

REFLECTIONS

Summer 2018



Newsletter of an East County Historical Organization

E.C.H.O.
P. O. Box 946
Fairview, Oregon 97024
503-618-0946
www.echohistory.org

E.C.H.O.
Board Meeting
Quail Hollow Clubhouse
21100 NE Sandy Blvd.
Fairview, Oregon
Jan, Mar, Jul, Sep, Nov
3rd Thursday,
6:30pm
Open to the Public

1874 Zimmerman
Heritage Farm
17111 NE Sandy Blvd
Gresham, Oregon

House Tour
Open Saturdays in August
Noon to 4pm

Volunteer in the Garden
Every 2nd Saturday
9am to Noon

Volunteer in the House
Call for Days & Hours or
email info@echohistory.org

1893 Heslin House
60 Main Street
Fairview, Oregon

House Tour
Every 3rd Saturday
Noon to 4pm

Volunteer in the Garden
Every 1st Saturday
9am to Noon

Annual Meeting Summary

We held our annual meeting on April 29th and conducted a short business meeting, including Board member elections.

Peggy Olin is our new President, Twila Mysinger continues as Treasurer, Lael Larger is the Secretary and the following are 'at large' members; Chad Olin, Tom Dooley, Stephanie Graves, and Linda McNerney. We are sad to report that Stephanie is leaving the Portland area, so subsequently resigned from the Board. If you are interested in joining the Board, please contact Peggy Olin at polin@echohistory.org or 503-666-4083.

Our guest speaker at the meeting was Sharon Nesbit, and she told a number of stories about her visits with Isobel Zimmerman. We thought you might enjoy the following article Sharon wrote a few years ago.

Isobel to Tea **By Sharon Nesbit**

November 9, 2011

Isobel Zimmerman could never have enough company, and I was always behind in my obligations to her – as well another full dozen people who were living breathing historical monuments with stories to tell.

It wasn't just that Isobel was old and lonesome and alone in the magnificent clutter of that old house. She was also fey and funny and secretive. What local lore would she unveil in an afternoon visit? Each meeting was a test. If she resolved to trust you, she would tell you a little more the next time.

You could sit there and listen to her stories and absorb the wonderful stuff, a magnificent lamp, a cedar Indian basket, the art deco radio the family won in a Meier & Frank contest back in the day when she and her sisters and mother filled the house with feminine noise and clatter.

(Continued on Page 3)



Reed Price and a repaired jail door.

Jail Restoration

If you've ever visited the historic Fairview Jail, you may have noticed the exterior and interior doors were tough, if not impossible, to close. Well, no more!

Retired union steel worker Reed Rice volunteered his time to correct the issues. The exterior door header was sagging, and both interior doors were hampered by their thresholds. Between discussions with the City of Fairview staff and the actual work, Mr. Rice spent a solid thirty hours on this project.

Mr. Rice also noted that "other than heating, ornate iron doors were not subject to grinding, cutting and so forth. All work was done 'direct to the frames'".

Please join ECHO in thanking Reed Rice for sharing his expertise and skills, and to the City for supporting this project.

Summer Saturdays

The Zimmerman House will be open every Saturday through August from noon – 4pm! We are continuing the quilt exhibit which includes items from the 1850's to the 1930's. There is even a quilt that has "Zimmerman" hand-stitched on the edge, and we wonder if this went to camp or college with one of the daughters.

We want to thank all our volunteers that are sharing their Saturdays with us in order to make this possible. We always need more help with tours and we provide training! If you are interested, please contact Alice Duff at aduff@echohistory.org or 503-618-0946, or just drop in some Saturday and check it out!

Isobel to Tea (continued from Page 1)

I think she was surprised that she had ended up alone guarding the house's treasures. In all of her family – the sister who died tragically young, the two who married, and the one whose stuff came back to the house -- she was keeper-custodian. The dining table was a semi-organized jumble of incoming mail, not just important mail, but all of it -- ads, one-page flyers, junk mail. I was always touched to see a special little pile of the post cards I sent her when I was traveling. You never know what the small gesture can mean.

I tried, whenever possible, to give her a head's up that I was coming. "Good," she would say, "We will have tea."

I never saw the kitchen of the old house. In many ways, I am grateful because I expect it was awful beyond words. When I arrived, she would have her tea set out, all but the hot water. She set up TV trays in the family parlor, never the front parlor. It was cold in there, and I expect, not a proper place for food.

The wobbly trays held her "nice" tea cups along with festive paper napkins, betraying many earlier folds. She had received them at other events and tucked them in her pocket to bring home. In the same way, I expect, she acquired a stash of wrapped hard candies. Two or three were set out on each tray. Sometimes, too, there was a little tray favor of some kind that she had collected at another event. Isobel wasted nothing.

And then there were cookies. Isobel, rail thin and still wearing the old clothes of her professional career, was not the cookie muncher that I am. Her cookies had been sitting for months awaiting just such an occasion.

Though they were incredibly stale, I consoled myself that they were store-bought and probably had enough preservatives to prevent harm.

Isobel should answer the summons of the tea kettle, bring it from the kitchen and pour water over ancient tea bags. Then we would sit and talk. This worked a whole lot better in the days before she got "Moon," the most rambunctious and misbehaved of dogs.

With Moon in the house, you had to anchor your tea tray and guard your cookies, attempting conversation between shouts at the dog, which did no good at all.

Isobel never thought the dog was a problem. She was so grateful for Moon's companionship that it did not occur to her to put the dog out or exact any kind of discipline.

(Moon, you know, is buried on the front lawn of the Zimmerman House. The Fairview Rockwood Wilkes may be the only historical society to receive a dog, along with a historical collection. Dodie Davies cared for Moon until the dog's death. Flea dip is not normally an archival expense.)

The tea parties were in Isobel's good days, when she revealed bits and pieces of family history, hauling out books and odd artifacts. The item I remember best appeared to be a horse hoof, carved of stone of some kind, and cut smoothly, it appeared, from a sculpture. It had a metal rod down the middle, also sheared off smoothly. She had not the slightest notion what it was or where it came from and neither did I. It was also on a tea party day that she dug out a photo of Indian John at his house.

Her conversation about such things were bits of memory spread like a trail of bread crumbs that I tried to follow. I hoped I would remember it all. A tape recorder would have been an unthinkable intrusion.

It was on a tea party day that I took Dick Jones to meet her and he gained her trust and she allowed him to fix things around the house.

Dick helped keep an eye on her as Isobel began to fail, confining her life to the dining room where she had a cot set up along the north wall. The old black and white television sat there with her hand-lettered sign, intended to discourage the burglars who had invaded her home and kept her in constant vigilance. I think we still have it, but I remember it indicated that the TV was old and not worth stealing.

Isobel's tea parties were memorable and on one occasion, though it was not her practice, she presented me with a small milk glass dish. She did not say where she got it, but just that it was hers and she wanted me to have something from the house. I realized then, and now, what a remarkable gift it was from a woman whose job was to keep her household intact. Honoring that, I have returned it to the Fairview Rockwood Wilkes Historical Society.

I will add one more memory, because it is fall and this is the time of year that, even if you couldn't have tea, that you could not leave Isobel Zimmerman's house without some kind of produce. Zucchini, walnuts, squash. We know she saved the seeds and planted them where she could. In addition, I expect people brought her many vegetables.

I called her one day to tell her that I only had a few minutes, but that I would drop by on my way home from work. I pulled into the driveway and there she sat, her legs extended stiffly in front of her like a propped-up doll, her back against the garage door, Moon was under her left arm, and a pile of squash was at her right.

She was wearing an old wool suit that once had been a very fine garment, in autumn colors. She had on a knit cap against the cold and various layers of stockings. Her cheeks were pink from being outdoors and she had the greatest grin on her face.

"Moon and I have been waiting for you," she said.

That is how I choose to remember her.

Sharon Nesbit

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

At-Risk Media Update

We had a great response to this fundraising request and have received \$630 to date. We want to thank Mae Vasey Huston, Kenn Lantz, Sharon Petri and four more donors that wish to remain anonymous, for their support.

John Bootes, one of our new volunteers, has taken the lead on this project. He worked with Twila Mysinger to box up the audio cassettes and VHS tapes that are stored at the Heslin House. John delivered these to Q Madp, and at press time, Q has finished the first of two 'batches' of media. John has reviewed the original and new digital versions and was impressed with Q's ability to enhance / clarify these old sources – we have audio cassettes from 1988!

The Board will discuss how to share these new digital files at an upcoming meeting.

WE DIG HISTORY

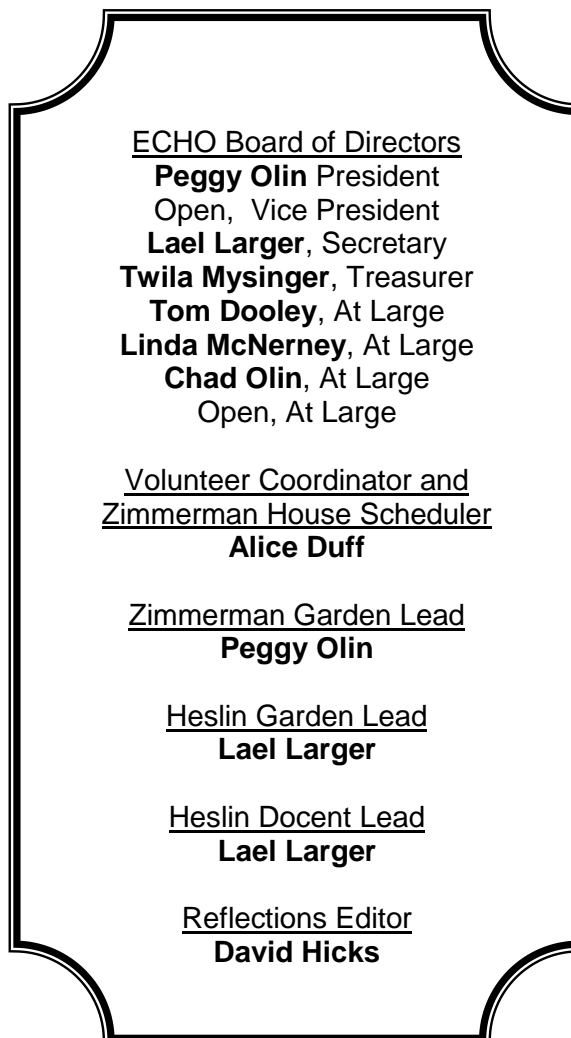
by Laura Smith

The metal detecting adventure began in early May to save items from the Zimmerman Farm life hidden in the land that is now a Gresham City Park. After many years of detecting experience (Search and Rescue, Pioneer Trail-locating for the US Forest Service assisting archeologists, and finding other lost items), my passion for history led me to volunteer here so these items would not be lost.

It is an ongoing process of recovery and research but a display of small items will be included for the home tours yet this year.

A gracious thank-you to Dodi Davies, the ECHO Board, the Lenharts, Alice Duff and Peggy Olin's plant advice. Thanks to fellow detectorist Tim Schade for trimming and clearing behind the Zimmerman home to create better access to detect and recover items.

[Please note that only authorized individuals are allowed to metal detect at the Zimmerman House.]



Dues Reminder

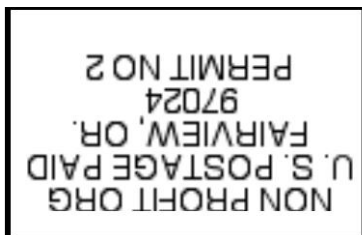
We appreciate your membership and thank you for your support! If you're not sure your membership is current, just check the mailing label on this newsletter. To renew: mail a check to ECHO, PO Box 946, Fairview OR 97024 or visit echohistory.org and click on the "Donate" button.

Smithsonian Museum Day !

Both the Heslin and Zimmerman House are participating in this event, and will be open September 22nd, *instead* of our usual 3rd Saturday. Get your free tickets at: <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/museumday>

Save the Date !

The Zimmerman House will be ready to celebrate the Holiday Season the first three weekends in December. We will have every room decorated for you, so plan to visit between noon – 5pm.



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

East County Historical Organization (ECHO)
P. O. Box 946
Fairview, OR 97024