

Rainier Valley HERITAGE NEWS



Volume 21, Issue 2

Fall 2012

We love a Parade!

RVHS had a hand-carried parade entry designed by Board member Roger Ford in the Rainier Valley Heritage Festival parade this year. Roger designed award-winning floats for many years for the Rainier Valley Businessmen's Association (the RV Chamber of Commerce's predecessor) and the Seattle



Photo credit: Evelyn Fairchild.

Japanese American Citizens League's Seafair entries. Our parade volunteers included Veronica Fairchild, Scott Norman, Tim Burdick and Sheila Harvey, pictured left, as well as Karen O'Brien, Jeannie O'Brien and Cleo Selander. We had a great time sharing history while attending several other

community events this fall, including the Rainier Beach ArtWalk, Mount Baker Day in the Park and Festa Italiana and hosting the kids table at Columbia City Farmer's Market.

Annual Meeting Recap

Our Annual Meeting was held at a new venue for us, the Lakewood Seward Park Community Club. It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces as well as quite a few new ones!

Executive Director, Eleanor Boba and Board member Karen O'Brien shared a wonderful presentation about the making of our new book *Images of America: Rainier Valley*. If you haven't purchased your copy yet, they are available on our website! Next year's Annual Meeting will showcase our current project, *Remembering Garlic Gulch*.

Volunteer of the Year!



Donna Schubert
Photo credit: Evelyn Fairchild.

At the Annual Meeting, we were very pleased to recognize Donna Schubert as our **2012 Buzz Anderson Volunteer of the Year** recipient. Donna's positive attitude and dedication makes her invaluable to the Society.

News and Notes

CCBA Annual Trick or Treating

Wednesday, October 31, 3:30-6:30 pm

Stop by our office for candy and show off your costumes!

Holiday Open House

Saturday, December 1, 4:00-6:00 pm

Join us for our annual holiday open house at our Ferdinand Street office.

Come for cookies; **stay for the**

Columbia City Lighting Festival, 5:00 pm

Rainier Avenue and Hudson Street
Caroling, refreshments and more...

Annual Campaign. Our annual fund-raising campaign begins November 1. Beat the rush to join or renew by sending in the form on the back of this newsletter now. Or renew your RVHS membership with your PayPal account.

Find us on [PayPal](#)

<https://sites.google.com/site/rvhsmembership/>

Office Hours:

Wednesday, 1:00-4:00 pm

Friday, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 pm

Sunday, 10:00 a.m.-1:00 pm

3710 South Ferdinand Street

Check our voice mail (206-723-1663) for last minute changes to this schedule.

E-News:

Opt-in to our E-News, Past is Present.

Just send your email address to

rvhsoffice@aol.com.

Saving green: Help us cut down on mailing costs and save the environment! Submit your email address to RVHsoffice@aol.com and we will deliver your full color newsletter electronically. We will continue to mail a printed newsletter to those who wish it.



RVHS is on **Facebook!** Find the latest news, announcements, and photos on our Facebook page: Rainier Valley Historical.

Board update:


Sheila Harvey and Mary Charles have been appointed Interim President and Vice President of our Board of Directors. They will be serving out the annual terms of Brian Fairchild and Grover Haynes with elections to be held at our 2013 Annual Meeting. Brian and Grover will remain on the Board, just scaling back their responsibilities after many, many years of service.

Support history:

Annual Campaign: 50 in 50

**Rainier Valley Historical Society
50 in 50 Membership Drive**

11/11/12
50 New Members



12/31/12
In 50 days

Your \$30 family membership is critical so that we can...print walking tour maps...update our web site...buy archival supplies...spread the word...staff the office...distribute a newsletter...expand the collection engage the community...support education, and so much more...

Our mission is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret the history and heritage of Rainier Valley and its people, and to promote public involvement in and appreciation of its history and culture.

Join today via PayPal at rainiervalleyhistory.org

Endowment fund

Our endowment fund provides annual support to fund general operations – helping us survive lean times and thrive during more prosperous times. Please consider including RVHS in your estate planning. Your donation or bequest will ensure that RVHS continues to provide benefit to the community for generations to come. For more information, please email us at RVHSendowment@gmail.com. Many thanks to the generosity of our past endowment donors!

Volunteer your time:

Come let us put you to work!

The Rainier Valley Historical Society is in real need of volunteers to help our Board of Directors with several new initiatives. Do you have experience in space planning, marketing, fundraising or organizing events? Express your interest and we'll put you to work! Drop us a line at RVHsvolunteer@gmail.com.

Save the date!

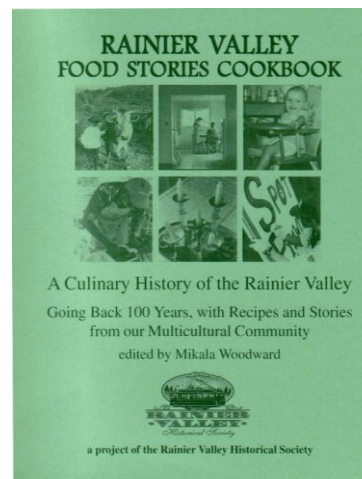
Save the date!



February 8th
Rainier Valley
Historical Society Auction

First annual RVHS dinner and auction details to follow soon - more info @ rainiervalleyhistory.org

Now back in stock: Rainier Valley Food Stories Cookbook



Interspersed with lots of tried and true recipes from blackberry pie made with berries picked in the park to Somali cakes and other treats with a more international influence...

This delightful softbound book provides a fascinating overview of the history of the valley as told through recollections and interviews with community members, past and present, who reminisce about good food and good times.

Purchase a copy for yourself or as a gift. The Rainier Valley Food Stories Cookbook is available in our office or from our website. The cost is \$14.99 plus tax and shipping.

REMEMBERING GARLIC GULCH: EAT, DRINK & BE HAPPY!

In the spring of 2012, RVHS launched its new collection-building project, Remembering Garlic Gulch. This article is based on oral history interviews with Bill Ferrari, Lucy Polet Brusha, Douglas Chiechi, and Vincent "Buster" LaSalle, all descendants of Gaetano and Pasqualina Polet, as well as John Croce.

Gaetano and Pasqualina Polet came from southern Italy in the 1890s with five children; five more were born in Seattle. In short order, they purchased five acres of land and a house at 25th and Atlantic Street, where the I-90 lid is now, with the grand front entrance of Colman School plainly in sight. Louie Polet, their second son, and his siblings were raised in the neighborhood that became known as Garlic Gulch.

The Polets were a self-reliant, resourceful family, and they soon prospered. In 1913 the family opened a succession of small shops, notably Polet's Meat Market & Grocery at 1352 Rainier Avenue. The shop became known as the Atlantic Street Grocery next to Tony LaSalle's shoe repair and Frank Orrico's barbershop.

One side of the store sold grocery staples, including imported Italian olive oil, anchovies, and Romano cheese. Vincent LaSalle recalled, "My grandma [Pasqualina] used to have a big garden. She raised garlic, onions, peppers, tomatoes and round the edge of the garden there was a big fence. And in that fence was raspberries and oh man!!" There were also pears, cherries, and one big Italian prune tree. Any harvest surplus was sold at the family store along with the commercially canned goods and Gai's bread which was delivered daily.

On the other side was a meat market, early on advertising Fresh Italian, French and German sausage. Over the years, a number of men worked as meatcutter: Louie Polet, Alphonse Polet, Bill DeCaro, and George Ferrari who later operated the York Grocery. Vincent LaSalle remembered with relish the fifty-gallon barrel of pickled pig feet in the walk-in icebox.

By December of 1932, Louie Polet had ventured out of Garlic Gulch and was managing Empire Grocery & Meats at 6507 Empire Way, the first of three businesses he would start within a block of each other. His family lived just to the rear on Morgan Street.

In the mid 1930s Louie's Café, a "beer parlor," debuted. Customers could order

Spiced Wine for 20¢ or Bemco's Brewery Fresh Beer along with their food. The Rainier Business Men's Club met at the cafe to discuss street lighting, sewers, and crosswalks and to hear presentations on "Advertising for the Business Man" or "Retail Credit." Seattle's Mayor Arthur B. Langlie, the future governor, was invited to speak to the group in 1939.



Louie's Café was located at 6501 38th Avenue South, just off of Empire Way, in the 1930s and was operated by Louie Polet (second from left) and family. Louie's slogan, "Eat, Drink & Be Happy," is posted above the bar. Photo courtesy of Lucy Polet Brusha.

By 1940 Louie and his wife Violet were offering diners Spaghetti and Ravioli, Italian Meat Balls, Italian Prawns, Polet's Chicken a la Casserole, and Hot Garlic Bread at Polet's Italian Dinners. It was one of Seattle's first family-style Italian restaurants – red and white checkered tablecloths, breadsticks, antipasto and all.

Their daughters Charlotte and Dorothy and granddaughter Lucy worked making the raviolis and meatballs, cleaning the chickens (oh, the cold water!), and grilling the garlic bread along with waitressing, hostessing and cashiering. Even Violet's mother, Emma Bristow, chipped in, spending many an hour peeling garlic for the restaurant.

Lucy Brusha remembers "my aunt Charlotte, who was a waitress, on Sundays in those days you couldn't have alcohol, I believe, so her favorite customers including my husband would come and she would bring them a coffee cup and a saucer and would say 'here's your coffee,' but it wasn't coffee, it was wine."

After Louie passed away in 1949, Violet Polet kept the restaurant operating until the mid 1960s when she sold the business. Later the building was demolished and a stripmall now stands in its place.

The Atlantic Street Grocery was owned and operated by John Croce's family between 1946 and 1954. John recalls: "During that time they built a freeway and everything else and isolated our store into a little island. You had to cross

three sets of lights to get to us, and access to the store was very limited. They starved us to death!"

While neither Atlantic Street Grocery nor Polet's Italian Dinners exist any longer, the family is still going strong. The Polet Family Association was established in 1934 to provide funds for the educational pursuits of talented family members. Each year the association organizes a family Christmas party. With about 150 people expected this year, the celebration will be held at Our Lady of Mount Virgin Church where the stained glass window dedicated to the Gaetano Polet Family in 1915 remains to this day as a reminder of the family's early days in Garlic Gulch.

-- Nancy Dulaney

HONOR ROLL

Many thanks to our members and supporters who make our work possible! Below are those whose gifts we received between March 1, 2012 and August 31, 2012. Help us keep the record straight. Send corrections or omissions to us at 206-723-1663 or rvhsoffice@aol.com.

History Makers*

Deehan Wyman, Wyman Youth Trust

**History Makers are those making donations of \$350 or more in any category.*

New Lifetime Members

John and Mary Charles
Martin Patricelli

Special Gifts for "Remembering Garlic Gulch"

Mark De Rocco
Nancy Dulaney
Martin Patricelli, Patricelli Tile Company
Sal Vacca

Memberships and Gifts to Operating Fund

Scott Amick
Wendy Call and Aran Falsafi
Gloria Cauble **Lifetime Member**
Zora Chaney
Dave Chesnutt
Bill Cranston
Sandra R. Hagan
Mark and Ann Halvorson *in honor of Lee Stone Powell*
Nancy Hevly
Donna Mikula
Boyd Pickrell and Ann Melone
Sharon Richards and Terrance Chriest *in memory of the Richards Family*
Steve Rinn
Louise Ryan
Mrs. Thomas J. Sisson **Lifetime Member** *in memory of Thomas Sisson*
Frances McNabb Stowell
James W. Telgenhoff
Marilyn and Dick Tilbury **Lifetime Member**
Mikala Woodward

Taylor's Mill – Rainier Beach

by Buzz Anderson, from "Days Gone By" archives, published in 1999

Taylor's Mill was located on Lake Washington, one mile south of Rainier Beach near the present Seattle City limits. Sanford Taylor's first mill was also on Lake Washington but farther north at the base of a bluff near Leschi. Conveyor belts connected the mill with planing mills at the top of the bluff.



Taylor's Mill owner, John Sanford Taylor, is standing on the far left. Photo on loan from Ron Edge.

About 1901 heavy rains caused the bluff to slide and severely damaged the operation. Taylor loaded their machinery onto a barge, moved south and set up the mill. The business was also known as the Rainier Beach Lumber Co.

The workers at the mill formed a small community the post office designated as "Tamil." Although the town was never incorporated, "Tamil" appeared in the 1911-12 Polk Directory. The names of all the residents appeared in the directory and it listed their job descriptions at the mill. The mill employed about 100 workers but only 78 were listed in the directory. The others that didn't live there probably commuted on the streetcar line's special car that showed the name "Taylor's Mill Express" on the front. The only name in the directory not associated with the mill was the branch post office clerk listed as "M. R. Metcalf, clerk in charge."

The building now on the corner of 68th and Rainier was originally the town's grocery store with apartments above. For some time it was the "Lakeside Tavern" with one side of their sign turned upside down. Just south of the grocery store the mill had built some bunkhouses for the workers.

When the mill first opened, Rainier Avenue had not been constructed beyond Rainier Beach Station. Lumber was delivered by railcars on the streetcar line either south to Renton or north to Seattle. Lumber delivered locally to the many homes that were being built was hauled on a wagon pulled by a team of horses.

The only road in and out of the mill went south along 68th Avenue and followed Taylor Creek, also known as Dead Horse Creek. The area, still thickly wooded, is now known as Lakeridge Park. The road made an abrupt right turn, climbed the steep hill now named Holyoke Street up to Waters Avenue and then on to deliver the lumber to the location of the new house being constructed.

At that time however, and still referred to by some, it was known as the "Dead Horse Canyon" road. It was necessary to add a second team of horses to the lumber wagon to climb the hill and it was rumored that one of the teams went off the road, killing one of the horses. This explains the name "Dead Horse."

When the mill first started operating, their supply of logs came mostly from the heavily wooded Skyway area. The trees were very large, mostly Douglas Fir. To get them to the mill a chute was constructed from the top of the hill, over the streetcar tracks, and down to the mill.

In an Interview with Mort Taylor at the age of 100, he said several relatives worked at the mill. His Uncle Bill was a logger, Uncle Dave operated the boom, his dad was foreman and one of the girls in the family ran the mill restaurant. The pay for loading lumber was 22 cents an hour.

You can find more stories by Buzz Anderson on our website.

Collections Update

Garlic Gulch Remembered

This year the Rainier Valley Historical Society is exploring Garlic Gulch, the Italian community that shaped the north end of the valley in the first half of the 20th century and beyond. This collection-building project, **Remembering Garlic Gulch**, aims to fill in gaps in our archives and our understanding of this vibrant ever-changing community. While much of the focus may be on Italian families and businesses, we are interested in the stories of all groups.

To follow our progress, see pictures we have collected, and hear audio clips from our oral history recordings, please visit our website: www.rainiervalleyhistory.org.

Grazie!



Rainier Jewelers was a fixture at 4852 Rainier Avenue South, owned by the Mondale family, until repeated robberies forced it to close in 1974.



This clock hung inside Rainier Jewelers from the 1950s until the 1970s. Pictured here are Suellen Mondale McHugh and Guy Mondale. Photos courtesy of Suellen McHugh and Marlys Mondale.

Recent additions to our Accessioned Archives include:

Photos and printed materials related to Robin Weiss. Donor, Stuart Weiss.

Oral histories: John Croce, Lucy Salle, Bill Ferrari, Douglas Chiechi, Lucy Polet Brusha, Dino Patricelli.

Audiotape, Columbia Pioneers Meetings of 1972, 1976, 1981. Donor, Darrell Anderson.

Neon clock from Rainier Jewelers. Donor, Suellen Mondale McHugh.

In addition, we are grateful for donations to our **Research and Exhibit Collections** from:

Sara Thompson (Franklin High School programs and Phoenix arts magazine, 2003).

Robert Connell (children's books).

David Svendsen (Franklin High School graduation programs, copied).

Iris Antman (photos of Columbia City flower gardens).

Suellen McHugh and Marlys Mondale (digital photos of Rainier Jewelers Store and clock).

Lucy Salle (photo of the Hitt Factory girls).


Dino Patricelli (digital images of the Hitching Post Tavern).

Ron Edge (photo of Taylor's Mill).

Bill Ferrari (digital images of the Polet family, PFA Newsletter).

Douglas Chiechi (photos and documents relating to the Polet family).

Lucy Polet Brusha (photos and documents relating to the Polet family, restaurant menu).

<p>Rainier Valley Heritage News Editor and Layout..... Teresa A. Anderson</p> <p>Rainier Valley Historical Society Office location*..... 3710 South Ferdinand Street Mailing address PO Box 18143, Seattle, WA 98118 OR 3710 South Ferdinand St., Seattle, WA 98118 Phone and fax 206-723-1663 Email rvhsoffice@aol.com Website www.rainiervalleyhistory.org Office hours Wed 1-4pm, Fri & Sunday 10am-1pm RVHS Executive Director Eleanor Boba *The Rainier Valley Historical Society office is an accessible facility. Auxiliary aids and assistance are provided upon request to persons with disabilities.</p>	 <p>Thanks to King County for their operating support</p>
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Support History

If you haven't joined the Rainier Valley Historical Society this year, we urge you to do so now.
All membership dues and donations are tax-deductible within the limits of the law.

Please fill in this form and mail it with a check to:

Rainier Valley Historical Society
P.O. Box 18143
Seattle, WA 98118

<p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City / State / ZIP _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p>*Email _____</p> <p><small>*Be sure to provide your email to receive our new E-News, <i>Past is Present</i>.</small></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Book Order</p> <p>Please send me Images of America: Rainier Valley. Each book in-state is \$29.00 (includes King Co. sales tax/shipping) Each additional book in-state is \$29.00 + \$2.00 extra shipping Each book out-of-state is \$27.00 total Number of copies: _____ Total book order \$_____</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Member</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$500</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> History Maker</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$350</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Patron</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$100</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$60</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Individual / Family (per household)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$30</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Senior / Student (per household)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$20</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Additional donation to Operating Fund</td> <td style="text-align: right;">_____ (amount)</td> </tr> </table> <p>Donation in honor/memory of (please circle one): Name _____</p> <p>*Address _____</p> <p>City/State/Zipcode _____</p> <p><small>*If you provide us with an address, we will be happy to send an acknowledgement of your gift.</small></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime Member	\$500	<input type="checkbox"/> History Maker	\$350	<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$100	<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor	\$60	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual / Family (per household)	\$30	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior / Student (per household)	\$20	<input type="checkbox"/> Additional donation to Operating Fund	_____ (amount)
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