

N.S.N.C.

Trolley Times

Vol. 22

• News of the North Slope Neighborhood Coalition • Jan-Feb-March 2001



The Tacoma Historical Writers very popular Tacoma, Voices of the Past, Volume I, 1989 Washington Centennial is now available in **reprint**.

Call 752-7722 to reserve a copy. Volume II is also available at \$20.00 each. They will mail or delivery a copy for an additional \$3.00 charge.

The North Slope Neighborhood Coalition is made up of the people living between "I" and Grant Streets from Division to Steele Streets. If you live in this area as a property owner or tenant, please join us on Tuesday evening, **February 27** at Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 9th & J St. Refreshments at 6:30; meeting commences at 7:00 p.m.

February Coalition Meeting to be Panel on Remodeling

The next North Slope Coalition meeting will be a panel on remodeling. The meeting will be **Tuesday, February 27**, at Immanuel Presbyterian, 901 N. J. Refreshments are available at 6:30 p.m. and the program will begin promptly at 7:00 p.m.

Tacoma's Historic Preservation Officer, Elizabeth Anderson, will talk about what the historic designation requires regarding building permits and do's and don'ts for our district. She will moderate a panel of North Slope residents who have restored their homes. They will discuss problems and answers about various phases of remodeling.

There will be a question and answer period. Those attending are urged to come prepared with questions and concerns on those items you want more information and/or advice.

If this is of interest to you, write the date and time on your calen-

dar now as this meeting is several weeks away and easy to forget. This program was planned due to resident interest. If you have other ideas for a future program, please phone any one of the steering committee members with your suggestions. We need input from our coalition neighbors.

If you have experience in restoring your home and would like to be a resource at the meeting, please call 383-2329, 272-2884 or 627-4537.

Dates to Remember:

January 16, Police/Community Meeting

January 15, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

February 3, Adopt-a-Spot Litter Pick up

February 14, Valentine's Day

February 19, President's Day

February 27, North Slope Coalition panel on remodeling

April, next issue of Trolley Times

Thank you to:

Tacoma Cares

for the printing of the newsletter. We appreciate your support!

The North Slope Loses a Valued Neighbor

Valerie Sivinski, North Slope resident and former Tacoma Historic Preservation officer, died in a traffic accident on October 17th in downtown Tacoma.

Sivinski was a leading preservationist in Tacoma, both as the former city Historic Preservation Officer and as an architect in private practice. Her projects included many downtown buildings and the formation of the North Slope Historic District.

In the early 1990's, a group of North J St. residents were referred to Sivinski's office for help in discouraging the tearing down of old houses on the street to build apartments. Sivinski advised the group to survey North J Street for interest in forming an historic district while her office determined if an historic district was justified.

What emerged was an historic district with simple architectural guidelines for structural changes made to the exterior of contributing (included) buildings. Structures too modern (less than 40 years old) or in drastically marred condition were called non-contributing and were not subject to the ordinance. This excluded all the modern apartment buildings of the 1960s, 70s and 80s and included all sizes and shapes of houses and older apartments.

After North J became the North Slope Historic District in 1995, a larger neighborhood group took on the project of extending the Historic District to include North I, K, L and M Streets. This phase was completed in 1997, and the final segment of Sheridan, Cushman, Ainsworth and Grant/Sprague Streets were finally added in the spring of 2000. This final phase was completed after Valerie left the Historic Preservation Officer job to pursue her career as an independent

architect. The new officer, Elizabeth Anderson, came highly recommended by Valerie and continues to provide professional advice and support to the North Slope.

Julie Turner, who worked with Valerie on the original J Street ordinance and the subsequent extension, feels that Valerie's guidance and professional advice were key elements in the successful formation of the Historic District. "In addition," says Turner, "Val taught us to think of more than just 'no more apartments'; she taught us our place in Tacoma's history."

Somewhere along the line in the years from 1993-2000, the residents of the North Slope absorbed Valerie's point of view of the value of our neighborhood as a chronicle of the lives of real people in Tacoma from the 1880's to the 1950's. The variety and breadth of housing types and sizes as the North Slope developed in fits and starts over the years was as important as the historical value of the individual buildings. "Val was fond of saying you could stroll the streets of the North Slope and see what was built and how people lived over a 50 year span," says Turner.

"It is difficult to absorb the loss of a friend, a neighbor, an advisor who was such an integral part of our neighborhood's recent past," says Turner. "But think of Valerie as you walk along our streets and appreciate what she saw in all the old

houses we are fortunate to call home."

The North Slope Coalition sent a contribution in memory of Valerie to the Tacoma Architectural Foundation.

Granite

Recently my wife and I began a landscaping project that had been on our back burner for many years. We had been too timid to launch into the unknown. Just as the good weather was fading, we began. We paint the house the same way, as the weather gets wet and the days get short, we start. We're too busy with other activities, more fun things, to work on projects!

Many years ago, while working on the house, a vigorous older gentleman "sprang" onto the front porch and informed me that his father had built our house in 1887 and that he was born in the house in 1893! He wanted to tour the house and see what it looked like after all those years. The house had suffered many indignities over the years, but we had been restoring it back to something like it originally was. The gentleman could remember only a few things about the interior of the house but most of all he remembered the exterior. As a young boy, he remembered playing on a granite retaining wall that was

Adopt-a-Spot

The coalition's first litter pick up in 2001 will be Saturday, February 3, 10:00 a.m. Adopt-a-Spot, sponsored by Tacoma Cares, furnishes gloves, safety vests, and plastic bags.

We will meet in the parking lot behind Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 901 North J, and spread out to cover both sides of I Street, Division to Steele Streets.



We always welcome more volunteers who want to help keep our neighborhood looking good! If it is raining, we will try February 10 instead. Anyone who would like to do three blocks on his/her own time may phone 627-4537 to make arrangements.

around the house. He remembered sitting on top of it in the morning sun and waiting for the horse-drawn milk wagon to arrive. His memories gave birth to our current project.

Our house sits on top of an 18-inch thick wall of cut granite blocks, beautiful blocks of quartz and hornblende hewn by a craftsman from some impossible looking rocks. Unfortunately, the granite retaining wall is no longer there. Maybe some of it tipped over and the rest was hauled away. Maybe someone bought the granite to build their own foundation – who knows? There are a few big blocks of granite buried in the slope of the front lawn; relics of the past?

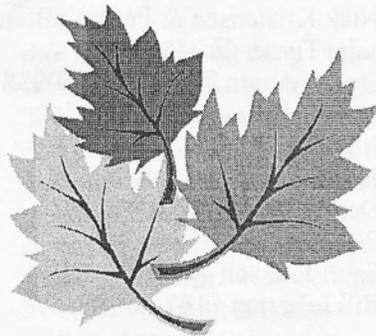
We have begun to replace the granite wall. After shopping around for granite, we had almost 20 tons delivered. Some of the granite is cut into “rectangles and squares”, some of it is “rec’s and squares gone bad” (factory seconds) and a lot of it is just half-man rock. We have been putting together a giant puzzle of pieces too heavy to lift more than once. The construction is slow, laborious, finger smashing and very rewarding! It is coming together in its own style. We first thought that we would duplicate the house foundation but that has proved impractical. The good idea of the past meets the practical world of today and the two make for a beautiful wall, rich in detail, texture and a link to the past. It would have been far easier to buy some of those cement-retaining blocks at Home Depot and be done with it. We have to take our time and think carefully about each and every rock, how to place it and how it fits in with the whole wall.

More than anything else, the wall has brought the neighborhood together. While working on the wall, without fail, people walking by stop and talk. Talk about the wall, talk about the past and talk about our great neighborhood. Cars going by stop, people get out to talk. They stop their busy lives to visit: to visit “over the fence”. Grinning ear to

ear, many people give me “thumbs up” or the okay sign. One afternoon a fellow stopped by to talk about how he had lived in the house in the 1950s. He and his wife had just married and this was their first home together.

The blocks of granite, though heavy and hard, have had a gentle effect on many people. People have seen the beauty and timeless ways of our predecessors. When the North Slope area was new, people had time to sit on the front porch, time to visit with the neighbors and time to notice beauty in the everyday world. They had the time and inclination to make their surroundings pleasing as well as practical. Using natural materials for as many things as possible enhances everyone’s lives. A concrete wall or a granite wall, a wall of today or a wall of the past, we prefer the granite. This granite wall is bringing the past to today.

Roger Johnson, North Slope Historic District Rep to the Landmarks Preservation Commission

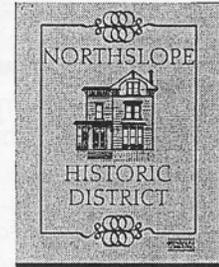


A “Harvest/Halloween” potluck was held on October 27 at Immanuel Presbyterian church. Salads, main dishes and desserts worked out just right, and everyone had plenty of delicious food!

About 15 people attended who had never been to a coalition meeting. Welcome!

Thanks to the neighbors who celebrated “Make a Difference Day” by bringing donations for the food bank and the YWCA Women’s Shelter.

If you weren’t able to attend the potluck, perhaps you can come to the next get together on February 27th. It is fun to get to know our neighbors. A community that knows each other is a safer, caring, friendlier place to live.



Get Your North Slope T-Shirts!

Available for your wearing pleasure – 100% cotton T’s in slate blue or a soft buttery yellow with our historic street sign “logo” on the front (see below). T shirts are available in M, L, XL & 2X for \$12.00 each.

Polo shirts are available also in Lake Blue with “North Slope Historic District” embroidered in yellow. Polo’s are \$25.00 each. Both styles of shirts are available at North Slope meetings or by calling Patty LeBlanc at 272-2884.

Tacoma Police News

The next police/community meeting for Sector 2 will be held January 16 at the Metropolitan Park Headquarters on South 19th. A representative from the prosecutor’s office will be on the program.

Our area, Sector 2, has a new lieutenant, Lt. Fedderson. Liaison Officers are PPO Kothstein (591-5290) and PPO Stark (594-7837). They want to remind North Slope resident not to leave cars warming up on cold mornings. Several unattended cars have been stolen while owners were in the house.

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Washington Women of Accomplishment:

· Margaret Allen was the first women's heart transplant surgeon in the Northwest. In the mid-1980s, she headed the surgical team which performed the first heart transplant in the Northwest.

· Mary Brainerd and Mrs. Erastus Brainerd were the founders of the 1898 Red Cross Society of Seattle, and were personal friends of Clara Barton.

· Martha Covey was the first woman dentist to graduate in 1897. She was an early member of the Dental Society of Washington (1901).

· Marilyn Cowger, a heart surgeon, was the first woman in Washington State to be named Advance Research Fellow of the American Heart Association (1963).

· Mary Ann Born Denny, a Seattle pioneer, experimented with clam nectar as a substitute for cow's milk in baby formula in 1860.

· Martha Rice Duckworth was Tacoma's first African American nurse (1900).

· Mrs. Overton Ellis, a civic leader, fought for food sanitation ordinances in Washington State in 1907.

· Charlotte Meyer Fisher, a Norwegian immigrant, trained as a nursing midwife and caregiver, delivered babies in Douglas County when no medical doctors were available.

· Lady Willa Forbus, a Seattle lawyer in the 1940s, pushed legislation to remove the word "illegitimate" from birth certificates in Washington State.

· Rosa Franklin was the first African American woman to serve in the Washington House of Representatives. She currently serves as a Washington State Senator.

· Babette Gatzert founded the

Seattle Section of Council of Jewish Women. She founded a settlement house to assist new immigrants receive medical care.

· Mrs. O.I. Hall, a member of the Ladies Improvement Club in Duwamish, was instrumental in getting rid of the "Pest House" in 1915.

· Nora Anne Johnson and husband were foster parents to 119 children in addition to rearing children of their own during 1943 - 1960.

· Bertha Knight Landes was the first woman mayor of Seattle and

improved hospital conditions in Seattle (1924).

· Mary Latham was Washington State's first "lady doctor." She settled in Spokane as a resident in 1887.

· Jarret Shotwell Moore, resident of Olympia, was the president of the Women's Club. She spearheaded the lobbying effort to improve sanitation of public restrooms in Washington (1908).

· Pollene Speed was the first Black woman to graduate from the school of dentistry at the University of Washington (1980).

Committee Contacts

North End Neighborhood Council: "Tom" Tomberg @ 572-1532
Walter Evanishyn @ 272-2425
Thomas Hudson @ 973-3700
Bill Johnston @ 627-6860

Newsletter: Angie Klein @ 272-0938
Marilyn Torgerson @ 627-4537
Patty LeBlanc @ 272-2884
Tom Hubbell @ 593-0749

North Slope Coalition Steering Committee:

Nick Kristensen & Patty LeBlanc @ 272-2884
Julie Turner @ 383-2329
Dan & Angie Klein @ 272-0938
Velda McDonald @ 627-4192
Judy Martin @ 272-0609
Marilyn Torgerson @ 627-4537
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Scott Johnson @ 572-9182
Bill Johnston @ 627-6860

Other: Safe Streets: 272-6824
Tacoma Cares: 591-5001

NSNC Meeting:

February 27, 2001

6:30 pm - Refreshments

7:00 pm - Panel on remodeling

Immanuel Presbyterian Church, 901 N. J