

The C/DPHS is an association of individuals dedicated to the preservation of the history of our community. To the preservation of the region's oral history, literary history, social history, graphic and pictorial history, and our history as represented by the region's artifacts and structures. To the preservation of this history for future generations. To the art of making this common heritage accessible to the public. And to the act of collaborating with other individuals and organizations sharing similar goals.

THE
CLAYTON/DEER PARK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mortarboard

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The Arcadia Orchards Film

How Don Reiter

Saved an Antique Film of Unique Historical Significance

by

Wally Lee Parker

It might have just been a spur of the moment thing — one of those random impulses young people often get that, on reflection, don't seem to make much sense. After all, what was Don Reiter going to do with two (or was it three) reels of 35mm movie film? Regardless, as best he can recall it was sometime in 1953 that he took them home — home at that time being his parent's farm.

Don graduated from Deer Park High school in 1952. For the next three years he supplemented his farm income by working evenings as a movie projectionist in Deer Park. The first year he spent at Deer Park's inside movie theater — the "*Family Theater*." That theater, located in the northeast corner of the old Olsen Hotel building at Crawford and Main, was owned by Deer Park's mayor, Earl Mix, but operated by Wayne and Luella Mackey. In 1953 the Mackeys, intent on getting Deer Park's new drive-in theater going, put the old inside theater into mothballs. They tasked Don with cleaning out the upstairs projection booth, instructing him to throw away all the accumulated junk. Among said junk were the two — or was it three — dust covered reels in question.

Rather than dropping them in the boxes destined for Deer Park's garbage dump, Don, on sudden impulse, took the reels home.

Well, maybe not such a sudden impulse. As Don's wife, Mary Jo says, "*Don's always been a history buff. He's fascinated by anything like that.*"

As a history buff, Don would surely have listened to the town's elders whenever they reminisced about the old Arcadia Orchards Company. Doubtless at least a few of those stories recalled warm summer days spent splashing in the cool flow of the Arcadia's water flumes. Others about watching box after box of apples being packed into freight cars at the town's railroad siding. Any such memories would have had to have been dated from before the company's demise in the early 1930s. Then too, Don must have heard most every newcomer to the area ask about those inexplicable monoliths scattered across the countryside — the weathered remains of concrete siphons that once funneled water throughout the orchard company's sprawling irrigation system. Curiosity about those hulking artifacts even today keeps the story of the Arcadia — or at least various myths about the

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Arcadia Orchards Company — alive.

When inspecting the dusty reels, Don doubtless would have unspooled a few feet, held the strip up to the light, and tried to figure out what the films were about — much as most anybody coming across a box of old home movies long hidden in the attic might do. If it was what's now designated as reel #1 of the Arcadia film he unspooled those few feet from, he should have been able to read the first few frames of the movie's title sequence — the first cells quite clearly announcing "*Arcadia Apple Orchards.*"

Sixty years later and Don can't recall having unspooled any of the film during his assigned cleanup task. But he does agree it would have been a reasonable thing to do. And if he did, that was likely the source of his decision to take the reels home for safe keeping rather than throwing them out.

Of course, all the above is just speculation — since memories do fade.

As for why Don and Mary Jo offered to donate the reels to the historical society in the late summer of 2011, Mary Jo explained, "*We didn't know for certain that they were about the Arcadia Orchards Company, but we suspected. We picked the worse looking reel — leaving the better reel alone just in case the films proved of real value and our unspooling could somehow damage it — then unspooled enough of that reel to see images of some pieces of machinery.*"

Since the better looking reel — reel #1 — is the one with the opening sequence, Don and Mary Jo wouldn't have seen the film's title.

Don continues to entertain the nagging recollection that he'd originally brought three reels home from the theater — not just the two donated. One possible explanation is that Don recalls bringing three objects home — two reels of film and the metal container enclosing one of those reels. Could the sixty intervening years have muddled the memory of those three items into three separate reels?

Maybe yes. Maybe no.

Mike Reiter, Don's cousin, reported



Opening titles film cell.

that another cousin, Craig Olson, recalled finding a roll of film in a woodshed on the Reiter farm many years ago. Since Herb and Esther Reiter still lived in the "*big house*" at the time, Craig dates the incident as having occurred prior to their moving off the dairy in 1957. Unrolling a few feet of the reel, Craig saw images of what appeared to be a "*piece of heavy equipment. Possibly an early crawler tractor.*" A few days later he returned to find that Don's oldest boy — little more than a toddler then — had also found the film, and unrolled it down the driveway. What happened to that particular roll of film afterwards, Craig can't say.

Was the "*piece of heavy equipment*" Craig recalls seeing the same as the "*pieces of machinery*" Don and Mary Jo saw on the "*worse looking*" of the two reels they donated to the society — reel #2? Or was Craig's "*piece of heavy equipment*" something on the unaccounted for third reel — the hypothetical one? As Mike says, "*We'll probably never know.*"

But what we do know is that the two reels Don and Mary Jo donated turned out to be a promotional film — a silent motion picture — created by the Arcadia Orchards Company, and that this cinematic advertisement gives us a unique insight into that company's once existent holding. It also captures scenes of the nearby city of Spokane that may very well prove to be the earliest surviving motion

picture of that town.

And all of this is attributable to Don Reiter's impulsive decision some sixty years ago to not throw these priceless films in the dustbin.

According to the historical society's minutes, Don and Mary Jo delivered the reels to the society on August 13th, 2011 — oddly enough, close to if not exactly 100 years after the bulk of the film is believed to have been shot.

The society's vice-president, Pete Coffin, volunteered to assess the condition of the film and determine the nature of the imag-

es contained on the film. Based on his findings, Pete was then to make a set of recommendations regarding the ultimate disposition of the film.

The story of the film's restoration deserves an article of its own — said article being currently under construction. Yet after all is said, there's likely to be one mystery remaining.

Was there ever a third reel? And if so, what did it contain?

———— *end* ————

Working Wages *Wages Paid by Milan's Lumber Company in 1907 & '08*

by

Wally Lee Parker

A Tariff Hearing's transcript published by the Ways and Means Committee of the U. S. House of Representatives in 1909 lists, among other things, the wages being paid by the Spokane Lumber Company at their Milan, Washington, operation in both 1907 and 1908. That list is reproduced on pages 876 and 877 of this issue.

One of the most interesting things about this list is the fact that the wages being paid for common laborers in 1908 were 11.1% less than those being offered in 1907. Such would seem to suggest an economic downturn. In fact, unemployment statistics indicate that nationwide joblessness increased from 2.8% in 1907 to 8% in 1908. As for why this downturn occurred, the story beneath seems to echo much more recent events.

Most authorities attribute the economic slowdown of 1908 to 1907's bank panic. As with most things financial, the truth appears to be much more elusive — and the divergent opinions offered often highly col-

ored by the best financial interest of whoever's explaining their particular version of the truth.

Historical data suggests that the American stock market saw a significant expansion between 1904 and 1906. Said expansion began to retreat after the tremors and resultant fires sparked by San Francisco's devastating 1906 earthquake. That quake destroyed 80% of the city, leaving insurance companies in both the United States and Great Britain obligated to cover 235 million dollars of the estimated 400 million in losses (these being 1906 dollars).

A simple inflation calculator shows the original 235 million dollar insurance liability expanding to just over 6 billion dollars in today's currency.

Though the inflation adjusted numbers don't seem that large when compared to the cost of a major disaster nowadays, the liability incurred by insurance underwriters in 1906 is believed to have increased the overall cost of borrowing in the United States and

***Wages paid by “Spokane Lumber Company,” Milan, Washington.
 (All wages not otherwise specified are by the day.)***

	<i>1907</i>	<i>1908</i>
Saw mill foreman and millwright _____	\$100 per month.	\$100 per month.
Chief engineer of whole plant and kilns _____	\$100 per month.	\$100 per month.
Other engineer, night and day, saw and planning mill _____	\$2.75 and \$3.	\$2.50 (day of ten hours).
Sawyer _____	\$6 and board.	\$6 (no board).
Filer _____	\$6 (ten hours).	\$6 (ten hours), when run nights, \$4 extra. He pays his helper \$2.50 to \$3.
Setter _____	\$3.	\$3 does it all.
Carriage rider _____	\$3 (changed with setter).	\$2.50, tail end only.
Offbearer (tail saw) _____	\$2.50 and \$2.75.	\$2.25.
Edger man _____	\$3.50.	\$3.
Tail edger and slasher tender _____	\$2.25.	\$2.
Tail trimmer _____	\$2.25.	\$2.
Trimmer _____	\$2.75.	\$2.50.
Lumber marker on chains _____	\$2.75 and \$3.	\$2.50.
Sorters _____	\$2.25.	\$2.
Lathman _____	\$3.50.	\$3.
Bolter and helper _____	\$2.75 and \$3.	\$2.50.
Stock picker _____	\$2.25.	\$2.
Slab men _____	\$2.25.	\$2.
Watchman _____	\$2.25 (no board).	\$2 and board (special man, here seven years).

Continued on next page.

England because the underwriting financial institutions tried to recoup their profit shortfalls by raising interest rates — setting into motion a general weakening of the markets.

The first significant market drop of 1907 occurred in mid-March. That was deflected by the intervention of the Secretary of the Treasury. Though diverted, the drop did leave an obviously nervous market vulnerable to the cascading dominos of a mid-October attempt by a group of Wall Street wolves to

corner the market in copper.

As the October scheme quickly unwound, the share prices of the target company, United Copper, plummeted, and a number of companies associated with the schemers became insolvent — including the State Savings Bank of Butte, Montana.

But that was just the start. Institutions in any way associated with the schemers and their immediate associates began to suffer massive withdrawals as depositors, fearing

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	<i>1907</i>	<i>1908</i>
Fireman _____	25 cents per hour (twelve hours).	22½ cents per hour (twelve hour shifts).
Fireman helper when necessary _____	22½ cents per hour.	20 cents per hour.
Teamster on green lumber into yard _____	25 cents per hour.	22½ cents per hour (ten hour shifts).
Kiln men _____	\$2.50.	\$2.25.
Dry lumber shed, grader and sawyer _____	\$2.50.	\$2.25.
Blacksmith _____	\$3.50.	\$3.
Oiler and foreman's helper _____	\$2.50.	\$2.
Yardmen _____	\$2.50.	\$2.25.
Lumber pilers, contract _____ They pay their help 25 cents to 27½ cents per hour this year. In 1907 paid 30 and 32½ cents.	30 cents per 1,000.	25 cents per hour and 2 cents bonus at end of year.
Dry lumber teamster _____	\$2.25.	\$2.
Wagon loaders (for shipment or to planers) _____	\$2.25.	\$2.
Planing-mill foreman _____	\$90 per month.	30 cents per hour and overtime.
Planer feeders (big services and stickers) _____	\$2.75.	\$2.50.
Planer feeders (small machines) _____	\$2.50.	\$2.25.
Tail planers _____	\$2.25.	\$2.
Shipping clerk _____	\$90 per month.	30 cents per hour.
Head grader and factory plant shipper, work anywhere _____	35 cents per hour.	30 cents per hour.
Car loaders and graders _____	30 cents per hour.	25 and 27½ cents per hour.
Helpers _____	\$2.25.	\$2.
Other common laborers _____	\$2.25.	\$2.

Continued from last page.

further collapses in the financial system, panicked.

The cascading failures of banks and trust companies only halted after an infusion of capital was organized by financier J. P. Morgan.

Though a total collapse was diverted, the damage done created an economic contraction that became fully realized during the first months of 1908. And as usual, it was the working people furthest from Wall Street's

Machiavellian schemes that paid most heavily.

The Milan saw mill's softening wage structure was a graphic reminder that wages and availability labor (especially in those pre-union and pre-minimum wage days) was and is very much a part of the basic capitalistic presumption of supply and demand. Simply put, the greater number of workers vying for any given job, the lower the wages an employer needs to pay to purchase their labor. In other words, skilled or any other kind of labor

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only has the edge in wage negotiations when that type of labor is in short supply. Due to the downturn, there was no shortage of common labor in 1908.

There's also the simple matter that during economic downturns manufacturers are often forced to reduce labor cost. If lowering wages isn't possible, then by curtailing production or shutting down altogether.

The impact of 1907's panic on Washington State was outlined by Charles F. Hubbard, the state's Commissioner of Labor, in his introduction to the 1907-1908 edition of the *Sixth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics*.

Hubbard wrote, "Toward the fall of 1907 ... the financial crisis which marked the closing months of the year, spread to this state, seriously crippling all lines of industry and throwing thousands of men out of employment. The lumber industry, further handicapped by an unsettled struggle with the railroads over freight rates, was brought almost to a standstill, and there was a general shrinkage of output among all lines of manufacturing industry.

"Labor bore its full share of this unexpected catastrophe. Discharged workmen from the mills and logging camps flocked to the cities, which already were suffering from a general suspension of building and other activities. In consequence, it became necessary in certain

of the larger centers to provide for the care of the unemployed on a considerable scale. A strong effort was made by local authorities to cope with the situation by authorizing public improvements, thus giving work to many of the unemployed. In this manner the stigma of being the recipients of charity was taken from hundreds of self-respecting men who through no fault of their own had been temporarily thrown out of employment.

"With the opening of spring, a visible improvement was manifest and from that time on the situation has steadily brightened. A substantial drop in the price of all building materials followed the panic and the opportunity was extensively improved by those who were in a position to build."

Regarding the state's various efforts at work projects, since 1899 all public work contracts issued in the state have been subject to a law stipulating eight hour workdays. To clarify that this law was intended to include all governmental entities subservient to the State's overriding authority, in 1903 the words "or any political subdivision created by (Washington State) laws" were added to the relevant statute.

It's reasonable to assume that the eight hour law was not at that time binding on private companies not directly involved in public works projects. As such, companies were still able to set their own work hours. Doubtless

Spending A Years Worth of Wages (\$600)
In 1908
A Family of Five (three children under 14)

1908 Dollars

<i>Necessities</i>		
Food _____	48%	\$288
Shelter _____	20%	\$120
Clothing _____	12%	\$72
Heat and Light _____	6%	\$36
	86%	\$516
<i>Cultural Wants</i>		
Everything else _____	14%	\$84
	100%	\$600

many continued with ten or twelve hour days. As for the workweek, six days were common, and seven day workweeks not unheard of. In fact, nationwide the normal workweek in 1908 averaged 54 hours.

The wage schedule at Milan's saw mill — with certain exceptions — doesn't specify the number of hours needed to earn a day's pay. But from an historical perspective, the typical day was unlikely to have been only eight hours long.

Assuming a six day workweek, or 312 days a year at work, those earning \$2.00 a day in 1908 would have been taking home \$624 a year.

The percentage table illustrated on the prior page (*and again below with all the dollar amounts converted to today's dollars*) is a modified version of a similar table presented in an article titled "*The Standard of Living — Up or Down?*" That article was found in the March, 1916 issue of the *American Economic Review*. The table gave a simplified breakdown of the likely dispersal of a typical year's wages (*set at \$600*) within a typical family of five in 1908 — a family where all three of the children are under fourteen years of age.

By specifying the children's ages in this manner, the author seems to be alluding to the fact that working-class children fourteen and over were generally expected to do at least

some work outside the home — and add the majority of any wages earned to the household upkeep.

The author of the *Economic Review's* article, Professor Henry Pratt Fairchild (1880—1956), was a highly controversial figure at the time. Considering the Professor's "*progressive*" political leanings (*or Marxist, according to some*), it's likely his article wasn't intended to accurately reflect the spending patterns of the average working-class family, but rather to suggest the essence of what a working-class family's quality of life would have been.

As previously noted, the yearly income of one of Milan's "*common laborers*" — assuming full time work at six days a week — should come to \$624 a year, or \$15,941.61 in today's dollars. Assuming ten hour work days (*a sixty hour work week not being out of the question*), that should translate into an hourly wage of 20¢ an hour (*which seems consistent with the charts on pages 876 and 877*). Recalculated against today's dollars, that would come to \$5.11 an hour.

Assuming an eight hour work day and six day week (*48 hours*), we'd calculate an hourly wage of \$6.38 — still below the current federal minimum of \$7.25 per hour.

The takeaway from these simplified calculations is that a common laborer working

	<i>Spending A Years Worth of Wages (\$15328.47)</i>	
	<i>In 1908</i>	
	<i>A Family of Five (three children under 14)</i>	
	<i>Necessities</i>	
	Food _____	48% \$7357.66
	Shelter _____	20% \$3065.69
	Clothing _____	12% \$1839.42
	Heat and Light _____	6% \$919.71
		86% \$13182.48
	<i>Cultural Wants</i>	
	Everything else _____	14% \$2145.99
		100% \$15328.47

2014 Dollars

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at Milan, Washington, in 1908 would be considered a member of the working poor by today's standards.

Of course any sampling of comparative living expenses separated by one hundred years of progress are problematic, to say the least. It may be that the element we're not seeing in the various inflation adjustments is that the standard of living for a large portion of America's working people in 1908 would be better compared with that found in one of today's 2nd or 3rd world nations than the industrial/urban complex we now inhabit.

For example, the idea of the vast majority of wage earners budgeting just 6% of their income for heat and light in today's world would be absurd.

Consider that the 20% of a working man's income was then needed to shelter a family of five — that money typically being spent to rent a house or apartment that was without electrical service or inside plumbing. That 20% would be the equivalent of \$255 a month in today's dollars.

The 12% for clothing would allow \$30.65 per person per month. The 48% food allowance allotting \$28 a week in today's currency for each family member.

Consider the 14% Professor Fairchild allotted to "Cultural Wants." As Fairchild notes ... "The items of expense which are included under cultural wants in the \$600 family includes outgo for doctors, medicine, dentistry, religion, education, saving, recreation, insurance, etc., items which are regarded as utter necessities by more well-to-do families."

Could all the above noted "Cultural Wants" be purchased for a family of five at today's equivalent of \$178.83 a month?

Considering the number of people doing without medical or dental care — or depending on charity or government subsidies for such things in today's world — it appears that the answer would be no.

In today's world, most working class American families need at least two wage-earners to make ends meet. In families with a single wage-earner — especially at the current

minimum wage — that person usually needs to work two or more jobs, and a number of hours at least equal to if not exceeding those worked by common labor in 1908 to even continue treading water.

Simple logic would suggest that the smaller a family's income, the larger the percentage of that income they will have to spend for basics such as food and shelter. That was true in 1908, and that is just as true today.

The above reality is likely what compelled Professor Fairchild to caution ...

"In a democracy scarcely any public question is of greater importance than the standard of living of the common people. It is essential to know what is the actual level of this standard of living, and whether it is improving or deteriorating, not only because these facts are significant in themselves, but because they furnish the key to the solution of a number of other great problems. In the United States, diametrically opposite views are repeatedly expressed, with great conviction, as to the course of the standard of living, and each of these views finds ready acceptance with various audiences, according to their prejudices and preconceived notions.

"... It is perfectly possible, as history has repeatedly demonstrated, for the standard of a society as a whole to be improving, while that of one or more groups within the society is declining. Moreover, if the distribution of economic power within a society is very unequal, it may happen that the group, the standard of which is declining, may constitute a very large proportion, even a majority, of the total population."

The fact that a sociology professor writing in 1916 could outline the very debate regarding income disparity being argued in today's headlines is profoundly suggestive of the probability that history will eventually repeat itself in the form of an era of massive social and economic turmoil similar to that experienced worldwide during the earlier decades of the 20th century.

———— end ————

*Minutes of the
Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society
— April 12, 2014 —*

In attendance: Sharon Clark, Kay Parkin, Wally Parker, Pat Parker, Betty Burdette, Lonnie Jenkins, Ella Jenkins, Peter Coffin, Judy Coffin, Mary Jo Reiter, Don Reiter, Mark Wagner, Duane Costa, Mike Reiter, Roberta Reiter, Marilyn Reilly, Sue Rehms, Donald Ball, Grace Hubal, Bill Sebright, and Bob Gibson.

Society President Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. He reported: 1) We received a Leno Prestini print of "*Doors of Life*" in the mail. There was no return address, so we don't know from where it came. 2) Dennis Christianson, Homelink history teacher, requested a copy of the Reiter Arcadia Orchard's film. He plans to join the CDPHS. 3) We have received many memorial donations for Warren Nord, Art Stelting and Lorraine Ball. 4) Marilyn Reilly brought the 1915 DPHS annual, the Senior Cycle, the first annual published. It was donated by Marilyn Strong Taylor and is in great shape, especially being 99 years old. 5) Marilyn Taylor also sent a group picture taken in front of the east entrance on the north side of the old Deer Park High School. It seems to have been taken in the 1920s or 1930s. Mike Reiter suggested we compare the faces in the photo to the graduates on the walls of the Deer Park Council Chambers.

Society Treasurer, Mark Wagner reported: Regular checking account balance \$4,609.82. A check was written for \$81.51 to Wally Parker for printing expenses, \$100.00 for Pizza Factory. Deposits were \$884.25. The web hosting account had \$148.06. Withdrawals were \$10.95 and a service charge of \$5.00.

Society Secretary Grace Hubal reported: 1) She sent a welcome to the Society card to Nancy Hartley. 2) Sent out numerous

thank you notes for donations in the memory of Warren Nord, Art Stelting, and Lorraine Ball. 3) Sent a thank you card to Marc Stelting for the DVD of pictures of Art that was shown at Art's service.

Society Vice President Pete Coffin reported: 1) Have given Editor W. Parker a manuscript titled "*Deer Park's First Sawmill Moves*." The manuscript documents the move of the 1903 Standard Lumber Mill from the site north of the old creamery to a site near the Kane town site (south of Northport, WA.) and its subsequent destruction by fire. 2) The Peter J. Kelly manuscript mentioned in last month's report has been delayed. I have made contact with one of Mr. Kelly's partner's grandchildren and may be able to acquire a trove of historical Deer Park photographs of the People's Supply interior, photographs of the early Catholic Church as well as other early Deer Park subjects. Hopefully, I will get a picture of Mr. Kelly to put into the manuscript. 3) On assignment from President Sebright, I have corresponded with Mr. George Harper who has sent the Society a DVD set of 17 blueprint drawings of the Spokane National Guard Armory from where our eagle came. In the past we had sent him data about Fort George Wright and the shooting ranges there. 4) Have been exchanging emails with the owner, John Crow, of the Deer Park Lumber mill site. He has expressed interest in seeing some of the data the society has about the Arcadia Orchards Company's Dragoon Creek reservoir. I have an appointment to meet with him at 2 PM today. 5) KSPS contacted me confirming their permission to use portions of the Arcadia Film in a clip on Avista they are constructing. Proper credit will be given to the Reiter family and the CDPHS. 6) Last week I had my last scheduled chemotherapy.

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If a PET-CT scan later this month shows no cancer in my body I could be on my way to remission.

Print editor, Wally Parker reported: 1) The April 2014 Mortarboard #72 was distributed. The articles included: *Abraham T. Williams, Williams Valley's namesake*; *The Deer Park Area's First Non-Native Visitor*; and *Letters, Email, Bouquets & Brickbats*. 2) 20 copies of the *Collected Newsletter, Volume Eighteen*, have been printed and are available. This issue contains newsletters #68 through #71.

Society Webmaster, Marie Morrill reported by email from Cincinnati, Ohio: 1) I attended a workshop at the MAC regarding matching fund grants. We could consider trying for a grant in a couple of years if we have a project that would qualify. We are too late to try for it in 2014 and it comes up only every two years.

Peter Coffin moved that: Editor Wally Parker purchase a Brother laser printer using his discretion. Mark seconded. Discussion: The advantage would be to separate out all the expenses. We'd need an extended warranty as well. The cost would be somewhere between \$250 — \$300 for printer and warranty. The motion was passed unanimously.

The Clayton Brickyard Day Meeting held March 24 at the Pizza Factory was a success. Over 30 people attended, and the breakfast, fun run, quilt show, parade, and picnic will all happen. The CDPHS will have a display downstairs at the Clayton Grange. The Grange will be the center of the day. A follow-up meeting is scheduled, Thursday, April 17, 6 PM at the Pizza Factory. Mark is checking to see how the Society's insurance can cover some of the events.

Mike Reiter Civic update: Ms. Hartley asked questions at DP City Hall about building a new civic center.

We discussed the Eagle repair: Wally suggested putting a cover (roof) over it to protect it. Tom Taylor is one of the brick masons that worked on it during restoration.

Mike Reiter passed around a picture taken in the old Tribune Office showing Ray Jarrett's TV repair shop.

Next meeting: Saturday, May 10, 2014, 9 AM at the Clayton Drive-In.

Meeting adjourned at 9:50 AM.

The meeting minutes submitted by Grace Hubal, Secretary.

———— end ————

Letters, Emails, Bouquets & Brickbats

— or —

Bits of Chatter, Trivia & Notices All Strung Together

... Airport Manager Comments ...

The lead story in our February issue — Mortarboard #70 — was titled “*An Airport for Deer Park*.” On April 1st that story received the following comment from Penni Loomis, manager of the Deer Park Airport.

“Please thank Pete Coffin for his excellent article on the history of the Deer

Park Airport. In spite of the fact that I have managed the facility since 1993, I still learned facts about the airport that only a diligent historian would discover.

“We are currently classified by the Washington State Department of Transportation as a Regional Service Airport with over 30,000 operations each year. Many of those operations represent firefighting aircraft based at the airport for rapid response to wild

fires in eastern Washington during the region's fire season in July and August each year.

"In addition to aircraft operations, the northwest/southeast runway that is no longer used by aircraft is used by law enforcement agencies for Emergency Vehicle Operations Course (EVOC) training, recreational rally-cross driving, and remote control airplane enthusiasts. We currently have three aircraft maintenance facilities and a flight school training pilots to meet the increasing need for commercial pilots in the airlines.

"I would be honored to provide an on-site tour if any of your members would like to join me.

"Thanks, again for the historical perspective published in the Mortarboard."

... won't float indefinitely ...

One of the editor's jobs is to stir through all the letters and emails — all the little bits of online and offline chatter and trivia — and gather together any artifacts of substance or curiosity that rise to the surface. Then it's a matter of sorting through all this bric-à-brac for anything that might be of future value. If such is discovered, archiving the tidbit in the *Mortarboard's* "Letters" segment just seems the wise thing to do.

Archeologists do something similar when investigating an ancient site. Any bits of pottery found are labeled and kept. In the lab, it's sometimes possible to puzzle a few of those pieces together. And every once in awhile a complete artifact can be reconstructed from once fragmented pieces.

If nothing else, saving those pieces invites further examination — or in our case, further comment. One never knows where such an extended conversation might lead. For example ...

The minutes of the society's March 8th meeting contained a question that had been brought to Bill Sebright's attention by Vince Janson and Jerry Davis. They wanted to know if anyone recalled hearing about a Volkswagen

being driven on the frozen surface of Loon Lake in the 1960s. Supposedly the little "bug" dropped through the ice and is still at the bottom of the lake.

The conversation rising from that note in the minutes didn't answer the actual question, but it did result in some interesting comments. Said extended thread started with an email from society member Mike Reiter.

"I talked to Craig Olson about a similar story I had heard. Craig said that he and a friend of his drove the friend's mother's Volkswagen across a frozen-over Loon Lake, hitting speeds up to 70 mph. Another fellow was there in his 1950 Mercury. Neither car fell through the ice.

"Craig also mentioned that his grandmother, Mabel Olson, told a story about his granddad, Albert Olson, losing a team of horses and the load of logs they were pulling across the lake — that back in the 1920s. He was going to ask his dad, Robert, if he remembers that story."

The first part of Mike's email reminds me of one of Volkswagen's classic advertisements, this one from 1967. Beneath the illustration of a floating "Beetle," the text cautioned, *"Keep in mind, even if it could definitely float, it couldn't float indefinitely. So drive around the big puddles. Especially if they're big enough to have a name."*

Wise words indeed.

Pulling the thread of conversation off in another direction — though still Volkswagen related — I dimly recall spending a few minutes of one long ago evening watching a sideways spinning VW sketch carbonized rubber streaks on a smooth concrete pad near Deer Park High's north entrance. I wrote to Rick Hodges about the incident.

"I can't remember who was driving, but I do recall a brand new Beetle, packed with about six kids, burning tight circles on the concrete pad near the high school's north parking area late one night. That was somewhere in the early to mid-1960s. As I recall, it was someone's folk's car. I suspect that vehicle had ongoing suspension problems after

that — supposedly of “unknown” origin, I’m sure. And likely attributed to those inferior foreign parts and poor German workmanship.”

Due to the low purchase price and good gas mileage, a lot of us drove Volkswagens in the 1960s and early ‘70s. (During the 1970s, all those costs went through the roof.) Considering that the horsepower ratings for “bugs” of that era were in the high thirties or low forties, it’s a wonder they could do 70 mph, or cut donuts on dry (though smooth) concrete. But under the right conditions, they could.

As both a Deer Park High School graduate and former “Beetle” owner, Rick, replying to my note, assured me ...

“That Volkswagen thing at the high school, it wasn’t me. Honest!

“On another point, the mention of losing a team and load of logs in Loon Lake reminded me that my grandpa got a sled full of logs stuck on the railroad tracks at the Deer Park saw mill’s entry, and it was hit by the train. He managed to get the team unhooked in time but lost the sled and timber. Somewhere I have a clipping from the Deer Park

Union with this story.”

All we have above are a few collected memories. In themselves they might be cute, humorous, sad, or disturbing, but they’re not really stories. They’re like those bits of pottery at the aforementioned archeological dig. Fragments of something larger. If we can gather up enough related fragments and puzzle them together, then we’ll have a story.

And that’s why we have our society contacts listed below. We want the conversations printed here, and the stories printed throughout the *Mortarboards*, to continue. We want questions to be asked. We want new conversations to start. All you have to do to do either is contact one of the people mentioned below — or anyone else connected with the society for that matter.

You may think that what you have to say is unimportant. That box of dusty photos, old letters, ancient documents in the attic — you may think they’re just trash. But sometimes that’s all we need to create a story. To find out, just give us a call or drop us a note. After that, making history only takes ink.

———— Wally Lee Parker ————

Society Contacts

We encourage anyone with observations, concerns, corrections, or divergent opinions regarding the contents of these newsletters to write the society or contact one or more of the individuals listed below. Resultant conversations can remain confidential if so desired.

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———— C/DPHS ————

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