

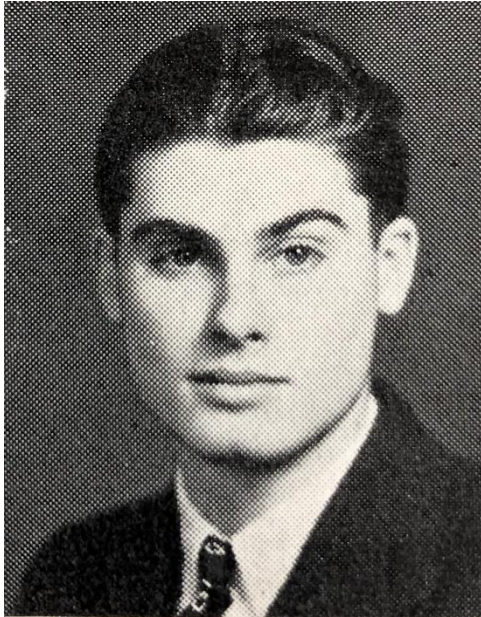


"Preserving the past for the future"

www.rainiermuseum.org / ROHM, PO Box 762, Rainier, OR 97048

Number 3 *

Fall 2023



Kenneth Schreiber, 1937 Rainier High School graduate.

Forty-five minutes before the raid, Schreiber and Rucks flew over the camp and began their convincing performance of a severely crippled plane on the verge of a crash. The guards were caught by surprise as they watched the P-61 circle above with the engines sputtering and backfiring loudly. This effect was caused by Schreiber's skill of manipulating the ignition to cut the power to the engines and then restart them. They waggled their wings and then scraped over the nearby tree-covered ridgeline with only 30 feet of clearance, only to reappear again to take another pass. Finally, they disappeared over the horizon with the Japanese transfixed, waiting for the sound of an explosion.

Kenneth Schreiber's Wild Distraction

Raid on the Philippine POW camp Cabanatuan

Compiled by Mike Clark

On the night of January 30th, 1945, a lone P-61 Black Widow flew over the Cabanatuan POW camp in the Philippines. Its sole mission was to put on an air show that would capture the attention of the Japanese guards below.

The plane "Hard To Get" was piloted by Captain Kenneth Schreiber and radar specialist 1st Lieutenant Bonnie Rucks, from the 547th Night Fighter Squadron. They had received an unusual request to fly over the prison camp and distract the guards long enough for the combined forces of United States Army Rangers, Alamo Scouts, and Filipino guerillas to creep across open terrain surrounding the camp and rescue the 500 allied POWs held captive there.



From left to right, Crew Chief Technical sergeant John Crough, radar specialist 1st Lt Bonnie Rucks, Pilot Lt Ken Schreiber and Col. Johnson.

The spectacle caused the Japanese to be completely unaware of the planned raid on Cabanatuan, allowing it to be a massive success for the Allied forces.

Kenneth Schreiber was from Rainier, graduating from Rainier High school in 1937. He had a sister Dorothy, who graduated in 1942 and married Bob Bernard that year on September 3 in the Hudson Community Church. Their parents were Joseph and Hilda Schreiber, and they had lived on the property that is now owned by the John Stennick family (at the end of Oliva Dr. off of Wonderly Road). Chris Smith grew up next door to them and remembered, “In my early teens I worked for them in their orchard, mowing yard and anything a teenage boy could do. In my late teens and early 20’s, I cut their firewood and filled the basement of the house with it for winter. Joe taught me a lot about the logging history of the area. He showed me where the steam donkey sat that lowered the rail cars loaded with logs from the Hudson and surrounding areas.” (1).

It was Duane Bernard’s uncle Bob who married Dorothy, and he remembers attending their wedding. Duane commented, “I worked side by side with Joe in the early and mid '50s at the cheese plant in Rainier. Rainier Creamery, later on Standard Dairy, also sold bottled milk and ice cream. Plus, they owned the lockers there, but that's another story. Joe and I, and a few others from the Creamery, used to deer hunt together in the, then recent, Tillamook Burn. I bought a gun from Joe that I still have, and I treasure it. Probably the most interesting thing that I remember about Joe is the fact that he related to me that he helped to build the old original Columbia River Highway out east of Rainier. He said he drove a horse-pulling a fresno. A fresno was a small scraper used to scrape up and then haul dirt or rock. It had to be dumped manually. I often wonder if he had a hand in building the portion of that road by Little Jack Falls where ROHM is involved currently. All he ever told me was ‘out east of town.’ Joe's father-in-law was Johnny Johnson who owned the property prior to Joe and Hilda. Johnny Johnson created the ‘Johnson Fir.’ Joe donated one to the city, and it was planted in front of and to the east of Rainier City Hall. I remember a conversation Carl Nys and I had about the Johnson Fir,” Duane commented.

Kenneth continued his military service after World War II serving in Korea and Vietnam and rose to the rank of Lt Col in the US Air Force. He passed away in 1994.

(1) The concrete pedestal that Chris saw was for the Yeon and Pelton's railroad incline engine that was used to lower trains cars full of logs down to the Rinearson's slough where they were dumped and formed into log rafts.

References:

- a. The Fascinating P-61 Black Widow: Fighter, Hunter, and Decoy - World War Wings,
- b. Mr James “Big Jim” Truman, the official Historian of the 547th Night Fighter Squadron,
- c. Rescuing the Most Doomed American Soldiers of WW2 - The Great Raid - YouTube
- d. Ghost Soldiers, The Epic Account of World War II’s Greatest Rescue Mission by Hampton Sides, pages 248 & 249
- e. https://arsof-history.org/articles/v14n2_cabanatuan_page_1.html

Members of the ROHM Board

Kay Heflin, President	Sherry Evans, Secretary	Delyla Laughlin, Director
Duane Bernard, Vice President	Matt Alexander, Director	Debra Elliott, Director
Martha Van Natta, Treasurer	Mike Clark, Director	Tunie Betschart, Director

President’s Message

by Kay Heflin, ROHM President

We continue to work tirelessly to raise funds to build our new museum. We have applied for four grants in the last two months. We received \$5,000 from the Autzen Foundation, and we will be receiving word by the end of October if we are accepted to complete an application for the Marie Lamfrom grant for \$50,000. We have just begun the process of applying for the M. J. Murdock Charitable Trust grant. Grant applications are a difficult and time-consuming process, but we will continue to apply for grants until we have the funds needed to build our museum.

THERE IS STILL HOPE! We continue to advocate for the funding of the remaining 14 capital projects that include funding for building a new museum for Rainier, and the HB 2459 recovery bill that will be addressed again in a special 2024 winter session in January and February.

Please contact Oregon State Representative Rob Nosse and our Oregon State Senators and Representatives to let them know how important funding the remaining 14 CREF slate of projects is to the cultural and arts health of Oregon.

We continue to transfer our collection of photos, documents and donated items into archival storage after receiving an archival grant last year. We have also begun the long process of entering each donated item in our collection into our Past Perfect program which will allow us to find any item in our collection by entering a related word. When completed, each item will have a description and a picture showing the donated item. It will be a great tool that can be used to find a specific item for a visitor who is looking for a family photo, history or a certain item.

The mission of our museum is to educate our community, including our local students, about the history of Rainier. On October 20, our museum will be hosting three, second grade classes and showing them objects that they may never have seen before or know what the object was used for. We have hosted grade school classes in years past and the children always enjoy their hands-on learning experience about historical items. We hope that this experience will increase their curiosity about Rainier's history and the items that we have in our collection. One class we had in the past had never seen a rotary dial telephone before or knew how it worked.

Please stop by the museum for a visit on any Saturday between noon and four. We look forward to seeing you!

ROHM Volunteers Step Up to the Challenge

By Duane Bernard, ROHM Vice President

This recent summer found ROHM reaching out to our membership for additional volunteers. When we were offered the opportunity to manage the parking at the Rainier Marina during Rainier Days in The Park, we accepted, not knowing much about the task, or if it would even be worth the effort. The board was already signed up for shifts to man our booth there. July is the busiest month of the year for us, as we are responsible for the annual All Alumni Picnic at Hudson Park, also. Two new volunteers who stepped up to help at the picnic were Dan Bernard and Bill Stennick, and they'll be doing it next year, too. Thanks, guys.

When it came time to staff the parking lot in the marina, we were really up against a challenge, but we started calling members who we thought might be willing to help. Some who answered our call were Connie Krenik, Carolyn Samples, Jim and Amy Everman, Robyn Yeoman, Casey Garrett, Carla and Carol Bodenhamer, Doris Hale, Kim Cardwell, Rick Burnham, Carol Everman, and Dave and Teresa Scott. Dave and Teresa have, thankfully, agreed to take this job on next year. They will be responsible for staffing and preparation. Many thanks, Dave and Teresa.

In August when we needed help to wash vehicles for Columbia River PUD, Pat Valpiani, Debbie Stewart and Dennis and Dianne Sholrud pitched in to help several board members to earn funds for ROHM. Thank you.

Now, for one member who went way beyond what is expected of a volunteer, Tim Vasey spent hour after hour, day after day, working on the old Hallberg delivery panel in order to have it ready for the Rainier Parade. He volunteered his labor, but he ended up offering to buy all the parts that he used too: all new brakes, hoses, electrical parts, ignition, filters, etc. Many parts were very hard to find for the 1964 model, but TIM PERSEVERED. A huge thank you to you, Tim.

All of these volunteers helped us put money in the bank towards a new museum. The entire ROHM board thanks you.

Plaques

By Martha Van Natta, ROHM Treasurer

You can view three different plaques at the museum: the Building Fund Plaque, the Memorial Plaque, and our new Life Member Plaque.

The Memorial Plaque is to honor loved ones who have passed. You can put your relative's, or friend's name, on this plaque for a donation of \$500 to the museum. These funds are dedicated to the museum's building fund. In order to place a name on this plaque, we would need the person's name and their birth and death years. Families can request donations be made to the museum building fund in lieu of flowers as a choice of a charity to remember a deceased friend or loved one.

You can put your own name on the Building Fund Plaque by donating \$500 to the building fund. You can also put the name of a deceased person on the building fund by donating \$500 in their memory. You can donate any amount. When the museum accumulates \$500 in a person's name, we will put their name on the plaque. Several families, and their friends, have gotten together to donate in the memory of their loved ones.

We have a new plaque, the Life Member Plaque. If you'd like to be a life member of the museum, all you have to do is purchase a life membership for \$500. You can pay for it all at once, or you can make a pledge with the museum and pay \$100 a month. You can skip months as long as we receive the \$500 within a year's time. If you decide not to do this, any money you have already paid would be credited for future years. For instance, if you have paid \$100, then you would be credited four years of membership.

It costs \$500 to put a name on each plaque. All plaques are displayed at the museum. You can view them on Saturdays between noon and four o'clock, although a plaque could be at the engravers getting more names put on it.



Rainier Days in the Park

The 2023 Rainier Days in the Park again was another success headed up by Mayor Jerry Cole and the dedicated volunteers who worked tirelessly to make it happen. This year's Grand Marshal, Delbert Larson, was driven in the parade July 8th in a side-by-side driven by ROHM board member Matt Alexander. After the parade Delbert met and visited with well-wishers at the ROHM booth. (Photo by Mike Clark)

Rainier All-Class Picnic

This year's All-Class Picnic was held on Sunday, July 30, from noon until 4:00 at Hudson-Parcher Park. A lunch buffet started at noon. The Rainier Museum sponsored the picnic and paid the park entrance fee for attendees to the picnic. Water, coffee, and tableware were provided. There was a good turnout of nearly 200 people. The event has grown in popularity over the years, and it's held every year on the last Sunday of July. (Photo by Martha Van Natta)



ROHM's Annual Logging Event

On Saturday, September 16, ROHM held its annual logging event. There were displays and activities for the children. The highlight of the event was the showing of the documentary "Fireflies in the Night: The Great Wigwam Burner." Director of the Documentary, Jay Critchley, provided additional information on the past Prescott and VanVleet wigwam burners and the current wigwam burner in Clatskanie. There were two showings in the Rainier City Hall chamber room, and it was well attended. (Photo by Kay Heflin)



ROHM Annual Meeting

On September 21 ROHM held its annual meeting. It is at this meeting that elections are held. Three positions had expired; President, held by Kay Heflin, Director number 2 held by Teresa Bentley and Director number 5, held by Tunie Betschart. Both Kay and Tunie were reelected to their posts. Teresa, however, decided not to seek reelection, but she is continuing as Membership Chairman. Mike Clark was then nominated and elected to take over Teresa's position. Our other remaining board members who continue to serve on our board are Duane Bernard, Vice President; Martha Van Natta, Treasurer; Sherry Evans, Secretary; Delyla Laughlin, Director; Matt Alexander, Director; and Debbie Elliott, Director.

During the meeting Mike Clark was presented with an Honorary Lifetime Membership Certificate by Kay Heflin for his long service as a historian, editor of the museum's quarterly newsletter and maintaining the ROHM web page. (Photo by Martha Van Natta)

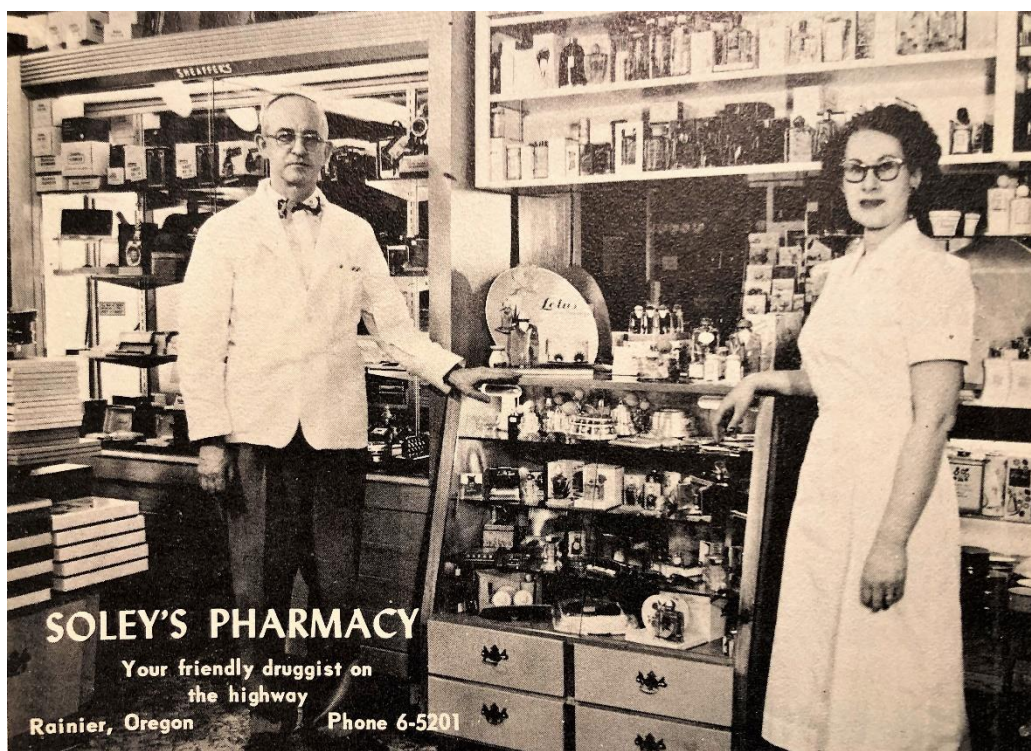


Veterans Day Celebration November 11, 2023

ROHM will honor local veterans at the museum, on the third floor of the Rainier City Hall, from noon to four. We will have over 100 pictures of local veterans on display. We invite the public to attend, view the displays, trade stories, and donate any photos or memorabilia that relates to our veterans. (Photo by Martha Van Natta)



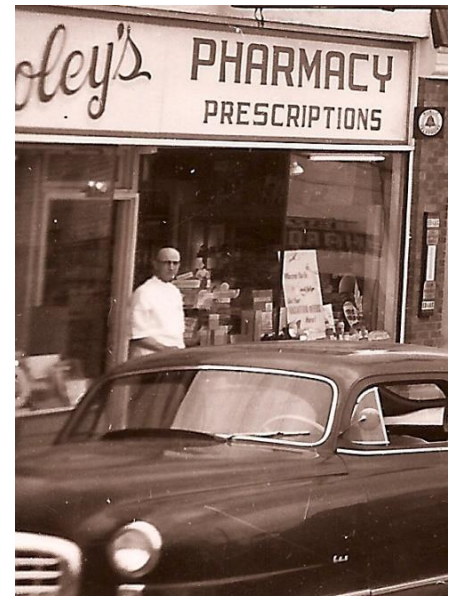
Soley's Pharmacy 1948-1966 Verner (Verne) and Henrietta Soley



Interior view of Soley's Pharmacy from the 1952 Rainier Union High School yearbook. Verne Soley with his wife Henrietta.

Verner M. Soley graduated from Washington State College in 1929 and served in the Navy during WWII for three years as a chief pharmacist mate. He spent eight years in Juneau, Alaska, where he met and married his wife Henrietta Curtis. Verner and his wife moved to Rainier in 1948 and opened their pharmacy on November 13, 1948 in the Hirtzel building that was located on the north side of East B Street (Hwy 30) between East 1st St. and East 2nd St. Mrs. Soley's parents Arnold and Alice Curtis had also moved earlier that same year from Alaska and settled in nearby Prescott, Oregon. Sometime prior to May 1962 Soley moved his pharmacy to the south side East B Street into a larger store (located at 110 E B St). His first store later became the Chuck Wagon Cafe. This

building was later torn down and at present is a vacant lot. Mr. Soley was involved in several civic activities and belonged to several organizations. Soley closed his Pharmacy on October 31, 1966. Verner passed away in 1976 and Henrietta in 1993.



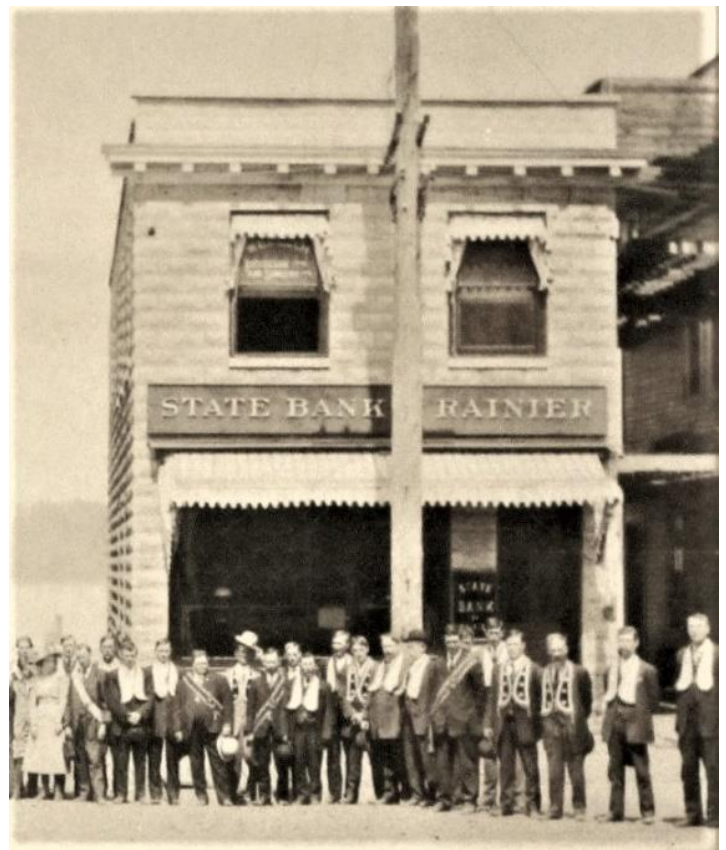
A real photo postcard by Smith's Scenic Views titled "Street Scene - Rainier Oregon" taken in the 1950s. Soley's Pharmacy can be seen at left with what looks like Mr. Soley standing in the entryway. (Postcard in the Mike Clark collection)

Dr. William Edward Welch

Dr. William E. Welch came to Rainier in 1907 to practice medicine. He was Rainier's mayor from April 3, 1911, to March 5, 1912, and for several years at a later time he served on the Rainier water board.

Dr. Welch was recognized by leading physicians of Portland as one of the most efficient men in his profession. During his prime years he was frequently called into consultation with Portland surgeons and physicians before serious and important operations were performed.

Dr. Welch was stricken with two paralytic strokes in March 1924. On June 28th, that same year, a devastating fire severely damaged his office that was on the second floor of the State Bank of Rainier building. He had no insurance. The fire also destroyed most of Rainier's businesses on the northside of "A" street. It was decided later to remove the upper floor of the bank building and to keep it as a single story. This building still exists at present. He died in Portland at age 66 at the home of his sister in Portland on December 3, 1927.



The photo at right shows the State Bank of Rainier building where Dr William Edward Welch had his office on the second floor. On the upstairs window at left, it is written "W. E. Welch, physician and Surgeon." (Photo in the Mike Clark collection)

NEW MEMBERS SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER

(through October 2, 2023)

We have 286 memberships* now

Jim & Jeanette Banta
Micheal Brusco
LeAnn Cole
Jason Davis
Terry Deason
William & Jenifer Dias
Tiffany Hatley
Karen Hooke
Jim & Jenny Elliott
Butch Keepers
Steve & Kathi Mattinen
Sandra Pearson
Kirk Rea
Sandra Russell
Mike & Christine Smith
Dave & Linda Stennick
James Tipfer
Suzan Watson
Jackie Weaver
Bob & Jan Wing
John Womack
Malcolm Worrell

LIFETIME MEMBERS

Mike Avent
Jim & Jeanette Banta
Greg Beck
Lawrence (Buzz) & Alice Beck
Alfred S. Berg
Harold & Elaine Davis
Jason Davis
Jefferson Davis
Carol Girt
William & Mary Harrison
Rosalie Herstrom
Robert & Dorothy Massey
Russ & Jan Moon
Sloan & Jennifer Nelson
Paul & Judy Nys
Mark & Sue Pitra
Rainier Masonic Lodge #24
Bill & Lydia Stennick
Dale Strom
Teevin Bros.
Pat Valpiani
K.C. & Marilyn Van Natta
Robert & Martha Van Natta
Leona Zimmer

HONORARY MEMBERS

Mike Clark
Columbia County Museum Association
Betsy Johnson
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 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.

Calendar of Events 2023

November 4	Rainier Senior Center Holiday Bazaar at the Rainier Senior Center. 9 to 3. ROHM will have a table with baked goodies and craft items for sale, as well as a raffle basket.
November 11	Veterans Day Celebration to honor local veterans at the museum from noon to four. We will have over 100 pictures of local veterans on display.