



Helge Erickson Selected Our 17th Pioneer of the Year

1996 Pioneer of the Year

Helge Erickson, a Hoquiam native of 85 years, will be honored as the Polson Museum's 1996 Pioneer of the Year at a celebration at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, February 23, at the Hoquiam Y.M.C.A. Mr. Erickson, born June 9, 1911, at 419 Chenault Avenue in Hoquiam, is the son of John G. and Vendla Meria Erickson, who immigrated to the United States in 1890 and 1906, respectively, from the Swedish speaking region of Finland. Still standing today, the Erickson family home is occupied by Helge's sister Svea. After the turn-of-the century, the home was often used as the first stopping place for many of the Swede-Finns who immigrated to Grays Harbor.

Helge attended Hoquiam High School and graduated in 1931. Unable to find work at the onset of the Depression, he returned to Hoquiam High to complete another year of schooling under a special program designed to ease the city's severe unemployment. During World War II—from 1942 to 1945—Helge served with the 843rd Signal Service Battalion as a radio operator. After the war he attended Coyne Electrical College in Chicago, graduating in 1948. Upon his return to the Harbor, Helge married Dorothy Pease in 1949. They adopted two children. One daughter, Camile, still resides in Hoquiam. Helge's wife Dorothy passed away in 1994.

Today Helge spends his time serving more than a few Harbor organizations. As a 47-year member of the United Methodist Church, a 49-year member of the Hoquiam Lions Club, a 50-year member of the Grays Harbor Amateur Radio Club, and a 59-year member of the Olympians, Helge has given countless and selfless hours to his community. He has served in nearly every office of the Olympians, including President, and has become legendary for his Pancake Feeds at the Methodist Church. Over the years, Helge has refined his pancake recipe on countless mountain outings with the Olympians and now uses his expertise far and wide throughout our community. Today, Helge is President of the Men's Club of his church and he still frequents the Tuesday morning gathering he started at Hoquiam's Oriole Café.

Museum Receives \$20,000 From Polson Family: \$15,000 to Start Endowment

In December, the Museum received a gift of \$20,000 from Mr. & Mrs. Robert Polson of Ithaca New York. The Polsons generously donated \$5,000 to help with Museum operating costs and \$15,000 to start a long-term endowment. We are now in the process of establishing this endowment fund and are especially pleased to have such a fund better to ensure the Museum's future financial stability. Anyone interested in more information about the endowment and making contributions to it are encouraged to contact the Museum.

John Larson Hired as Director and Curator

As we begin the Museum's 21st year, we are pleased to announce the appointment of John Larson as our new Director and Curator. We have selected John to replace Dave McDougal, who left the position on January 1. In addition to welcoming John, we welcome Dave back to his position on the Board. We appreciate Dave's

fine work in temporarily managing and maintaining the Museum since September.

John has returned this autumn to his native Hoquiam after completing an undergraduate degree in June from The University of Chicago. He graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in History and (Continued on page 2)

Museum in the Community

Museum to Create Ocean Shores Exhibit

This March, we will be opening an exhibit at the Ocean Shores Convention Center. The exhibit will run through April 24 when Museum Director John Larson will give a short lecture on Grays Harbor logging history at the Washington State Visitor Information Centers annual convention. The exhibit will provide a general overview of all the exhibits featured here at the Polson. Be sure to check it out anytime during March or April.

Trade Fair a Success

Our booth at the Chamber of Commerce's Trade Fair on February 1 was a success again this year. We dispensed bookmarks and brochures and gave fair goers a real taste of "modern" stereoptical technology. Congratulations to Mickey Tozier of Montesano who won our membership drawing.

Don't Miss Hoquiam Auction, Feb. 22

The annual Hoquiam Shows Its Best Action will be held at 6:00 p.m. on February 22 at the Hoquiam Eagles. Be sure to show your support for the community (you might even bid on an Elton Bennett drawing).

Television Tour of Polson

At our annual Christmas Open House, December 7, 1996, Richard Whitney of the Ocean Shores Convention Center filmed a video tour of the Museum which aired later that month on local-access North Beach television. Director John Larson hosted the tour—one well received by all beach viewers. A big thank you goes out to Mr. Whitney for providing the Museum with this wonderful exposure and for sharing a copy of the program with us.



Keep your eyes peeled for our new logo. Its design is based on original Polson Logging Co. letterhead.

New Director

(Continued from page one)

Geography, concentrating on 19th and 20th century American topics. John is particularly happy to start his professional career in his home town and at the Polson Museum. His lifelong ambition has been to become a museum professional.

This summer John completed an eight-month internship in the Collections Department of Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, where, in addition to designing and researching new exhibits, he dealt with day-to-day tasks in collections management. Aside from his practical experience at MSI, John focused his academic work on museum matters as well. Last April he completed an undergraduate thesis--*Articulate Space: Historical-Geographical Studies in American Museum Culture, The Washington State Historical Society Museum, 1891-1996*.

Aside from his various academic and professional interests, John is a longtime fan of fishing on Grays Harbor, hiking in Northwest mountains, playing the piano, riding bicycles and motorcycles, and traveling in the U. S. In fact, John attributes his developing museum interests to the varied summer car trips he enjoyed with his parents and younger brother, Scott, over many years.

Beyond welcoming John as our new Director and Curator, we also welcome him as our Museum's new caretaker. Beginning last December, John took over from Aaron and Julie Brewer, who are now headed to warmer climes with their fifth wheel. We wish them all the best and thank them both for over a year of superb service to the Polson Museum.

A t the Museum

Grays Harbor College Student Creating New Indian Exhibit

Gene Woodwick, a Grays Harbor College student, is working on a new comprehensive exhibit covering the history of local Indians and early white settlement on Grays Harbor. She is working five days a week for three hours a day through the College's New Chance program as a Curatorial Assistant. Aside from her work on the new exhibit in the dining room, Gene has also been helping with organizing our collection.

Help the Rose Society and Museum Garden, March 15

On March 15 at 10:00 a.m., the Grays Harbor Rose Society will meet at the Museum to conduct a rose pruning demonstration. Consulting Rosarian Helen Peters and other Rose Society members will lead the work party and answer any of your questions. All community and Museum members are welcome and encouraged to help. Bring your gloves and pruning shears and give our rose garden some much needed care. The Rose Society will also be selling roses, books, and catalogs. We look forward to seeing you there.

Americorps Builds New Shelving

While adding new collar ties and pony wall studs to strengthen our roof, Americorps workers this fall constructed shelving throughout our attic collections storage area. We now have enough room properly to store our entire collection and have been busy organizing artifacts by category on the new shelves. If anyone is interested in working on a variety of collections-related volunteer jobs, we'd be happy to hear from you. Call John Larson at 533-5862. He'd be happy to make your acquaintance and, of course, put you to work.

Summer Tour Guides

It's never too early to start thinking about summer so keep in mind that we can always use extra help with Museum tours.

Missing Hesperians

We're still missing a few Hesperians and are looking to complete our collection. If you have any of the following issues and would be interested in donating them to the Museum, let us know.

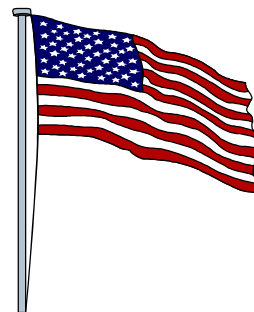
- ◆ 1934, 1936
- ◆ 1944
- ◆ 1961, 1962, 1965, 1967, 1969
- ◆ 1970 thru 1996

Research Library Opens

Our research library is now in place and open for use. Located in the study, the library houses a wide variety of books pertaining to local and regional history. City directories, biographies, assorted scrap books, periodicals, and school year books are featured. Already, one researcher from Washington State University and a Hoquiam High School student have found our library helpful. Thanks goes to Margaret Wenham for all her volunteer help in organizing and setting up the library. Thanks also to the Robert Gray Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution who purchased our five brand new bookcases. Be sure to stop by the Museum if you have something special to research. You browsers are also welcome.

New Member Discount at Museum Store

Museum Members now receive a 10% discount on all Museum Store purchases. Stop by and see what deals we've got in store for you..



Museum Still Accepting Roof Donations

Although the new roof is already on, we're still accepting donations to cover the cost. We thank the following people for their recent contributions:

- ♦ Myrtle Allasina
- ♦ Mike & Jean Bonney
- ♦ Tanya Bowers
- ♦ Barb Durney
- ♦ Hoquiam Eagles
- ♦ Isabelle Esses
- ♦ Cecil Herrington
- ♦ M&M Don Hurd
- ♦ Fred Kletka
- ♦ Ilene Kline
- ♦ Gordon & Pat Lanning
- ♦ Dale & Ingrid Larson
- ♦ Lauren H. Lucke
- ♦ Lillian Luark
- ♦ James Neil & Oma Logue
- ♦ Evelyn Murnen
- ♦ Merritt Nevers
- ♦ R. Alex Polson
- ♦ Bob Preble
- ♦ R.M. & Marcia Schouboe
- ♦ Ada Spencer
- ♦ Lee & Marjorie Stage
- ♦ Mr. & Mrs. James M. Stewart
- ♦ Charles & Joann Stover
- ♦ Timberland Savings & Loan
- ♦ Margaret Wenham
- ♦ Doris West

Museum Needs Volunteer Help

We have a variety of volunteer work for anyone interested. Please contact John Larson at 533-5862 if you would like to inquire about volunteer opportunities. Here are a few examples:

Collections
Exhibits
Marketing
Membership
Special Programs
Sales/Gift Shop
Yard Work/Housekeeping
Special Tours
Guides

Renew Your Membership

Don't forget to renew your membership with the Polson. Your support is needed to keep the Museum active within the community. If you haven't done so already, you can renew at any of the following levels.

- ☐ Corporate.....\$200
- ☐ Sustaining\$30+
- ☐ Family.....\$20
- ☐ Couple.....\$15
- ☐ Individual.....\$10
- ☐ Student/Senior.....\$8



MUSEUM NEWS

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