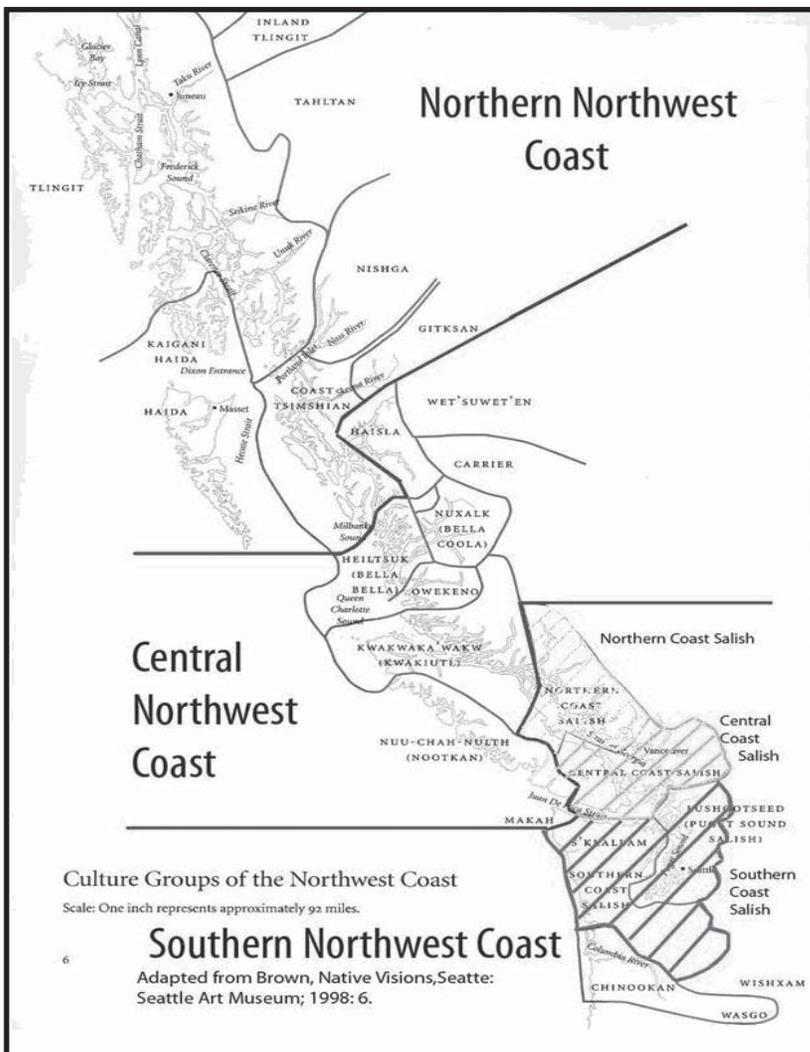


Pacific Northwest Coast and Coast Salish Native Cultures

By Dorota Rahn, Volunteer and Education Coordinator



Map: Cultural Groups of the Northwest (Courtesy: Burke Museum).

Rentonians usually recognize the Duwamish tribe as the First People of the cities of Seattle, Mercer Island, Renton, Bellevue, and Tukwila. However, not very many people know that the Duwamish tribe is one of the Coast Salish tribes. The differences between Coast Salish tribes and those of the Northwest Coast native cultures of the northern Pacific Coast are even less obvious. Coast Salish peoples are located in the southern part of the Pacific Northwest Coast. The Duwamish belong to the southern Coast Salish tribes of Central Puget Sound.

While doing research for the Museum's new Coast Salish 4th grade curriculum, I developed an understanding for how subtle the differences are among the various indigenous groups along the Pacific Coast. This article attempts to explore these differences by explaining the most common mistaken beliefs.

Many people share a basic misconception about Native Americans living on the Pacific Northwest Coast. It is the belief that all Native Americans on the northern coast looked and lived in the same way, created the same art, and shared the same traditions and beliefs. In fact, the Native Americans who lived in the Pacific Northwest thousands of years ago belonged, and still belong, to various distinct tribes. Their lives were shaped mostly by the natural conditions in which they lived. The environment dictated not only what they ate, what houses



Renton Historical Quarterly

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Renton History Museum
235 Mill Avenue South
Renton, WA 98057
Phone: 425-255-2330
FAX: 425-255-1570

www.rentonhistorymuseum.org

Hours:

Tuesday - Saturday 10:00am - 4:00pm

**Admission: \$3 for adults
\$1 for children**

**Always free to members and to the
general public on the first Wednesday
and third Saturday of the month.**

**Board Meetings: Please call the museum
for time and location.**



President's Message

By Sandra Meyer, President

The Society is off and running toward enhancing the museum experience for the community. Our Museum Master Plan, recently completed, will serve as our guide toward making the museum an exciting experience, by regularly rotating exhibits pulled together with our diverse community. To achieve the vision, we are embarking on planning for the needed capital campaign. The next nine months will be challenging and revealing as we learn how to approach this process by getting board training, developing our case, and talking to our community leaders and public about this venture.



In the meantime, we will be moving forward with ideas we can implement now as we update the Strategic Plan and integrate ideas developed in the master planning process. It is an exciting time and our board is more diverse and youthful than ever before.

My sincere thanks to past president Laura Clawson, who successfully led the organization toward fulfilling its mission. As a mentor and friend her bright, positive attitude made it possible for us all to meet our current challenges. Her continued participation in training new board members after her service as a trustee speaks to her sincere care and interest in the future of the Museum. I also want to thank outgoing trustees Mike Jacobs and Robin Baches for their contributions and I want to acknowledge two new board members, Andy Sparks and Anne Melton. Both have been museum volunteers and are now bringing their talents onto the board of the society. Theresa Clymer is our new vice president, and for those of you who know her we are especially blessed to tap into her expertise as a leader in our community.

So, what has the Board been doing since the last newsletter? In June we had our annual member's meeting at which the Historical Society awarded developer Dave Smith the George and Annie Lewis Custer award for rehabilitating the old 1934 City Hall located on South Wells Street. Mayor Denis Law helped give the award for this worthy project. The Fundraising and Events Committee pulled together our first spring auction to support operations. Betty Childers and Steve Denison contributed funds to cover the food for this event that Don Persson and Larry Sleeth prepared and served as volunteers.

Our community outreach efforts continue, although we are taking on some different venues. Many board members volunteered at the museum booth for Renton River Days. Board members are staffing or attending some of the neighborhood picnics and the Farmer's Market. I am attending Renton Chamber of Commerce activities to dial into local business perspectives and needs. All of this outreach has the sole purpose of educating and engaging the community with the Society and Museum.

Renton Museum Report

By Elizabeth Stewart, Director

It's been an unusually busy summer at the Renton History Museum, which makes it even sadder to see the long days and warm weather go. But with the Renton High School centennial coming up this month, "Back to School" takes on a whole new meaning!



Our summer started with a Memorial Day exhibit based on a unique collection of letters home written by PFC Charles Custer during WWII. Between 1943 and 1945 PFC Custer wrote hundreds of letters home detailing his experiences in the South Pacific. His letters served as the basis for "*Cookies is Something We Don't Get in the Army*": A Renton Soldier Writes Home.

In July we opened two new exhibits: *Across Cultures*, our annual summer exhibit of artwork by students from Renton Technical College's English as a Second Language program, and *80,000 Ducks, 25 Years*, an exhibit commemorating a quarter-century of Renton River Days festivities. 2010 marks the fifth year for our ESL exhibit, always a great opportunity to showcase the diverse experiences of Renton's newest residents. *80,000 Ducks* was something new for us, a collaboration between the Museum and the Renton River Days Board of Directors; the River Days Board provided access to their collection of photos and objects, and we added items from the Museum's collection. The result was a real crowd-pleaser, with opportunities for visitors to contribute their memories and for kids to color rubber duckies for display. The anniversary was also a chance for our Oral History Team to conduct numerous interviews about the origins and the history of the festival for use by future researchers.

The Museum also participated in the festival itself at Liberty Park, as we always do, breaking records with our Coast Salish-themed kids' activities. Thanks to all the volunteers and trustees who worked with the children, kept the Museum open extra hours, and generally got the word out about the importance of Renton's heritage. We also provided Native American storyteller Roger Fernandes on the small stage, thanks to a grant from the Muckleshoot Tribe.

We're changing so quickly these days that by the time you read this, we'll be mounting *Among Friends: Renton High's 100 Years*, a look at student life since 1910-1911. Based on contributions from Renton High athletes, choir singers, actors, and other alums, the exhibit culminates in a section put together by current ARROW correspondents. What a great opportunity to take a look at how high school life has changed in 100 years!

As you can see, this busy calendar was made possible by volunteers, Renton Technical College staff and students, the Renton River Days Board, and students and alums of Renton High School, not to mention our many donors. With three new exhibits having come and gone in the space of one summer, it makes me wonder how much we could do if everyone redoubled their commitment to helping the Museum succeed. It's a bright future when we work together!

Liz Stewart

THANK YOU, RIVER DAYS VOLUNTEERS!

Lay Chan
Janet Christiansen
Theresa Clymer
Steve Denison
Don Emmons
Nancy Fairman
Carol Hawkins
Ila Hemm
Lucas Hill
Bob Hunt
Phyllis Hunt
Anne Melton
Sandra Meyer
Schalon McCurry
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Michael Orm
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Juliet Santos
Wil Samson
Andy Sparks
Vicki Jo Utterstrom
Alice Vdolek
Rachel Vdolek
Kristie Walker
Elaine Wells

New Memberships

Thomas Burdulis
Christopher Briggum
Phillip Johnson
Anne Melton &
Kenny Wallendahl family
Lay Chan
Emelie (Holcomb) Knappett
Rachel Vdolek

Wanted: Museum Greeters!

For museum-goers, greeters are the welcoming face of the Museum. Greeters answer their questions and generally make them feel excited about Renton's heritage. The Museum is desperately in need of enthusiastic volunteers who can commit to work a three-hour shift one Saturday a month, from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. or 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. No knowledge of Renton history necessary; training is provided. If you're interested, please contact Dorota Rahn at drahn@rentonwa.gov or 425-255-2330.

they lived in, and how they dressed, but also their traditions and beliefs. The Native Peoples who lived in the south of British Columbia, Washington, and Oregon, and shared a common basic language system are called "Coast Salish." The Coast Salish people are unique among the Native Americans of the Pacific Northwest and are considered southern tribes of the Pacific Northwest Coast.

The traditions of Pacific Northwest Native Americans residing further north were very different from that of the Coast Salish people. Their traditions have been described in literature which is easily available, but we should not extend general knowledge about the Pacific Northwest Coast Native Americans to the Coast Salish. We usually identify Pacific Northwest Coast culture with intricate carvings and especially



Above: Fresh water canoes: Quinault shovelnose river boats, by Edward Curtis. (Courtesy: University of Washington Special Collections, #NA 276).

totem poles. Native artifacts in museums and Pacific Northwest Native American ceremonial objects, prints, and modern art are deeply ingrained in our minds. The common belief is that the art created by the Coast Salish people who lived in the southern part of the Pacific Northwest Coast was identical to the Northern Pacific Northwest art.

One of the reasons for the lack of recognition of Coast Salish art and culture is that, as art historian Wayne Suttles explains it, "Northern Northwest Coast art ... has been known...to the art-viewing public since around 1940. But to the south, Coast Salish art in general and this style in particular did not gain recognition until about 1980."¹ Late appreciation for the Coast Salish was caused by historical and cultural factors, including the relative scarcity of Coast Salish material objects and the mistaken belief that the far Northern Peoples were superior to people of other tribes.

Historical understanding of the tribes was influenced by the experiences of the first Pacific Northwest explorers. Early European explorers, impressed by the novelty of northern Northwest Coast culture, collected objects made by Native people which, in turn, led them to produce different items for sale or trade. In contrast, the Coast Salish tradition required keeping ceremonial objects and other types of art away from the public eye. Suttles observes that, "the collection and recognition of Coast Salish art may also have been delayed by the stereotypes and values of North Americans of European origin."²

In spite of the fact that most whites finally settled in Coast Salish territory, they perceived the Northern tribes as physically and intellectually superior to the local tribes. Native people in the north were on average taller and had lighter skin than those in the south. These physical differences made northern people, in the eyes of European descendents, superior to Coast Salish. As a result, Coast Salish art gained recognition much more slowly than art of coastal Canada and Alaska.

The Coast Salish did not carve the totem poles so commonly associated with Pacific Northwest Native Americans. Totem poles made by Tlingit, Haida, and other Native Peoples in the north represented the history of the clan. In contrast, Coast Salish artists carved large flat planks of cedar, called "house poles," which were attached to the outside and/or inside of longhouses. These carved planks were two-dimensional personal expressions of their carvers and usually did not represent a narrative about family lineage and histories, as the northern poles did.

Below: Salt water canoe in Skokomish fishing camp, by Edward Curtis (Courtesy: University of Washington Special Collections, #NA 311).

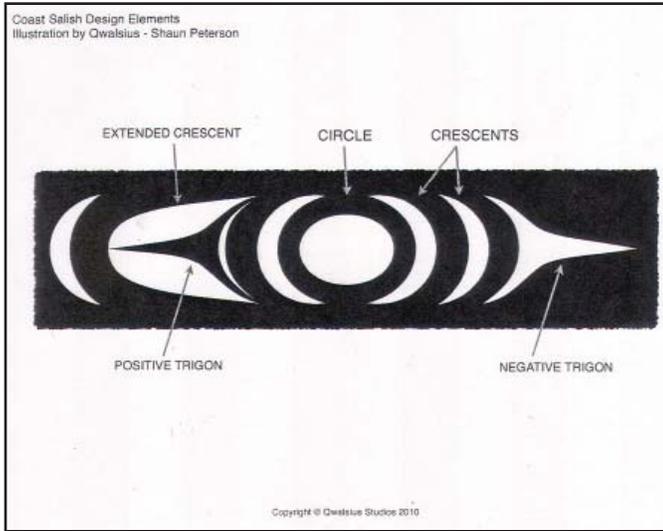


Canoe design is another example of the differences among Native Peoples. People around the world, no matter on what continent and in what kind of environment, have to sustain their lives by securing food, shelter, and means of transportation. Coast Salish people relied heavily on fresh and saltwater fish, mostly salmon, which they could find in abundance in the Duwamish, Black, Cedar, Green, and White Rivers, as well as in the salty waters of the Puget Sound. Only occasionally did they head out into the Pacific Ocean.

Canoeing constituted the easiest way to transport people and cargo among the Coast Salish villages as well as for hunting and fishing. There were three types of canoes specific to the Coast Salish: shovel-nose river canoes (called fresh water canoes), salt water canoes, and racing canoes. Canoes varied depending on the aquatic conditions, number of people, and cargo for which they were made. Sailors of the fresh water canoes, with symmetrical scooped bow and stern end, used poles to move people and cargo on the shallow river waters common around Renton. Saltwater canoes, used in Puget Sound, were powered by paddles and used mostly for carrying cargo or for fishing and hunting. Canoes were dug out of a single cedar log by experienced and skilled canoe-makers with the help of guardian spirits.

Pacific Northwest Coast and Coast Salish Native Cultures continued on page 6

Below: Coast Salish Design Elements. (Illustration by Qwalsius, Shaun Peterson.)



The most visible difference between the northern and southern parts of the Northwest Coast is represented in art. Carving was the main art form of Native Peoples in the Pacific Northwest. In general, the Northwest Coast art tradition is based on a concept of positive and negative spaces, in which incisions in wood are considered to be negative spaces and raised areas are positive. This style is basically two-dimensional. However, if the incisions are deep and/or wide or applied on a curved surface, for example a totem pole, the result becomes three-dimensional.³

Northern Northwest Coast represents what art historians call a "formline" design system built around varied lines and curves. Northern Northwest Coast native artists developed a tradition of two-dimensional painting on carved objects with colors used in a hierarchical order, while most of the Coast Salish artists did not use color in their carvings. Coast Salish carving art styles are mostly two-dimensional, using negative areas to define the composition. Coast Salish artist Shaun Peterson provides a detailed

explanation of the differences between Coast Salish and northern Pacific Northwest art designs on YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kc3K-MyH3xg or by searching on YouTube for "Qwalsius, Coast Salish Design Elements."



Above: Coast Salish art piece, "Circle of Life," by Susan A. Point. (Courtesy: Susan A. Point)

- 1 Wayne Suttles, "The Recognition of Coast Salish Art," chapter in Barbara Brotherton, ed., *S'abadeb The Gifts: Pacific Coast Salish Art and Artists* (Seattle: Seattle Art Museum in association with University of Washington Press), 50.
- 2 Suttles, "The Recognition of Coast Salish Art," in Brotherton, ed., *S'abadeb The Gifts*, 52.
3. Shaun Peterson, "Coast Salish Design: An Anticipated Southern Analysis," in Robin K. Wright and Kathryn Bunn-Marcus, *In the Spirit of the Ancestors: Contemporary Northwest Coast Native Art at the Burke Museum* (Seattle: UW Press and Bill Holm Center, forthcoming).
4. Peterson, "Coast Salish Design."

From the Collections Department...

By: Sarah Iles, Collection Manager

Managing Constantly Growing Collections



Museums rely on donations for the bulk of artifacts in their collections. Renton History Museum (RHM) is no different, and after over forty years of collecting has amassed a sizeable collection containing some amazing items. RHM still collects and is always on the lookout for valuable pieces of Renton's storied history.

Collecting practices often change throughout the life of a museum. Early on, many museums collect aggressively and broadly because they start with nothing. This frenzy of collecting often results in the acceptance of almost anything offered to the

museum and a large, but not necessarily a quality, collection. What a museum collects and seeks out for collection is referred to as the collecting "scope." Like most museums, RHM started with a broad collecting scope and tightened its scope more and more as time went on.

The simple reason for a collecting scope is that it is absolutely impossible to collect everything. Managing the size and content of a museum collection is vital because of the expense involved in caring for artifacts. Artifact donations are not something to be accepted lightly because RHM is bound to care for all its artifacts



Intern Andrea Cohen spent hours working to catalogue, organize, and provide proper storage for this drawer of pins, medals, and other artifacts.

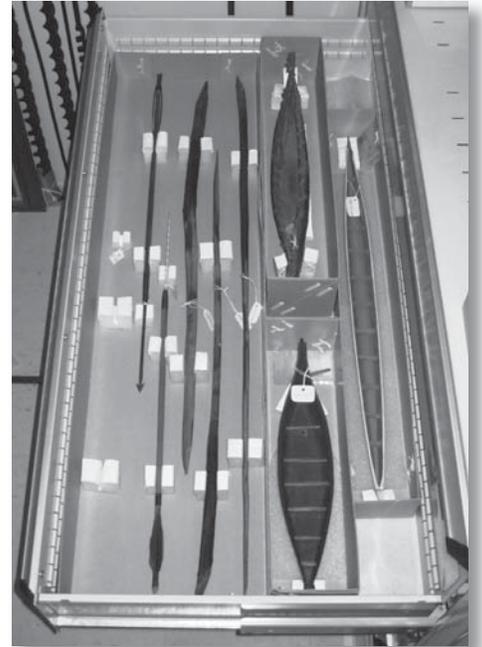
1. What is the artifact's connection to Renton?
2. Did the object belong to someone from Renton? What is that person's connection to Renton?
3. What does the object tell us about Renton's history?
4. Are there accompanying resources or documents that tell us about the artifact's history?

These questions should help guide you, but if in doubt, please inquire at the Museum. If you are making a donation to RHM, please also consider making a monetary donation to assist in the care of your artifact. This money will help offset the cost of cataloguing and storing your artifact in perpetuity.

To date, RHM's collection stats are:

- 14,850 photographs
- 7,100 objects catalogued
- 8,295 archival documents catalogued

This is a sizeable collection and a large responsibility for a small museum. Since the collection is so large, it is especially important that we accept new donations carefully to ensure proper and sustained care for the entire collection.



Each individual artifact requires approximately one hour to properly catalogue and house.

in perpetuity. Resources needed to properly care for artifacts include: professionally trained staff, interns, archival supplies for storage, and environmentally controlled and secure storage areas. All of these cost money which is often scarce in the non-profit world of museums. Museum staff weighs all these factors when making hard decisions about what objects to accept.

RHM is interested in improving its collection and donations from the public are especially important. The aim of this article is not to discourage artifact donations, but to educate about how and why RHM makes responsible decisions pertaining to collecting. Are you interested in donating an artifact? There are a few important questions you should ask yourself:

Volunteer Report

By Dorota Rahn, Volunteer and Education Coordinator



Knowledge about the pre-history of South King County is often limited and based on misconceptions. Changes in the way schools interact with the Renton History Museum provided us the stimulus to find new ways to reach out to students to teach them about the Native American ancestors of our region.

Until 2006 the Museum had the opportunity to educate kids about Coast Salish culture, including the Duwamish, thanks to annual third grade field trips organized by the Renton School District. Unfortunately, the economic downturn made it impossible for the School District to fund these field trips. Hoping to develop a substitute for this experience, the Museum's Education Department applied to 4Culture and Sam's Club for grants to design a Coast Salish/Duwamish Curriculum we could bring to classrooms. We recruited a team of specialists with backgrounds in education and Native American studies, and spent nine months working on a multi-phase program. By spring 2009 we were ready to test the curriculum with fourth grade students.

The curriculum consists of a lesson plan to guide teachers and a Cultural Education Kit which includes replicas of Coast Salish objects and sets of primary and secondary sources. The curriculum's main objective is to have students answer the essential question "How did the environment shape the economic, social, and spiritual lives of the Coast Salish/Duwamish People before the arrival of Europeans?" by working through five classroom units.

The curriculum fulfills requirements for Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs), Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs), and Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) in Visual Arts, standards set by of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

In the first three units, groups of students analyze objects—cedar canoes, baskets, hat, rope, and a cattail mat—present their findings, and participate in a slide presentation exploring Coast Salish culture. Units Four and Five give students an opportunity to exercise their creativity as they make paper replicas of the objects they have analyzed. Students also listen to Coast Salish stories on CD. Together the units immerse kids in Coast Salish culture and stress the ways in which the natural environment shaped the lives of Native Peoples. Museum docents Carol Hawkins and Nancy Fairman have worked very hard to ensure students leave with a basic knowledge of the Coast Salish's most important resources: cedar trees, rivers, and salmon, which were found in abundance in Puget Sound region more than 100 years ago.

Late last year the Museum also received a grant from the Muckleshoot Charity Fund to bring Native American storyteller Roger Fernandes once to every elementary school in the Renton School District. To date the curriculum has been implemented at five elementary schools with positive feedback from teachers. The Coast Salish Curriculum is offered free of charge to Renton public elementary schools. Private schools and schools in other districts can rent the Cultural Education Kit for a fee. The curriculum will be available in the fall at rentonhistorymuseum.org. Teachers can also contact the museum directly at 425-255-2330 or email drahn@rentonwa.gov.



Annual Benefit Dinner and Auction

Join us for the Renton Historical Society Annual Benefit Dinner and Silent Auction on Wednesday, October 6, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Renton Senior Activity Center. The theme is "Homecoming," and the Lindbergh High School Jazz Band will be performing. Enjoy a delicious dinner, bid on exciting auction prizes, and learn more about the future of the Renton History Museum. Tickets are \$40 each, or \$75 for a couple. To purchase tickets, please contact the Renton History Museum at 425-255-2330.

Speaker Calendar

September

Saturday, September 18 - 11:00 a.m. - Sabar: Music of Senegal - The band “Kheweul” led by Mapathe Diop introduces children to African percussion called “Sabar.” In Africa, drums are used to send a message from village to village, for good luck, to put babies to sleep, or for celebrations such as weddings and baby-naming ceremonies. Children will have the chance to try playing the drums, learn how to sing some African songs, and dance in the rhythm of Sabar. The band leader will also play “Taggu Mbarr,” bringing good spirits and good luck. (Audience: kindergarten through adult.)

October

Tuesday, October 12 - 5:00 p.m. - The People of Cascadia - Pacific Northwest Native American History - Join author and illustrator Heidi Bohan as she shares a digital slide show about Pacific Northwest Native American culture, as well as a display of artifacts and original art. Heidi Bohan is an ethnobotanist and a native plant and cultural expert who has taught about Pacific Northwest Native culture and the environment for fifteen years. She is also skilled in such traditional arts as basketry, weaving, woodworking and carving, and the recreation of traditional tools and materials. Books will be available for purchase and the author will be available to sign. (Audience: high school through adult.)

Saturday, October 30 - 11:00 a.m. - Whispers in the Graveyard, A Halloween Hullabaloo - The ancient Celts believed that on October 31 the boundary between the living and the deceased dissolved, and the dead become dangerous for the living. Naomi Baltuck and her daughter Bea will give us tips how to survive this haunted day. Expect horror stories, ghosts, and other Halloween attractions. Not for the faint of heart! Please arrive in costume. Refreshments will be served. (Audience: kindergarten through adult.)

November

Saturday, November 13 - 11:00 a.m. - Coastal Salish Basket Weaving: Past, Present and Future with Harvest Moon - Native basket weavers, once close to extinction in most tribes, are now experiencing a rebirth of their traditions and skills. Harvest Moon delves into the history of Native American basket weaving, explaining the rituals of gathering materials and the place of skilled basket weavers within traditional society. She sees each basket as an expressive vehicle of the weaver, embodying her traditions and spiritual aspirations. The presentation is enhanced by examples of traditional baskets. (Audience: elementary through adult.)

December

Saturday, December 11 - 11:00 a.m. - Ancient Traditional Games with Alan Hirsch - Over 50 historical games and puzzles are included in this hands-on program. Throughout history, almost every culture played games. Native Americans, the Maori of New Zealand, and Icelandic peoples all played games that improved their thinking ability. This presentation offers students and families the opportunity to discover and play the games of many cultures. With simple rules to guide them, children and adults explore strategy games, once played by the Pharaohs, Vikings, and Apache Indians, as well as games from every continent. Refreshments will be served. (Audience: elementary through adult.)

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Membership Level: _____

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Please make checks payable to the Renton Historical Society.

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Please share your e-mail address with us: _____

Please send me a volunteer application form. (32/1)

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235 Mill Avenue South, Renton, Washington 98057-2133

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Obituaries Collected



denotes former Society Life Member



denotes former Society member

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 Clara Rebuck Apland
 Debra Plumley Baxter
 Todd Blankenship
 Russel Carlson
 Eunice Rodgers Gotti
 Marjorie Geldseth Gould 
 Wayne S. Holt, Sr.
 Melvin E. Lansing
 Sharon Longo
 James Marenakos
 Beatrice Nass
 Marlene Rongholf Pelton
 Anne Murdoch Rohrer
 Tom "Moose" Staudt

(July-Aug. 10)

Richard (Dick) Albrecht
 Gerald J. Alexander
 William "Bill" Baker
 Juanita Beckstrom
 Matthew Brewer
 Paul "Jack" Crutchfield
 Stephen Grate
 Ben Majszak
 Stewart Moline
 Aino Anderson Moorman
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 (Over \$100)

Mable Lundy
Inez Edlich
Siro Cugini
Steve Gatti, RHS class '37
Virginia Lee, RHS class '41
Elda Businello, RHS class '38
Olga Azzola

Rentonians Remembered

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Carrie & Greg Bergquist

Bruna Ballestrasse
Lynda Dal Santo Maks

Roy Fournier
Cecilia Major; Hazelle DuBois

Marjorie Gould
Margaret Sebelist, Barbara Montemayor, Karen Uitting

Beatrice Nass
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Anne Murdoch Rohrer
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Mildred Warren
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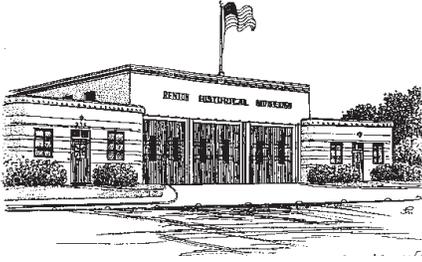
Larry Sleeth
Food for Annual Meeting
Betty Childers & Steven Denison
Food for Annual Meeting
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at Annual Meeting**

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Barbara Whitehurst
CD Danza Spa & Salon
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happy delusions
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Ivar's & Kidd Valley
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Terry Higashiyama



Do you recognize this place or these people? We need help with this unidentified photo from our collection.



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In Hindsight...



*Caption: Milt Sessler, Andy Lewis, and Chet Sessler pose in front of the old Renton High in 1932. (#1985.058.10842)
Join us for Among Friends: Renton High's 100 Years, opening September 22!*