



*"Preserving the past for the future"*  
www.rainiermuseum.org

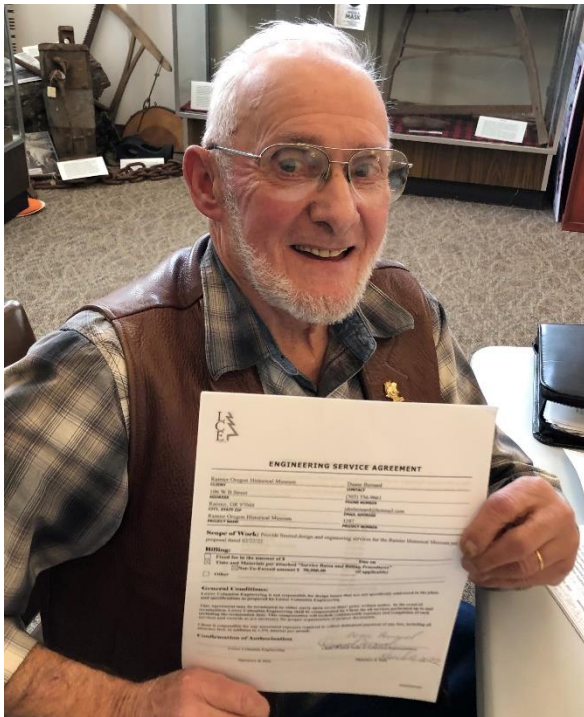
## Museum Building Design Underway

By Mike Clark



EAST ELEVATION  
SCALE: 1/4"=1'-0"

The above drawing, produced by Lower Columbia Engineering, is the latest design under consideration by the ROHM Board. There will undoubtedly be several changes before the board gives its final approval on the design later this year.



On March 10, 2022, ROHM Vice-President Duane Bernard signed an Engineering Service Agreement with Columbia Engineering to design our new Museum building that will be constructed on our existing lot on “West A” Street. Matthew Alexander, with Columbia Engineering, has been working closely with the board and has submitted several drafts for consideration. A final approved design will come later this year. The museum, when completed, will have an exhibit hall, exhibit garage for vehicles, a library/computer room, an all-purpose activity room, a room for archiving, restrooms, storage and an office with space for working on exhibits. A third of the projected amount has been raised for the new museum, and ROHM is working tirelessly seeking donations and applying for grants. We are all committed to making this a reality.

# Good News! ROHM buys Hallberg Truck



In May ROHM located (with the help of Rainier Mayor Jerry Cole) and purchased the Hallberg 1964 Dodge panel grocery delivery truck once used by Roland Curteman. Roland began working at Carl Hallberg's grocery in 1933, and in 1946 became co-owner with butcher Floyd Stehman. Roland became sole owner in 1968 when Stehman retired. He operated the store until he sold it on January 12, 1976, to Don and Vella Painter who changed the name to Mountain View Market (located east of the City Hall). Roland said that he racked up 34,000 miles on the truck



crisscrossing Rainier on delivery runs. The last time the public saw the truck was when Roland drove it in the 1997 Day in the Park parade as shown in the photo at right (by Robert West). He had been chosen Grand Marshal that year along with Alice Morgan. The truck is in very good condition but will need some restoration. It will join the Rainier 1936 Chevrolet fire truck after the Rainier Historical Museum is built. (Ref.: Rainier World 3/2/1977, Rainier Review 7/9/1997)

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## Fibre CU Donates to the Museum Building Fund



On May 12, 2022, the Fibre Credit Union donated \$500 to the ROHM building fund. L. to R.; Fibre CU Community Engagement & Education Coordinator, Bailey Roberts; ROHM Treasurer, Martha Van Natta; Rainier Mayor, Jerry Cole; ROHM Vice President, Duane Bernard; ROHM President, Kay Heflin; and Fibre CU Financial Services Supervisor, BreAnna Grissom. We appreciate their donation as we do to all who have donated to this worthwhile cause. Photo by Scott Jorgenson.

# President's Message

We wish to extend our thanks to the St. Helens Lions Club for honoring our museum by giving us a composite bench for our new museum. Members wanted to honor us after seeing the work and activities our museum was doing for our community. They invited ROHM Vice President Duane Bernard and me, to their May 16 meeting. I gave a presentation on the history of our museum, and Duane gave an update on our new museum plans. We were treated to a great dinner at the Warren Country Inn in Scappoose. Thank you again, St. Helens Lions Club!

**Great News!** On June 15, our museum was notified that we have been chosen to receive the Oregon Museum Grant through the Oregon Heritage, Oregon Parks Department, for which we had applied. This \$2500 grant will pay for the purchase of archival storage for our museum collection. Archival storage is very important, and will protect and preserve our collection for years to come.

**Important Clarification:** There have been rumors on social media and in the community saying our museum is planning to move the Hudson Chapel to our A St. property where we will be building our new museum. We were considering moving the chapel, but I want to clarify that the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum board has unanimously voted not to move the Hudson Chapel, though we are looking into restoration. We will tell you more as details become available.

**A Street Building:** The board has met with the architect on the A Street Building, and we are in the process of considering the design of the building. We are about a third of the way towards our goal in fund raising, and we would love more donations. Donations seem to have slowed way down, and we will have a fund raiser in the future. Please send your donations marked for the "Building Fund" to ROHM, PO Box 762, Rainier, OR 97048.

**Meet and Greet:** Please stop by the museum on Saturday, June 25, 2022, between one and three o'clock to meet Mike Avent, our 2022 Grand Marshal for the Rainier Daze Parade. There will be refreshments.

**Rainier Days in the Park:** Our museum will have a booth with pictures on display showing what the waterfront and the Rainier Park looked like in the early 1900's. We will be selling tickets for a large raffle basket to raise money for our new museum fund. Please stop by and say, "Hi."

We are very grateful for your continued support and membership making it possible for us to preserve our local history.

President, Kay Heflin

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## Oregon State Representative Suzanne Weber visits ROHM building site



On April 9<sup>th</sup> Oregon State Representative Suzanne Weber came to Rainier and visited the building lot that will be the new home of the Rainier Oregon Historical Museum. The next day the state representative posted on her Face Book page:

“What a great visit with great folks Friday in Rainier. Museum VP Duane Bernard and Board Member Tunie McAtee Betschart updated my staff and I on their progress with the future site of the Rainier Historical Museum. I'm very excited about this project and look forward to helping it come to fruition.”

Photo at left, L to R: Oregon State Representative Suzanne Weber, ROHM Vice President Duane Bernard and Board Member Tunie McAtee Betschart.

# 2022 Rainier Days in The Park Grand Marshal

## Mike Avent

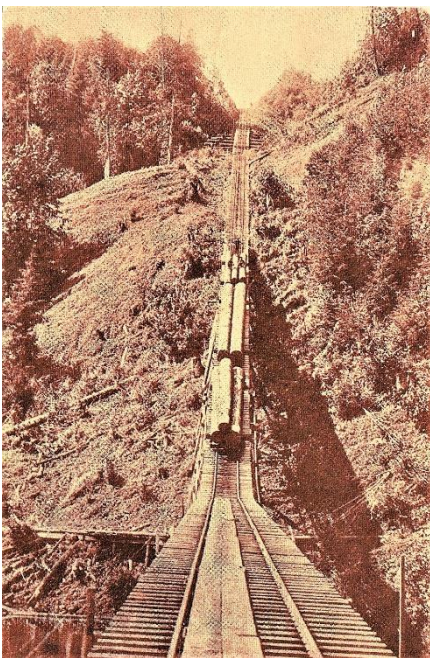


Mike Avent was born in Aberdeen, Washington, September 11, 1954. His father worked in construction so he spent most of his young life moving with the work availability. Mike completed his last two years of high school at Rainier. He then attended college at Lower Columbia College in Longview. He worked in construction himself until buying his own rental properties in the Columbia County area starting about 1977. In 1993 he started his first company with a partner and purchased more commercial and residential buildings in Rainier, Clatskanie, Astoria and St. Helens. Then in the mid-1990's Mike was elected to the Rainier City Council serving 16 years. During that time, he volunteered on the REDCO Board, Chamber of Commerce, H.O.P.E and Children and Family Services. He served on COLPAC and was elected to the Port of Columbia County serving 16 years there also. Mike and his partner (Steve Oliva) helped to facilitate the Senior Housing and Senior Center by developing the old Crown Zellebach Mill property where Teevin Bros, Condos, Senior Housing and Senior Center now sits and soon to be Rainier Museum. Mike is still involved in a number of organizations while overseeing his businesses. Mike's interests are collecting antiques and collectibles, metal detecting and ghost towning. He is kept busy these days with eight grandchildren, who adore Poppa Mike, while also working on his new home and property that he just purchased outside of Rainier. Mike said, "I find it rewarding to work for the Community that has given me many friendships and opportunities."

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## Logging in the Central Beaver Creek Valley

By contributing writer Robert P. Van Natta



Mike Clark Collection

In May of 1897 Jack Peterson assembled what was to be known as the Star Logging and Lumber Company. Its purpose was to log several thousand acres west and south of Rainier (Think Hudson, Delena, etc). The plan was to build a narrow-gauge railroad, about four miles of it, to reach the various timber holdings and haul them to the top of the cliff above Rinearson Slough, 600 feet below where they would be placed in a chute to slide down the hill. In 1898 Peterson also bought the Smith Brothers sawmill in Rainier. By 1899 Peterson was said to be shipping 100,000 board feet a day of logs.

In December 1901 Peterson sold the timberlands, railroad and everything, except the Rainier sawmill, to a newly formed business called the Yeon & Pelton Company. It is said that Yeon and Pelton's purchase price was \$100,000. It was Yeon's estimate that the chute was destroying about 15% of the timber produced. Yeon's first order of business was to install a set of railroad tracks alongside the chute (about 2400 feet in length at a mostly steady 33% grade). The incline was completed in 1902. He installed a very large Willamette Iron and Steel hoisting engine at the top. They let three carloads at a time down the incline (three loads of logs sitting on six disconnected trucks) and the cycle took about 20 minutes. All this meant that he could dump 60 loads a day in the slough below for rafting, and rafted they

were. They were then taken to Portland Lumber Company that had a high production sawmill in Portland.

This allowed Yeon and Pelton to increase production by a factor of four over his predecessor and make the Wilson mill of Beaver Springs (see Winter 2022 ROHM Newsletter) and its bull teams seem like something from the previous century (pun intended). Thus, highball logging was introduced to the Northwest.

One of the positive things about Yeon and Pelton, and their success is that they were hiring. The local homesteaders were struggling for survival, and job opportunities were a good thing. Among the local settlers was Ira Sampson Parcher (1863-1940). He and at least one brother, came west by train in 1876 to San Francisco, and thence traveled by boat to the Columbia River where they disembarked at Skamokawa, Washington. They lived there for a little over two years before buying a tract of state school land at the end of the road west of Rainier (now on Wonderly Road just east of Heath Road). They arrived at the Hudson site in the Spring of 1879. Although there wasn't a hint of a road or trail west of the family digs by Heath Road then, roads were appearing by the labor of the settlers fast enough that Ira was able to get a wagon to Delena and haul enough rough-cut lumber to his home site on the family farm to build a house for his bride when he got married about two and a half years later.

Ira lost his brother, Rodney, to a hunting accident in September of 1879 when he was 19 years old. His grave is among the oldest in the Historic Woodbine Cemetery which is located on a portion of the Hudson property. Ira, by chance, met a girl who had come west by wagon train from Tama County, Iowa, and settled in Portland about the same time Ira and his brother came west from Tama County. He married Alice Smalley (1865-1934) on November 29, 1882. They had seven children consisting of one daughter, Minnie (b. 1883), and six sons, Chester (b. 1886), Frank (b. 1890), Tracy (b. 1892), Donald (b.1896), Ernest (b. 1902), and Harvey (b. 1904). Several members of the Parcher family lived their entire lives in the Hudson Community. Their support of the community led to the Hudson Park being renamed the Hudson-Parcher Park. Frank was the second oldest of the sons and the center of this article.

## Frank Works for Yeon and Pelton

Life was difficult, for early settlers in Northwest Oregon. While nearly all practiced subsistence farming (some livestock, fruit trees, and gardens) the cash crops were fewer. Shake bolts (cedar for roofing) and cord wood (for firing boilers on the sternwheeler that plied the Columbia River) were the major sources of cash for the settlers. In this context a job opportunity for an older son in a large family was a blessing.

It seems in those days you needed to be 12 to get a job and, alas, Frank was 12 in 1902 and lived within walking distance of the Yeon and Pelton incline, so he went to work for them as a 'Whistle Punk,' thus starting a long career in working in the timber industry.

For those who don't know what a "Whistle Punk" is, an explanation follows: In a logging operation such as Yeon and Pelton had, and to some extent almost invented, you have a whole sequence of jobs from when trees are cut down until logs are on the train. First, you have 'fallers' whose job is to cut the tree down, followed by 'swampers' whose job is to cut or chop the limbs off the tree, and then 'buckers' whose job is to 'buck' the tree into pieces that can be sold (logs). They can make, or lose, the owner a lot of money depending on where they make the cuts. Next, come the choker setters who need to hook the log on to something so that the logs can be moved from where they hit the ground to where they can be shipped to market. This is where the big change in the 20<sup>th</sup> century occurred. In the last issue, we saw the Wilsons out with a team of oxen dragging pieces of tree cut small enough that the ox team could drag them to the mill. This changes with the beginning of the 20th Century with the steam donkey which is really a steam boiler for power which is connected to a steam engine which will turn a winch and thus wind up a cable. Typically, a donkey has at least two winches, but more likely three or more winches. As this was 1902 (early in the twentieth century) skyline logging hadn't been invented yet, and Yeon and company were ground logging, as we now call it. What you need to understand is the job of the whistle punk is near the place where the trees hit the ground and the place where the donkey and the tracks are located is different. You have men in one place whose job it is to hook the cable to the logs

(choker setters), a donkey puncher, whose job is to pull the levers to make the winch(es) do their thing and chasers to unhook the stuff when the time comes. These workers are all some distance apart, and they may not be able to see each other. Walkie talkies didn't exist in 1902, but steam whistles could make enough noise to be heard over the clatter of whatever else was going on. The big problem is that the choker setters out in the woods don't have any steam or a whistle, but they need to be able to tell the donkey puncher what needs to be done so they can get the "hooking up" done.

The task was accomplished by running a 'whistle wire' (really just a piece of wire) out in the woods to a point near where the choker setters were working. The wire is attached to the whistle in such a way that it toots the whistle when it's pulled. Communications were accomplished with a series of codes (Long toots, short toots, and combinations thereof). Frank's job as 'whistle punk' was to be out in the woods with the choker setters, but in a place of safety so he could continue to send messages to the donkey even if something went wrong. It turned out that Frank as a slightly built 12-year-old wasn't strong enough to pull the whistle wire, so the crew resolved the problem by pulling it tight and tying it off to a tree. He could then beat on it with a club and get the whistle back on the donkey to toot. Then he just needed to learn the code language that consisted of various combinations of long and short blasts. Oh, well, nothing is easy! Frank stayed with the timber industry and spent the last 35 years or so of his working life in a sawmill in St. Helens.

What's really difficult, is to put this logging project in perspective with the timber industry of that time. While it's pretty well known that Yeon and Pelton were a driving force in this logging project, but not the only ones. In the broader picture, periodic business cycles (booms and busts, perhaps) were very active in this period. 1897 was a panic year, and 1906 and 1907 were not good years either, but the period in between was pretty hot from an economic stand point. It represented an era in which small timber companies were beginning to be eaten by large organizations with nationwide financial interests. The urge to be big was just getting started.

It was reported in late 1901, that J. B. Yeon bought the entire operation for \$81,000 including 5,160 of timberland, 4.5 miles of trackage, three locomotives, and four donkey engines, as well as an inventory of timber and about 250 employees. Also, at this time, the flume was replaced by a railroad track down the hill to West Rainier, allowing logs to be lowered three rail carloads at a time which vastly improved production as compared to the flume.

The railroad era of logging was short. The Yeon rail was certainly not the first, but it was an early one. Log trucks were seen as early as 1914 with their popularity increasing fairly rapidly after World War I with their use the exception, instead of the rule, after World War II. To be sure we see a lot of log trains in Rainier these days, but they are different. The trains of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were on temporary tracks constructed out in the area being logged and engaged in moving logs from the woods to market. In contrast the log trains you see in Rainier today are moving logs from one log yard to another as part of a chain of transport that involves a great distance. These logs have been hauled out of the woods by truck, and they were then transferred to a train as general rail freight on their way to market.

As the years went by, the Yeon logging operation went away, but Frank Parcher didn't go far. He married Edna Alice Sisco of the Sisco family that was deeply entrenched in the Rainier area, the family having moved in from Arkansas. One of Edna's sisters was Rosa Etta Sisco Alston who married Charles Alston in 1895 from which the place name "Alston's Corner" was derived. It seems, as the story goes, that Alston had a small garage on the 'corner' which is, and was, fairly central to the greater community. Furthermore, even though Amazon was not a word that had much meaning in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, a lot of merchants delivered goods to rural settlers in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. With the maze of roads in the greater Alston area, they had considerable difficulty finding where all the settlers lived. So there developed a community custom that the delivery folks could leave their packages in the garage, and the neighbors could pick them up there. Charlie Alston and his wife Rosa ultimately saw a business opportunity, and they opened a store there in 1922 which at various times included a gas pump, and even a dance hall. The Alstons operated the store until about 1946 when they sold out and retired. A century later (now), the community is still known as Alston's Corner and even is on some maps, but it doesn't rate a listing in "Oregon Geographic Names."

## Calendar of Events

June 25 (Saturday) 1 - 3 PM	<b>Meet and Greet</b> for Grand Marshal Mike Avent at the Museum – Refreshments.
July 8-10 <sup>th</sup> , Friday – Sunday	<b>Rainier Days in the Park</b> , Museum will have a booth.
July 31 (Sunday) 11 AM - 4 PM	<b>All-Class Alumni Picnic</b> - Hudson-Parcher Park. Food served at noon. Potluck. Coffee, water, plates, utensils and napkins will be provided.
September 8 (Thursday) 1 PM	<b>ROHM Annual Meeting</b> at the museum. Business meeting to fill expiring terms.
September 10 (Sat.) Noon - 4 PM	<b>Logging event</b> at the museum including showing of “God’s Country and the Woman,” special displays and speakers.
November 5 (Sat.) 9 - 2 PM	<b>Fall Bazaar</b> at the Rainier Senior Center. Baked goods, craft items and museum products.
November 12 (Sat.) Noon – 4 PM	<b>Veterans Exhibit</b> at the museum. Special exhibits with a military theme. Artifacts from local servicemen. Dozens of photos of local military members.

## Raffle basket

Raffle tickets are available for purchase (\$1 each ticket or 6 for \$5) at all events. Raffle basket will be given away at the all-class picnic on Sunday, July 31. A new raffle basket will be displayed beginning in the fall.

### NEW MEMBERS SINCE LAST QUARTER

(through to June 17, 2022)

We have 245 memberships\* now.

Matt Alexander  
 Mike & Debbie Curtis  
 Jerry Davis  
 Debra Elliott  
 Shirley Heisinger  
 Scott Jorgensen  
 Donald Kalberer  
 Rick Lance  
 Ken & Charlene Niemala  
 Bill & Alice Redding  
 Len Robison  
 Dinah Robinson & David Blahm  
 L.T. Stem  
 Joe & Kim Staley

### LIFETIME MEMBERS

Mike Avent  
 Greg Beck  
 Lawrence (Buzz) and Alice Beck  
 Harold and Elaine Davis  
 Carol Girt  
 William and Mary Harrison  
 Mark and Sue Pitra  
 Rainier Mason Lodge #24  
 Charles Skeans  
 Dale Strom  
 Teevin Bros.  
 Pat Valpiani  
 Robert & Martha Van Natta

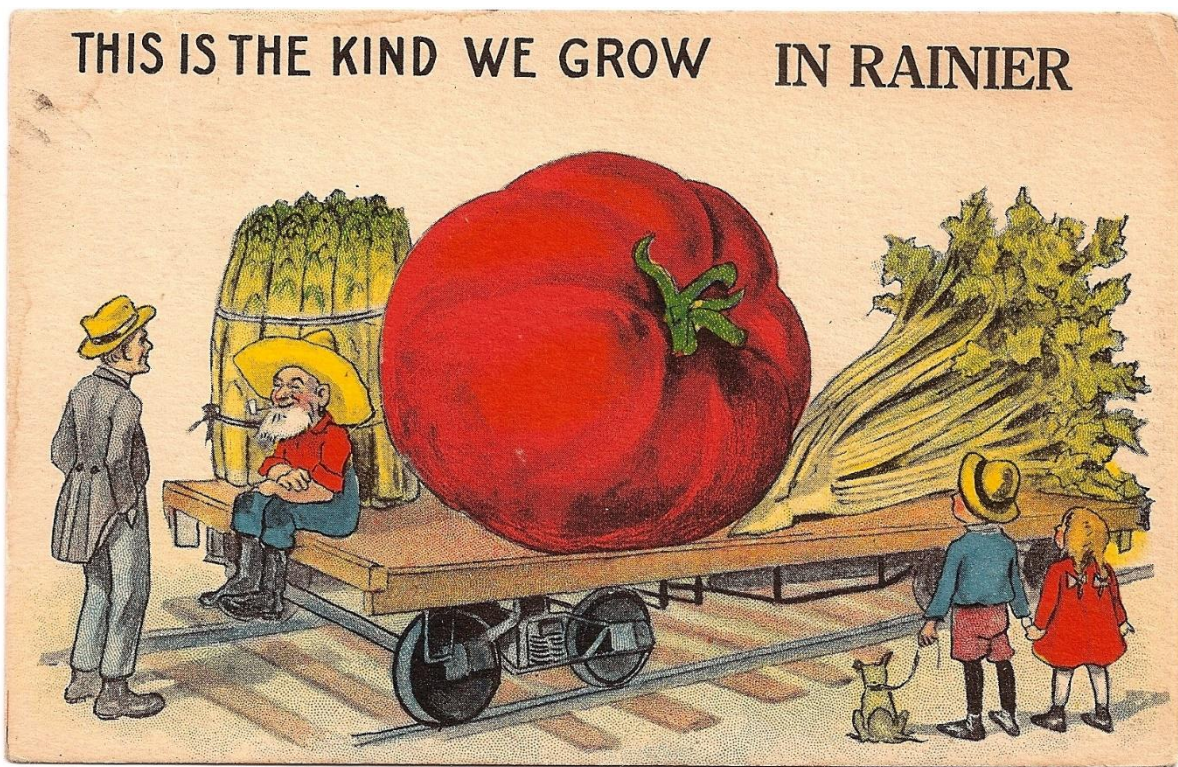
### HONORARY MEMBERS

Columbia County Museum Association  
 Steve and Jan Oliva  
 Vernonia Pioneer Museum Association

\* Memberships can be an individual member, a couple, or a family. All paid and honorary members will receive our newsletter.

Contact information: ROHM President Kay Heflin: [kay-lynn2@hotmail.com](mailto:kay-lynn2@hotmail.com) or 360-751-7039.

This issue was produced by ROHM President Kay Heflin, newsletter editor Mike Clark, and assistant editor and proofreader Martha Van Natta. Uncredited photos were contributed by interested parties.



Novelty postcard mailed from Rainier, Oregon, to Portland, Oregon, in 1915. On the reverse is written "June 19<sup>th</sup> 1915. This is where we landed and have found it good in every way. M.C.G." (Mike Clark collection)

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