

# Rainier Valley HERITAGE NEWS

Fall, 2016

## Lakewood Pioneer Family Member Honored As Hero

by Nancy Dulaney

At the May 26, 2016, Franklin High School Quaker Hall of Fame Dinner, I noticed on the program list to be inducted: Ed Almquist, '54, orthopedic surgeon. As Larry Schinke later spoke to introduce Ed, it gradually became apparent the importance of their relationship.

In February of 1953, Larry and another friend Keith Jacobsen were buried in an avalanche near Snoqualmie Pass summit. Their skiing companion, 17-year-old Ed Almquist hiked out 2-1/2 miles to return with a rescue team to find Larry still alive eight hours later. Keith

Jacobsen did not survive. After Larry's heartfelt introduction, Ed took the podium and talked fondly of his years at Franklin and humbly of his career as a renowned orthopedic hand surgeon in Seattle. In the 1954 FHS Tolo his Interests were "Hi-Y and Girls" and his Ambition was "Become successful."



Johanna Almquist with sons (l to r) Edward and Algon.

Dr. Edward Almquist is third-generation Rainier Valley, Lakewood pioneer. The Almquists homesteaded before Columbia was a city, before Lakewood was a neighborhood, before

Rainier Avenue Electric Railway streetcar tracks were laid, before indoor plumbing, and before any of us can remember.

Lars Anton Almquist, (Ed's grandfather) left the subarctic climate of northern Sweden in October 1883 with his wife, Johanna, and their two young children, Johan Alfred and Mary, headed for Washington Territory, never to look back. In June of

1884, L.A. Almquist purchased 1-1/2 blocks in Maynard's Lake Washington Addition from G.E. Phinney for \$450. In November another two blocks were purchased for \$600 by Louis Almquist. As Lars had become Louis, in 1902 Maynard's Lake Washington Addition was replatted and renamed Lakewood.

*continued on page 2*



## News & Notes

**RVHS Holiday Open House**  
Saturday, December 3rd, 2016  
2:00pm - 4:00pm

**Dismantling Racism: A Forum for Southeast Seattle**  
Tuesday, December 13th, 2016  
7:00pm - 9:00pm  
Rainier Arts Center

**Office Hours:**  
Tuesday 1:00pm - 4:00pm  
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*The Rainier Valley Historical Society's mission is to collect, preserve, exhibit, and interpret the history and heritage of the Rainier Valley and its people, and to promote public involvement in and appreciation of its history and culture.*

*Our geographic boundaries are from Dearborn Street on the north to the city limits on the south, and from the I-5 freeway to Lake Washington.*

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A. Almquist Grocery with Men, Horses and Delivery Buggy

In 1884, Louis and Johanna's first American-born child, Algon, made his debut, followed in time by Gilbert, Robert, Edward (Ed's father) and Laurence. By the 1889 King County Census, Duwamish Precinct, Louis' occupation was listed as Farmer. The Almquist homestead included fruit orchards, a pasture for their cows and horses, and a garden in which prize winning roses were cultivated. Lakewood was then a remote location with poor and limited transportation by land; Lake Washington by boat was the preferred mode of travel. In 1891 the Almquists sold two lots at 50th Avenue South & Hudson Street to the Rainier Avenue Electric Railway for \$1. They waited over 20 years for the trolley track to be laid.

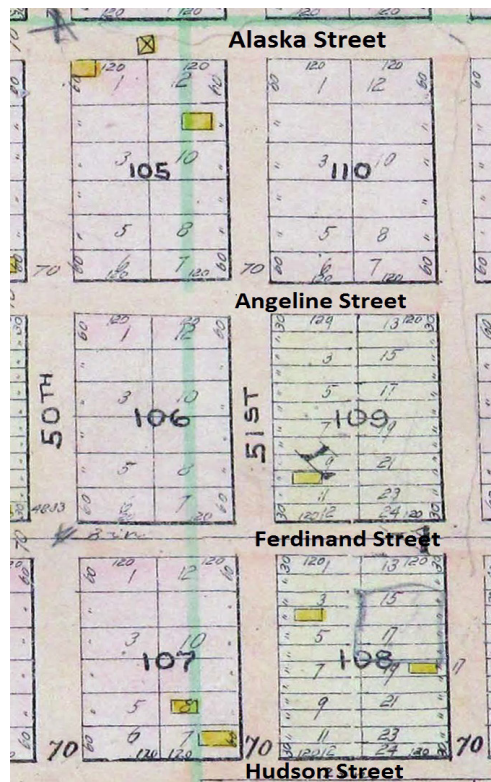
Louis Almquist also worked as watchman at Seattle's water pumping station at the shore in Mt. Baker. He rowed there from Lakewood and back every day. The privately owned Spring Hill Water Company had built the pumphouse in 1886 at the foot of Holgate Street.

Louis' name is on a passenger list for a ship bound for southeast Alaska in July 1897. He worked building rafts for miners to sail down the Yukon River

toward Dawson City during the Klondike Gold Rush. In 1901 his occupation is miner in the City of Seattle Directory.

As a teenager, son Algon worked for the Hepler family store in Columbia City, delivering groceries to customers near Lake Washington by horse drawn

cart. By 1910, Algon was proprietor of his own grocery at the corner of 50th & Alaska Street on the family property.



1912 Baist Map Detail.

In the Baist map above, the Almquist store is visible as a frame building (yellow rectangle) in Block 105, at the northwest corner. The horse barn looks to be located in the middle of Alaska Street (X inside yellow rectangle) and

the Almquist family home appears on 51st Avenue. Algon owned the grocery until 1939, when he sold outside the family. The store has been variously named Sure Fine, PSQ Food Stores, Brown's Grocery, Maimon's Kosher Foods, and, more recently, Noah's Grocery.

After years of begging, pleading and demanding from Lakewood residents, in 1913, the Genesee streetcar trolley, with a cow catcher mounted on the front, began connector service between the Seattle, Renton & Southern Railway on Rainier Avenue along Genesee to 50th and then Hudson Street, right past the grocery. Almquist family folklore tells it that trolley men enjoyed making unscheduled stops at the Almquist store for some of Ed Sr's homemade dandelion wine. So much for timetables.

As for customer service, after the 1916 record breaking snowstorm when some 20 inches of snow fell on Seattle in one day and the city came to a three-day standstill, Ed Sr. packed up some groceries, donned his snowshoes and made deliveries to customers as far away as the Mt. Baker neighborhood.

In between some semi-pro boxing and serving in WWI as an Army medic in France picking mustard gas victims up off the battlefield, Ed Sr. operated the Lakewood District grocery beginning at a young age. After Algon sold the store, Ed Sr. briefly ran a grocery in Leschi and then beginning in WWII, worked as an electrician for the shipyards in Bremerton and at Todd's.

The Lakewood Seward Park Community Club had its genesis in about 1910 with the neighborhood men meeting in the original Lakewood boathouse at the foot of Oregon Street and the women forming their own Lakewood Civic Improvement Club. At some point, the men voted to invite the women

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## Honor Roll

Many thanks to our members and supporters who make our work possible! Below are those whose gifts we received between April 2nd 2016 and November 10th, 2016 Contact us with any corrections or omissions: 206-723-1663 or [director@rainiervalleyhistory.org](mailto:director@rainiervalleyhistory.org).

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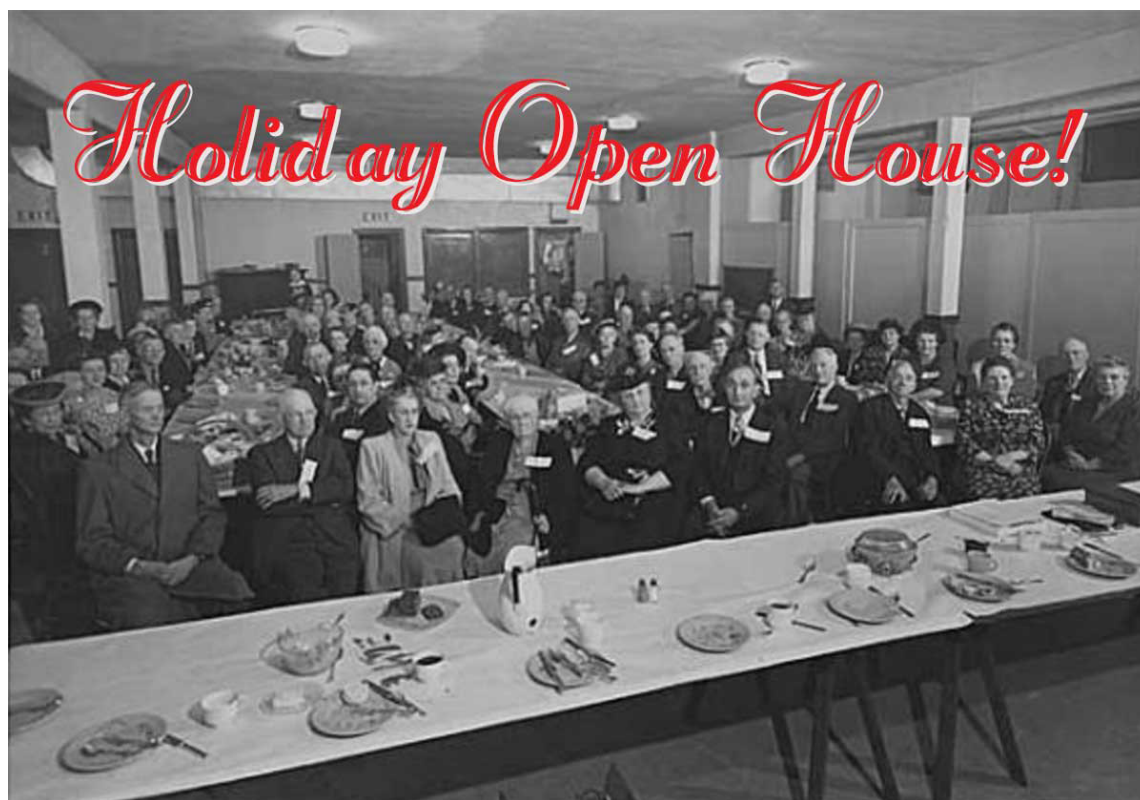
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You are invited to  
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**HOLIDAY  
OPEN HOUSE!**

**December 3rd  
2:00pm - 4:00pm**

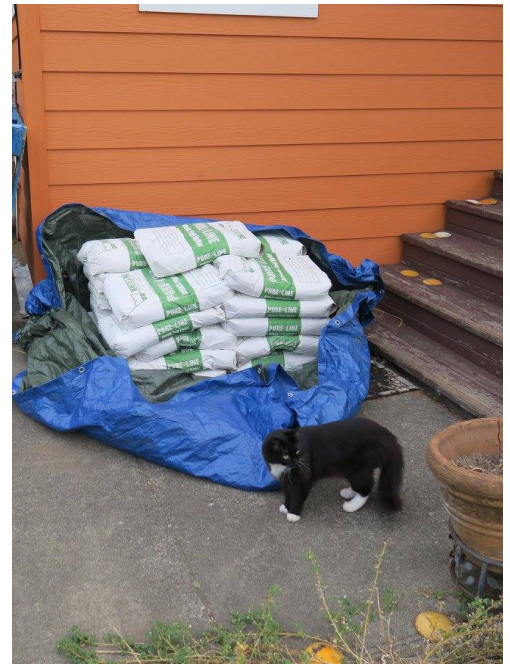
**Refreshments will  
be served.**

**3710 S Ferdinand St  
Columbia City**



## Drawing the Line

A hundred years ago this summer, the Montlake Cut was completed, and Lake Washington began to flow out into Lake Union (and then to Puget Sound, via the Ballard Locks). By October of 1916, Lake Washington was nine feet lower, and a whole lot of places that had been underwater no longer were. On August 28th (Bicycle Sunday), local historian and artist Mikala Woodward temporarily revived this vanished landscape by walking the former shoreline with a field chalker. The journey began at the Mount Baker Rowing & Sailing Center at 10 am and wound up at Seward Park in the early afternoon. The chalk line was non-toxic and lasted 3-5 days. A handout explaining the project and the history behind it was available at info stations along the route, one of which was manned by RVHS board members Nancy Dulaney and Teresa Anderson. Many thanks to Amir Sheikh and the Waterlines Project for historical mapping, and to 4Culture for a generous Heritage Project grant.



**MAKING THE CUT**  
The Locks, The Lakes, and a Century of Change



# 2016 FOUNDER'S DINNER

Everyone had a great time at the 4th Annual Founder's Dinner in honor of Buzz Anderson, October 15th, 2016, at Our Lady of Mt. Virgin Parish Hall. Douglas Chiechi and his team prepared a delicious traditional Italian dinner, and the meal ended with cannoli made by Chiodo Brokerage. The live auction and raffle contained a wide variety of items, from wine to special tours.



*In spite of the storm warning, Don Bearwood and his daughter Shamora came all the way from Goldbar, Washington, to attend the dinner! (Left to Right: Shamora Bearwood, Don Bearwood, Jean Veldwyk)*



*The Anderson family table at the Founder's Dinner.*

Music was provided by the Tarantellas strolling through the crowd performing traditional Italian music with Mandolin Guitar, and Harmonica.

One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation by former Board President Brian Fairchild of a special award to retiring board member Grover Haynes for his many years of service to RVHS and to the community at large. He is now recognized as an emeritus member of the RVHS board.



*RVHS Board President, Sheila Harvey, and newly recognized Board Emeritus, Grover Haynes*

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and the two groups were joined to form the Lakewood Community Club in 1929. The new neighborhood of Seward Park was added in 1979.



*Halloweeners At The Lakewood Civic Improvement Club. 1919. Johanna Almquist sits front and center in glasses and dark overcoat.*

In March of 1924, the city of Seattle acquired from the Almquists property for a children's playfield. After about \$900 worth of grading, Lakewood Playfield emerged from Block 106, one of the properties Louis and Johanna Almquist had purchased back in 1884. Louis had passed away in 1913. Upon her death in 1929, Johanna bequeathed \$50 for improvements to the playfield, and a drinking fountain was purchased and installed. Later a small concrete plaque was placed near the top of the concrete steps at 50th & Angeline, commemorating her gift to the Lakewood neighborhood.

When Dr. Almquist visited the RVHS office to share his family story and photos, he indicated that his mother, Lydia, was the last Almquist living in the Lakewood neighborhood, leaving in the early 1980s. Also of Swedish descent, she had worked for 50 years in obstetrics and gynecology nursing. She served in the Canadian navy during WWI and again nursed during WWII after she had married Edward Almquist in 1923, and began to live near the southwest shores of Lake Washington in Rainier Valley.



## Stained Glass Window Project Gets Financial Support

by Karen O'Brien

In the summer of 1923, architectural plans were drawn for a new Columbia Congregational Church to replace the original 1896 structure. Within the new Spanish styled church, tall arched amber glass windows adorned the east and west walls of the sanctuary. Of unique design, 4 beautiful memorial stained glass windows were placed in the church. The new era was also one of bereavement, losing several faithful church workers young and old. 3 of the 4 memorial windows were dedicated to young adults, children of the pillars in the community and the last window dedicated to a charter member. Today our collection holds 3 memorial windows dedicated to Sidney Burbank (1892- 1917), Mildred Weiss (1900-1926) and John A. Kelso (1850-1922). The 4th window dedicated to Mabel Hastings (1890-1918) remains in place.

The church property was sold in 2015 for 1.5 million. The project design is to keep the 1923 church's structure and transform the interior to "The Abbey," a 12-unit apartment building. We met with the owner and shared the 124-year-old church history with him. Plans are to tell the story of the congregation in an interpretive sign in the new building. Stained glass artist Kyle Schumacher was also given permission to salvage one of the largest remaining amber windows for his studio. Kyle has been hired to restore our window collection with the funds raised at the founder's dinner. Soon, our church window collection will be restored to near original condition and shared with the community in a display.



Columbia Congregational Church 39th & Ferdinand, circa 1940



On Sunday April 4, 1926 a stained glass window was dedicated to Mildred Weiss, Philip Weiss' sister, at the Columbia Congregational Church, and described in Philip's diary "C.E.

[Christian Endeavor] dedicated wonderful window to our dear Mildred."



On May 13, 1917, Sydney Raht Burbank died in Seattle at the age of twenty-four.

## Collections Update

**RVHS thanks the following donors of items recently added to our collections:**

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world wide flags

Boy Scout record books

Arthur Anderson navy  
uniform

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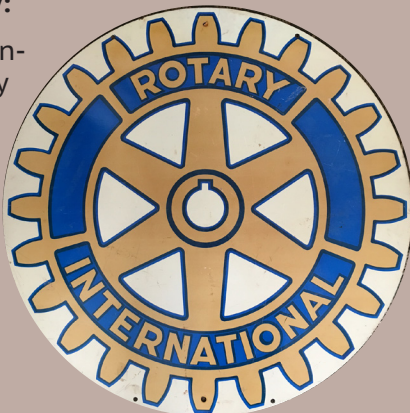
**Dr. Edward Almquist:** Almquist family photographs

**Anonymous Donor:** Seattle Sunday Magazines  
1940s-1960s

**Bonnie Bosworth:** Frederick & Nelson Bissell's vacuum  
and Franklin Tolos

**Carleen Bell:** original watercolor of Captain Burrows  
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family portrait postcard

**Dr. Alan Breen:** Ezra Bessaroth: The Story of a Sephardic  
Congregation, centennial book



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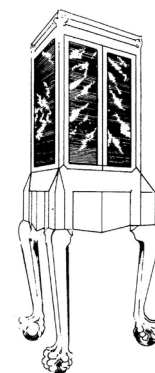
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