



# Prairie Gazette

Fall 2023

Official Publication, Lakewood Historical Society



## New Tenzler Library Exhibit Opens

On August 25th the Lakewood History Museum proudly opened its new Tenzler Library exhibit. The exhibit is a collaboration between the museum, the Pierce County Library System, and museum consultant **Chris Erlich**.

The Library opened in 1963 at the corner of Gravelly Lake Drive and Wildaire Road following a major donation by the Tenzler Foundation. The Foundation was established in the will of well known Philanthropist **Flora Belle Tenzler**, wife of Herman F. Tenzler, owner of Northwest Door Company in Tacoma. Flora passed in 1955 and in accordance with her will the Foundation was created with husband Herman serving as Foundation President.

In the early 1960s, the Lakewood area had a small temporary library but rapid growth created a need for a permanent facility. The Tenzler Foundation rose to the occasion and in 1963 donated the funds for a 8,612 square foot library. The library was officially known as the **Flora B. Tenzler**

by Phil Raschke



Flora B. Tenzler

### Memorial Library.

Ownership and maintenance of the building belonged to an organization called "FRIENDS of Lakewood Library" while Pierce County Library System provided staff and operations. In the 1970s the Tenzler Foundation made an additional grant to pay for an expansion project that quadrupled the library's size.

In 1982, at the request of the Tenzler Foundation which was terminating its activities, the official name of the Library was changed to "Lakewood Library" although many residents continued to call it Tenzler.

As time moved forward, the FRIENDS group believed maintenance of the building was becoming increasingly challenging. They decided it would be best to donate the Library to the Pierce County Library System. The donation was completed in 1992 and included \$350,000 cash for needed repairs and renovation. Following transfer, the FRIENDS continued to raise



Museum Consultant Chris Ehrlich

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## "We Got Books" Program a Big Hit!

by Phil Raschke

On June 2nd the Lakewood History Museum launched a repurposed book program which allowed residents to donate their good condition hardback and paperback books to the museum. Donated books were then placed on display and could be repurposed for a donation of \$1 for a hardback and 50

cents for a paperback. The program was designed to increase summer traffic to the museum and ran until August 19.

The museum is happy to report we made lots of new friends and our bookshelves are full with lots more books in reserve.

Special thanks to **Ginny Kershaw** (right) who was a first day donor. Before Ginny departed the museum, newly arriving visitors took home several of her

See BOOKS, page 3





## Lakewood Historical Society

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Ed Voie

## President's Message

Wow, summer is over. We have had a great spring and summer – two programs on the Titanic, a tribute to Amelia Earhart; multiple Saturday Street Fairs, and participation at the Lakewood SummerFest!

Ivan the Gorilla exhibit continues to bring people in to our Museum. Currently, we are highlighting the Flora B. Tenzler Library. And we are celebrating 25 years at the Lakewood Historical Society!

I want to thank **Becky Huber**, Past President, who suggested at her recent birthday celebration that guests make donations to the Lakewood Historical Society in lieu of birthday gifts to her. Very thoughtful of her and much appreciated.

We will be having our **Annual Meeting** on **Thursday, November 9** beginning at 6:30 p.m, which will also honor Veterans Day. See you then!

## Museum Welcomes Linda Work and Danielle Sharp to Board of Directors

By Phil Raschke

The Lakewood History Museum is delighted to welcome new Board members **Linda Work** and **Danielle Sharp**.

### PRAIRIE GAZETTE

Prairie Gazette is the official publication of the Lakewood Historical Society. The newsletter is published four times a year. Distribution is directly to members and available at the Lakewood History Museum, 6114 Motor Avenue SW, Lakewood, WA 98499 • 253-682-3480

The staff of Prairie Gazette actively encourages input from the Society's members as well as the general public regarding story ideas of any other aspects of this newsletter, and the Lakewood Historical Society.

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### MEETINGS

The Lakewood Historical Society formed in 1998 to preserve and share Lakewood's rich history through programs, displays and publications. The Society offers frequent programs on topics of historical interest. Most programs are free and open to the public. Visit us on Facebook or our website for information on events and activities:

www.LakewoodHistorical.org



**Linda** hails from Richfield, MN and attended the University of Minnesota. She started her career as a flight attendant for Northwest Airlines, but transferred to Seattle in order to fly on international routes. Later she owned a small business training people for the travel industry, worked as a travel agent and then joined Alaska Airlines where she worked until retirement. Today, she enjoys reading and volunteering.

**Danielle** is a graduate of Oregon State University with a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education. She spent several years teaching K-6 and Special Ed students and later became an English, History and Reading instructor with Charles Wright Academy. She loves to travel with Machu Picchu and hiking the Inca Trail being favorites. She recently returned from a trip to Uganda where she studied the lives and cultures of gorillas and chimpanzees.





# Motor Ave Street Festivals Draw Over 130 Museum Visitors

Photos by Historical Phil

**Good news**, the City of Lakewood's two summer street festivals drew over 130 visitors to the museum. Museum Board members and docents provided rotating tours and a fun, educational time was enjoyed by all.



Everyone wants a photo with Ivan



Hula Hoops were a big hit!



Juggler Jason Riley shows how its done!



The *Prairie Gazette* makes a stop in Ketchikan, Alaska with Board member Sue Scott!

*BOOKS*, from page one donated books. Thanks to everyone.

While the museum is not currently accepting new book donations the public is still invited to stop in and browse the shelves for a good book looking for a good home. Museum hours are noon to 4 pm on Friday and Saturday.

Dorothy Wickline thumbs through a book of interest.



## 2023 DONORS

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*Thank you!*

*TENZLER*, from page one funds to support Library special projects and programs.

By early 2022 the Library was again needing extensive repairs and offi-

cially closed in June. While plans for a new permanent location are being finalized, a temporary location is set to open later this year. Meanwhile, visit the Museum and

enjoy the new exhibit plus learn about "The Big One" a 586 year old Douglas Fir that was located next to the Tenzler entrance.



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## *“I Built That Ship Out Of 9,090 Lego Pieces”*

Story by Eric Cooper, Photo by Phil Raschke

*Back in early May the Museum hosted a two day Titanic event. A unique and captivating display at the event was a scale model of the Titanic built by Eric Cooper of Steilacoom. Below is Eric's story on how he came to build his model of the legendary Titanic.*



“From the moment I laid eyes on the Titanic’s design, I was captivated by its history and engineering. I knew I had to build it. It wasn’t an easy task. I had to keep track of so many pieces, it felt like I was counting every blade of grass in a field. As I built, I encountered challenges and setbacks, like any sailor navigating a treacherous sea. Whether it was a missing a piece or it was hidden in plain sight. But I pushed through, brick by brick, until the ship was complete. I finished in less than four days and felt like I had just conquered the high seas. The sense of satisfaction and pride I felt was unlike anything I had ever experienced. It was a project that pushed me to my limits, but it was also incredibly rewarding. Looking

back, I’m amazed at what I accomplished. Such a historical ship was now sitting in front of me, crafted with my own two hands. It’s a reminder that with hard work and determination, anything is possible.”

**Check [www.lakewoodhistorical.org](http://www.lakewoodhistorical.org) for notices about upcoming programs**