From **Jean McCain**, for the collections, a brass cash register formerly owned by Glendale Heating and Air Conditioning, a wooden high chair, outdoor Christmas lights, drafting set and slide projector.

From **Robert and Kathleen Premel**, for the archives, a 16 Page Seattle Times Rotogravure insert /31/1949 featuring Sunnydale, Seahurst, Evansdale, Three Tree Point, and Burien Heights.

From **Sherrill Miller**, 23 objects for the archives and the collections: Photos and articles relating to the E.B. Foote Winery.

From **Terry Anderson**, 8 objects for the collections and the archives: Four Class photos - Lake Burien 1941 and 1945, a lace Collar, an infant sacque, *Time Magazine* April 11, 1977, and City of SeaTac incorporation newspapers.

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

Please indicate your membership classification below:

- Individual - \$20
 Family - \$30
 Commercial/Business - \$50
 Patron - \$125

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Signature: _____

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TIME DATED MATERIALS

Changes?

Please make the corrections on your label.

*Circle the appropriate spot below, and
return to the Society. Thank you.*

Name misspelled

Contact person changed

Address wrong

Duplicate mailing



We enjoy this 1930's aerial view of the Society's property in Burien (centered above on the SW corner of Ambaum and SW 152nd Street.). Note the absence of trees, and the bog on the site of the present Town Square condos. The Den Burien Theater is on Ambaum Boulevard to the right of the Shell Station. Key Bank had not been built, and our building and surrounding Martini Cleaners and Danish Bakery are quite evident. Photo Highline Historical Society. - Ed.