



## Check out the Calendar—back cover

- Kent Chronicles 1st Thursdays
- GKHS Board Meetings—public welcome!
- Little Explorers' Club alternating Wednesdays
- Vintage Movies 3rd Saturday at 3pm tickets \$3/\$2 members
- GKHS Field Trips to other museums

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# The Recorder

Published by the Greater Kent Historical Society & Museum

## Letter from the President by Charlene Shaw

It is just amazing to me that this quarter has flown by so fast! Since January we have begun to have a monthly speaker and dinner series on the Third Thursday of the month—just \$15 for members and we are having a variety of fascinating topics. The old-time movies are also fun for only \$3 every third Saturday—the popcorn and licorice bring back a bit of nostalgia for the old Kent Theater.

The Little Explorers Club (preschoolers) continues quarterly and is available through the Kent Parks and Recreation Catalogue. On the other hand, Kent Chronicles (intended for seniors) began in January and meets monthly to discuss different time periods, historic happenings and events that have shaped our lives. Refer to the Calendar on the last page for times and dates.

Both Stephen and I had our birthday parties at the museum and there is a party rental this month. We are finding that the museum is a great place to use for a medium-sized party (40 or so guests). The kitchen is available for warm up and cold storage, and the dining room dresses up easily. We have folding tables and chairs available—thanks to the generosity of the Soroptimist International of Kent Club and plenty of dishes for food service. Consider renting the place—you will be really glad you did. Call Linda for details, 253-854-4330

PS We're looking for a china cabinet approx. 57" h x 48" w x 18" d to replace the loaner that was returned to the White River Valley Museum. If you have one that you would like to donate, let us know—the GKHS is a non-profit organization and donations are tax deductible according to the IRS laws. Arrangements can be made to pick it up, if needed.

## Membership has its privileges

Thurs, April 22,  
6:30pm – 9pm

**Speaker Series continues with "How to Fix up Your Money Pit" Dinner and dessert served at 7:00pm. \$18/\$15 members. For reservations, call 253-854-4330.**



## Membership

### THIS MAY BE YOUR LAST ISSUE!

Thanks to those of you who renewed your 2010 membership from the Winter issue of *The Recorder* newsletter. If you haven't yet replied, you can still ensure that you will continue to receive this newsletter by returning the membership form on page 2. Other

Membership benefits you may miss out on:

- free admission to the Bereiter House Museum,
- invitations to events including exhibit receptions, and
- membership prices on special events.

See calendar on back cover.

## Welcoming New Members

Welcome 2010 Business Members:

-St. James Episcopal

Parish  
-D&S Legacy

Investment, LLC

-Charley's On Central  
(GT Classics Food & Beverage, LLC)

Days and Nights at the Bereiter House

by Stephen Chandler



We had a busy month at the Bereiter House in February. Thought I would share the news with our readers.

On February 13 we held a Volunteer Breakfast, to show our appreciation for all the time and effort they put in at the museum. The staff, wearing their best aprons, cooked and served up a breakfast even Mom would be proud of. The menu consisted of griddle cakes from a 1937 cookbook, sausage links, and to complement everything, fresh strawberries. A good time was had by all. Thanks for the great turnout and hope to see you all soon.

Turning to an evening event, on February 18 we held the second installment of our Speaker Series. Our special guest was Mr. Jack Becvar, his topic of choice,

Kent Aviation. In his presentation he shared with us film footage of his Grandfather, Father and his Uncle George. These Becvar men had made great strides in building airplanes and aviation. The Becvars had a flying service here in Kent in the early 1900's. Thanks Jack for sharing the passion and dedication of these 3 amazing Becvar men.

What could be better than an afternoon at the movies!! Saturday February 20th we had our second movie matinee. We could not get Jack Becvar as our guest, so we had to settle for Cary Grant. The film made in 1940 was, His Girl Friday. Add popcorn, lemonade and red licorice, what else would you need? Please join us on the third Saturday of every month at 3pm. Only a \$3.00 donation admission gets you in. What a deal.

Greater Kent Historical Society  
 http://kenthistoricalmuseum.org  
 855 E. Smith  
 Kent, Washington  
 253-854-4330  
 Our purpose is to promote the discovery, preservation and dissemination of knowledge about the history of the greater Kent area.

2010 Officers  
 Charlene Shaw—President  
 Jim Osnes—Vice President  
 Dave Foltz—Treasurer  
 Carla Loux—Secretary  
 Jack Becvar—Past President  
 Staff  
 Linda Wagner—Director  
 Allison Jurgens—Curator  
 Stephen Chandler—Admin. Assistant

The Recorder is a publication of the Greater Kent Historical Society, a

A 100 Years of Kent Football: Then and Now

by Stephen Chandler

The Greater Kent Historical Society is pleased to welcome to our community, The Kent Predators. The Predators will be Kent's first indoor football team. The home games will be held at Showare Event Center. In celebration, please come visit our new exhibit, A 100 Years of Kent Football: Then and Now, going on now through June 2010. Some of the highlights are, The Taylor Trophy, The Hall Of Fame Jacket, which belonged to Morris "Red" Badgro and a array of photos from the past, including the legendary Claude French.

Renew Your Membership or Make a Donation  
 GKHS Membership Form

Please enroll me as Name \_\_\_\_\_

New  Renewal Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss or Business Name  
 Donor  Memorial Contact Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  Senior (65+)/Student/Teacher—\$15

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  Individual—\$20

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  Family (one household)—\$35

Family Historical Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_  Organization (Non-profit)—\$50

Donation Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_  Business/Corporate—\$100

Memorial Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_ In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:  
 Greater Kent Historical Society (GKHS)  
 855 East Smith Street  
 Kent, WA 98030-4623  
 Questions: call the museum at 253-854-4330



Do you do research on the internet?  
 Help us earn extra money by searching using **GoodSearch.com**. Follow the directions to **Choose Your Cause** and enter **Kent Historical Society and Museum** every search you make will contribute to earning money for the Kent

## Meeker Mansion Field Trip February, 2010

Everyone met at the Bereiter House at 10AM for the drive to Puyallup. Charlene Shaw, Sheri Sayer, Karen Bouton, Carla Loux and Ray Owens made up the group with 3 family members and 1 invited guest. John and Patty Mergens met us at the Meeker House.

The docent reduced the admission price by 50% and then made a phone call. Within a few minutes a past president arrived and gave us an excellent tour of the Meeker House.

The House is a showcase for fine wood working. The ceilings are 14 feet with the windows and doorways extended to match the ceiling. Most doors had a frame nearly twice as high at the door. While it seemed that no two doorways or windows matched in height, all were of a similar height making for well-lit rooms. The several fireplaces were surrounded with tiles made in England. The wall paper and color of walls were selected to match the tile work.

Over the years, there have been lots of changes made to the Mansion. It was turned into a hospital after Mrs. Meeker passed away in 1909. The House served as a medical facility until about 1970 when the mansion, but not the land, was donated to the Meeker Historical Society as a historical landmark. The ceilings had been reduced in height to reduce heating costs and there had been additions and annexes built that hid the original house. There annexes and additions have since been removed.

Restoration of the house is still ongoing. The ceilings are now restored and the covering of the original wainscoting has been removed. An artist has spent the last 2.5 years restoring the wall to their original treatment. She sands the wall until the original treatment is discovered and a modern replacement is found.

The billiard room had the window and door trim restored by replacing the figured maple wood at a cost of \$10,000 just for materials. The workmanship is impressive with some hand carved parts.

Comment from Karen Bouton:

I would like to organize a Meeker Mansion Victorian Tea for GKHS members.

Comment from Charlene Shaw:

I think we have hit on something great! The field trip was fun and very educational. It seems like we all mean to visit the other museums, soon. Our new planned field trips are your chance. We will be going to Renton Museum next, so be sure to join us.

## by Ray Owens

I hadn't realized that Meeker Mansion is just that. It is very plush and beautifully restored.

There was a lady, up on a ladder working away painting the

top of the walls - she has done ceilings, walls and trim all by hand!! What a labor of love.

I particularly liked the way the large family picture was labeled. It answered the question always in our minds - Who was that? The house is different than ours in that it has a museum feeling, and ours has a "home" feeling. They have managed to have a "Education Center" away from main house for those who want to do research. That is something I would like to see available for our membership.

These are wonderful experiences I hope you all can take advantage of soon.

Comment from Carla Loux:

I was impressed by how much restoration has been completed over the last 30 years since last visiting the mansion. The Ezra Meeker Historical Society (not the city) owns the mansion. It is amazing how much they achieved by relying on grants and donations without any local government support.

Also of interest was, there is no paid staff, all volunteer workers. There are 5 to 8 docents available for tours. There is a separate research facility located on the property. The museum is furnished and decorated as a home of the period, as faithfully as possible. A few items had been donated that were originally used by the Meekers.

The Meeker Mansion is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites. The objective of the Meeker Historical Society is to return the home to its original 1891 condition. There are no known records of the house aside from three letters Mr. Meeker wrote describing it. Although, they know the architects were Ferrell and Darmer of Tacoma and took three years to build and was completed in 1890. The Meekers lived in the mansion until 1909 when Mrs. Meeker died.





## Van De Vanter honored as First Mayor of Kent

research by Jack Becvar

The people of the town of Kent, on May 22, 1890, went to the polls in the office of Crow and Shinn to cast ballots for the first officials of the new community. When the counting of the ballots was finished it was found that the honor of being the first mayor of the new town would go to Aaron T. Van de Vanter, a man who had already become one of the most progressive citizens of the community.

A.T. Van de Vanter came to Kent in the winter of 1885. He soon organized the Washington Central Improvement Company, of which he was president, with the end in view of combining efforts to develop and encourage new industries here. The early company did much for the up building of the community, and possibly as a reward for his work in this regard, he was given the honor of serving his friends and neighbors

as their first mayor.

While serving in the office of mayor, he was elected to the state senate from the district. He was identified with most of the important measures which became laws during his incumbency.

Upon finishing his term as mayor, he was elected to the town council and served on that body during 1893. In 1894, he was elected to the office of King County Sheriff and served in that capacity for several years.

Aaron T. Van de Vanter was a nephew of the late Willie Van de Vanter, who for many years was an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Above information from Kent history compiled by the King County Public Library 1962.

The South King County Genealogical Society would like to invite you for a half day seminar:  
"Seattle's Pioneer Women: More Than Pretty Petticoats"  
Saturday, March 20, 2010  
9-12pm (doors open at 8am)  
at the  
First Baptist Church  
of Kent  
11420 SE 248th St  
Kent, WA 98030  
General Admission \$20  
(\$15 SKCGS Members)  
Cash or check at the door.  
Email:  
skcgs.seminar@gmail.com  
or  
Website:  
Skcgs.org

## A Kent Family Snippet — Samuel C. Cook

by Karen Bouton

Mr. Cook is buried within the Hansen/Lowell family plot in the Saar Pioneer Cemetery, right next to Chris Hansen. It is undetermined as to why he is buried in this particular spot as no family connection could be found. The only connection found was the fact that Mr. Cook died at Northern State Hospital as did Mr. Hans Peter Hansen, although in different years. Hans is also buried in the Saar Pioneer Cemetery, but there is no headstone for him to be found anywhere.

The only documentation to be found about Samuel Cook was a death certificate. This document indicated that Samuel was born in 1858 in Maine and died 24 January 1923 at age 65 years at the Northern State Hospital in Sedro-Woolley, Skagit County, Washington. He was a laborer, probably single, and buried in the

hospital cemetery. No parental information was given. The informant was Hospital Records. It is unknown if he was actually buried at the Northern State Hospital cemetery and later moved to the Saar Pioneer Cemetery, or if just the headstone was placed in the Saar Pioneer Cemetery in memory for him.

A thorough check of the weekly Sedro-Woolley newspaper, *the Courier-Times*, as well as the weekly Kent paper, *The Kent Advertiser-Journal*, brought forth no further information.



**Samuel C Cook  
1858-1923**

**Saar Cemetery , Kent, WA  
Public access available; privately  
owned, please respect private  
property.**

## GKHS to Award Scholarships

by Jim Osness



The GKHS will be awarding scholarships to four deserving Kent High School graduating seniors this coming June. Three of the scholarships are honoring the memory of past GKHS President Norm Turner. These are being made possible from gifts presented to the GKHS after Norm's passing last year. The fourth scholarship will be the

first annual Ralph L. & Elinor J. Osness Scholarship, which is made possible from an endowment established in their names.

Applications will be available in each of the Kent High Schools and at the GKHS museum and must be received at the GKHS museum no later than May 1, 2010, to be considered.

### Auction Tally for 2009 GKHS Fund-A-Cause for New Color Printer

Cash donations for this auction item raised \$560 towards our goal of \$700. Sincere thanks to the following donors who have contributed in 2010 towards funding the purchase of this greatly needed laser jet office equipment: Bill & Lois Stewart, Richard & Barbara McGhee, Claudia Roselle, Al & Audrey Sells, Alice Nelson, Dorice Wolfrom. To donate towards the laser jet printer, fill out the donation area of the Membership form on page 2.



### Norm Turner 1957-2009

With love and great sadness, Norm lost his courageous fight against cancer

peacefully at home in October. Norm was survived by his wife, Teresa; children—Nathan, Michael and Brian; grandchildren—Courtney, Jordan, Hannah, JT and Olivia; sisters—Barbara Brady, Betty Africa, and brother—Alan Turner; and a large number of family and close friends.

Norman was known for his warm heart, gentle presence and wonderful

smile. He was born in Greensboro, NC and moved to California, married, and employed by various aerospace companies including McDonnell Douglas. Norman moved his family to Kent in Dec. 1989 and worked at Boeing as a BDCO Project Administrator.

Norman loved to ski, ice skate and golf. He collected model airplanes and learned to play the organ. He dedicated his community time in the past to delivering food to the seniors in Seattle, and later donated time to the Greater Kent Historical Society, serving as a board member and president for 2 years.

**Norm Turner  
was a  
Greater Kent  
Historical  
Society Past  
President**

As a non-profit charitable organization, GKHS relies on community support from individuals, corporations, foundations and service clubs. All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by the IRS.

#### You can help GKHS financially by:

Become a benefactor (a financial contributor) or leave a bequest to GKHS in your will

Supporting the GKHS Direct Mail Campaigns

Making an In Memoriam Gift (names will be entered in our Endowment Book located in the front hall.)

Supporting Special Events by buying a ticket, being a sponsor

**Two ways you can donate today. Go to [kenthistoricalmuseum.org](http://kenthistoricalmuseum.org), click on Join which will give you an option for donations through Paypal or fill out the donation form located on page 2.**

Greater Kent Historical  
Society & Museum  
855 E Smith St  
Kent, WA 98030  
(Parking behind museum)  
Hours: 12-4pm, Tues-Sat

Phone: 253-854-4330

E-mail:

ctyofknt@msn.com

Membership:

GKHSMembership@hotmail.com

## Cultivating Kent's History

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We're on the web:  
[Kenthistoricalmuseum.org](http://Kenthistoricalmuseum.org)

The Greater Kent  
Historical Society is a  
non-profit organization.  
Donations are tax  
deductible according to  
the IRS laws.

## Kent Historical Museum Calendar

### MARCH

#### **Vintage Movies**

Sat, 3/20, 3pm – 5pm

3rd Saturday at 3pm, tickets \$3/\$2(members) Movies the old-fashioned way—see a movie “short”, brief intermission, then our feature film—“Meet John Doe” (1941). Seating limited. Freshly popped popcorn and other refreshments available.

### APRIL

#### **Kent Chronicles**

Thu, 4/1, 10:45am April topic—“1963” Intended for 60+ and home schooled students. Are you interested in a lively discussion about history? We'll look at artifacts, watch movie clips and much more!

#### **GKHS Board Meeting**

Thurs, 4/1, 7:00pm, at the Kent Historical Museum and open to public.

#### **GKHS Field Trip**

Sat, 4/3, 10:00am, meet at the Kent Historical Museum parking lot—go to Maple Valley Historical Museum. Check website for Calendar updates!

#### **Little Explorers Club**

Wed, 4/7 “Watch Me Grow” & 4/21 “Japanese Settlers”, 10:30am – 11:30am

#### **Speaker Series - \$18/(\$15 Members)**

Thurs, 4/22, 6:30pm – 9pm

“How to Fix up Your Money Pit”

Dinner and dessert served at 7:00pm. For reservations, call 253-854-4330.

#### **Vintage Movies**

Sat, 4/17, 3pm – 5pm

3rd Sat at 3pm, tickets \$3 (\$2 Members) feature film—“The Little Princess”.

### MAY

#### **Kent Chronicles**

Thu, 5/6, 10:45am May topic—“1929”

#### **GKHS Board Meeting**

Thurs, 5/6, 7:00pm, at the Kent Historical Museum and open to public.

#### **Little Explorers Club**

Wed, 5/12 “Food We Grow” & 5/26, “Springtime in the Valley” 10:30am – 11:30am

#### **Vintage Movies - 3rd Sat at 3pm, \$3 (\$2 Members)**

Sat, 5/15, 3pm – 5pm

Feature film—“Bowery Blitzkrieg”

#### **Speaker Series—Tickets \$18/(\$15 Members)**

Thurs, 5/20, 6:30pm – 9pm

“Planning for the Future—Funerals”

Dinner and dessert served at 7:00pm. Call for reservations.