

Potlatch Historical Society

Winter 2008

Letter from the President . . .

Did you know:

2008 marks the 10th Anniversary of the PHS?

PHS member Irene Bain now operates the Laird House Bed and Breakfast in her historic Nob Hill home?

The November Idaho Legislative Tour will feature Potlatch on its route?



Potlatch's 100-year-old depot should be good for another 100 years after exterior restoration work was completed this fall.

For the Potlatch Historical Society (PHS), 2007 went out with a bang, and 2008 now begins with a fresh wave of enthusiasm and energy!

Inside this issue:

<i>President's Message</i>	2
<i>Depot Highlights</i>	2
<i>Charles Woods</i>	3
<i>Rev. Theodore Hegg</i>	3
<i>Idaho Impressions</i>	4

In December, PHS members hosted the Potlatch Depot Open House to recognize major donors to the 1906 depot's exterior restoration. The event was a huge success, with hundreds of people attending, including county commissioners and even Santa. Thanks to PHS members **Janice and Donovan Palmer, Bonnie Rohn, Lindy Seip, Ruth O'Reilly, Judy Rohn, Carol Had-dock and Barb Coyner** for decorating the depot and serving refreshments. PHS has been a major supporter of depot restoration efforts for over 10 years and the project is important to PHS for two major reasons: historically it is the oldest commercial building in Potlatch; it's the potential home for PHS Archives.

The depot is owned by the non-profit Washington, Idaho & Montana Railway Historic Preservation Group (HPG), which purchased the building in 2000 from the Palouse River Coulee City Railroad. The HPG has raised funds to complete the exterior restoration, which was finished late last fall. The City of Potlatch was the sponsor of the major funding for the project through the Idaho Department of Transportation.

Looking forward to 2008, our PHS will be working cooperatively with the HPG to begin work on the interior of the building to make at least a portion of the building usable for both groups. Because we have so many mutual goals, I believe we can much more effectively be working together on this project. In future newsletters, I'll be providing updates on how our progress is going with this work.

PHS Mission Statement: Preserve and promote an interest in the rich history of North Latah Co. rural communities. Contribute to the location, preservation and display of items of historical importance in the Potlatch area for the enjoyment of the general public. Publish periodic newsletters, conduct annual events and provide historic memorabilia which further knowledge and interest in the history of the area.

President's message continued . . .

For many years all of our historic archives have been stored in City Hall. The City has generously given us space rent-free. The depot restoration provides us with the opportunity to place our extensive collection in a secure place, where it can be actively worked on, organized, and displayed. Moving to the depot means additional costs in terms of sharing with the HPG for insurance, power, water, etc. Anticipating this increased expense, our board has elected to set the household PHS dues at \$20 this year. We hope that you will continue to renew your membership, and perhaps con-

sider additional donations to help with our ongoing depot restoration efforts. And if you know others who may be interested in our historical society, please let them know what we're doing and encourage them to join PHS. We can certainly use volunteer help with carpentry, plumbing, electrical work, etc, as well, so if you know of folks with these skills, encourage them to become involved!

We also have our monthly meetings at a new time. We meet at City Hall at 9:30 AM on the second Saturday morning of each month for coffee and snacks (donuts, sweet rolls,

cookies, etc). This new time works out well, is more fun, and gives us more time to discuss important PHS matters. We encourage any of our members to attend meetings, and if you need further information, please give me a call at (208) 875-0636.

Here's hoping you have a great 2008, and become involved in the Potlatch Historical Society. We've got some exciting things going on this year!

Best regards...
Jack



As the depot project got under way, the 219-ton building was lifted and a new foundation and drainage system were built by Doug Wasankari and his crew. Larry Duff and his Timberworks crew donated the beautiful wood shingle roof and labor as a contribution to the community. Dan Karel was the project foreman, and Dan Tate was the painter.

"There was someone stopping to visit everyday and the community got excited about our work." Dan Karel



Since 1998, PHS has helped move the depot project forward, but there were many doubts that the building could be salvaged. Once workers got underneath it, however, they were amazed at how strong and stout the support beams were. As the depot was straightened and primed, many more people stepped forward to help with the big project.

Now PHS will help the HPG raise funds and donations of labor to finish the interiors. How can YOU help at the depot? Log on to <http://potlatchdepot.blogspot.com> to see the restoration and post your own suggestions.

Reminiscences from our readers . . .

Charles Woods

I was born in Potlatch on February 25, 1928, at home (only my oldest sister had the privilege of being born in the hospital!). We lived in a little house about 24' by 24' on Larch, I think. No bathroom, but an outhouse in the alley. We took baths in the washtub (pretty primitive). Then in 1932, when the sixth kid was born, we got the okay to move into a big two-story house just east, uphill from the Union Church. The rent went up from \$8 to \$12 a month, but what a relief, especially for my mom.

My mom and dad had both grown up in Potlatch and had Miss Ruth Hall as their first grade teacher (about 1906). Then me and my 5 siblings all had Ruth Hall as our first grade teacher. At least I and my older brother and sister did (she may have retired before my younger brother and brother came along). I attended school in Potlatch through the 7th grade. We moved away when World War II was impending in 1941. Some of my classmates were Ted and Irene Kirsch, Gene Compton, Don Seymour (my cousin), Gary Morris, Dan O'Connell, Rosemary Andres, Phyllis Coffman, Dorothy Nagle (another cousin), Don Morgan and others I've lost count of. I can brag that, in my opinion, Potlatch had a fantastic corps of grade school teachers and Ruth Hall, Miss Esther Johnson, Irma Thompson and Miss Durbin are the ones I can remember without getting my school pictures out.

My dad, Earl Woods, worked as an electrician at the Potlatch mill, starting when he was about 17. His dad, my grandfather John Woods, had a contract with Potlatch to buy slab wood and distribute it to the town folks for stove wood. About 1932, when the depression hit hard, Potlatch didn't renew his contract, so he moved to Palouse and tried to run a confectionary and about starved. In 1933, he got the opportunity

to move to Lewiston and open up a district office for Farmers Insurance, which was just moving into Idaho. When my grandfather died in 1944, we moved to Lewiston and my dad and mom took over the insurance agency and district, and in 1950, after Army service, I joined the firm, where I stayed until retirement in 1997.

We all attended the Union Church and every 4th of July looked forward to the big fireworks demonstration put on by the Potlatch Lumber Company. A great town to grow up in!

Charles Woods 105 16th Ave
Lewiston ID 83501

Rev. C. Theodore Hegg

I was born and raised in Potlatch -948 Spruce St (?). My start in the 1st grade was the first year that the grade school had to be divided in two classes because of the war babies. I remember most teachers. Miss Hall could never be forgotten. There were 12 of us in this first year class that went all the way through the 12 years and graduated together.

I worked in the mill one summer before entering the University of Idaho, handling the lumber in the short pocket (\$.50 per hour). The next summer I came to work at the same place but after a week the night shift closed. I went to Mr. O'Connell for help, as I needed money for college. He advised me to go to Snoqualmie Falls, on the coast, and work in the mill there. I went and was hired. The great thing was that I met a beautiful red haired girl, and we were married after a year. Now we are in our 64th year of marriage. I thank God that the mill in Potlatch closed the night shift and I had to move to the coast. God works in marvelous ways!

I attended the Lutheran Church all my life in Potlatch. It was God's blessing to me, as it led to my becoming a pastor.

Fourth of July we went to Riverside Park or to Coeur d'Alene. I always remember Christmas, as all the youth gathered on the porch of the gym and were given an orange and a small bag of goodies.

I return to Potlatch often and it is always a time filled with memories. Skiing all winter, on track, basketball team, but most of all being a part of the great music program, where I played the clarinet, and also in the German Band. I recall going up Gold Hill many times, helping my uncle farm during the many summers while in high school, driving to Lewiston with the band to march across the Clarkston Bridge to celebrate its opening, seeing the beautiful wheat fields in the spring, hearing the fire alarm and the firemen pulling the cart of fire hoses to fight the fires, the many fish I caught in the Palouse River, etc.

Ted Hegg 4301 Norpoint Way NE
#16A Tacoma WA 98422 253-952-5577 tededie@prodigy.net

A NEW HOME FOR THE PHS ARCHIVE

PHS members are dreaming of a new home for the extensive PHS collection, which includes pictures, letters and other items from the area's past. As we work cooperatively with the HPG to develop the Potlatch Depot interior, members are encouraged to donate time, money, ideas and enthusiasm. Already we have had people search our archives for photos and mention of loved ones. Now we want to provide a permanent home and better security for these treasures. If you ever considered making an extra contribution, please consider 2008 as the year to do it!!!

PRESERVING THE UNIQUE HISTORY AND HERITAGE OF POTLATCH, IDAHO

Potlatch Historical Society
PO Box 5
Potlatch ID 83855

Potlatch Historical Society
Officers

Jack Coyner, President
Bonnie Rohn, Vice-President
Lindy Seip, Secretary
Janice Palmer, Secretary
Barb Coyner, News Editor

Annual Dues: \$20/Household
Meetings:
2nd Saturday of each month, 9:30 am
Potlatch City Hall

Impressions of Idaho by **PETER SCARFE, PHS Member** **Peter hails from Western Australia and visited Potlatch last July**

Although I had visited the USA on 3 previous occasions, I had never been to Idaho. I became interested in the history of the WI&M Railway and became a member of the WI&MRyHPG and also of the PHS. As I was attending the National Model Railway Association National Convention in Detroit in July 2007, I decided to arrive earlier to visit Northern Idaho, and attend a 2-day convention, 'MilWest', conducted by the Milwaukee Road Historical Society at the Coeur D'Alene Resort. Attending this convention was relevant because between 1961 and 1980, the WI&MRy Co. was owned and operated by Milwaukee Road interests. At the conclusion of the Milwest convention I drove to Potlatch and made it my home base for a few days, attending HPG activities and some of the Bovill Centenary events (I also saw a deer and a bear).

I had lived in a Company town in Western Australia and was interested in the changes in Potlatch since the town site facilities were given or sold to the inhabitants in the 1950's. There are many reminders of the Company era but I was particularly impressed with the Administration Building, now City Hall. Magnificent!! And the restoration efforts on the WI&MRy Co. depot. I was pleased to see how many of the original houses still remained, with many of them showing evidence of much TLC in their restoration.

"I was fortunate enough to stay in one of these old houses. Although significantly restored you could still imagine what living there was like in earlier days."

Peter on staying at the Laird House B&B



Peter Scarfe