Dear Fellow Members of OHC,

As most of you are aware, Oswego Heritage Council held its first annual Membership Appreciation “Happy Hour” last week. We were delighted to put faces with names in case we had not met you before. OHC wants to build a better relationship with our membership. We hope those of you who attended enjoyed yourselves and enjoyed meeting our Board of Directors and Executive Director. We look forward to seeing you at future membership appreciation “Happy Hours” in the years to come.

In addition to building relationships with you, our vital members, Oswego Heritage Council has built, and continues to build, valuable relationships within the community. For example, Oswego Heritage Council has a mutually rewarding relationship with Lakewood Center for the Arts. OHC displays and sells posters and greeting cards from the Lakewood Center’s Alphabet Project in our museum store. OHC also held several First Wednesday historic lectures in Lakewood Center and will do so again on September 6th when Oregon author, Jane Kirkpatrick, will release her new historical fiction novel.

We have worked with Lake Oswego Preservation Society over the years supporting its preservation efforts both financially and with staff and volunteer support, and were delighted to include the Worker’s Cottage on our Historic Home Tour this year.

OHC members relax in the parlor during our member appreciation celebration.

Oswego Heritage Council has a mutually rewarding relationship with Lakewood Center for the Arts. OHC displays and sells posters and greeting cards from the Lakewood Center’s Alphabet Project in our museum.
President’s Letter... (cont’d)

Getting to know Oswego’s founding fathers through research at the library, research at Oswego Heritage Council or by strolling through the Oswego Pioneer Cemetery helps one understand and appreciate Lake Oswego’s rich history.

Our resident archivist, Mark Browne, has done a marvelous job of working with other historical societies and organizations throughout the metropolitan area. Building these relationships enhances Oswego Heritage Council’s ability to bring more information to you. We hope that you will visit our Heritage House and Museum. Our new rotating exhibit opened to the public on July 5th and features the women of Oswego who played an important role in our cultural history. Those members who attended our Membership Appreciation evening had first peek at this new rotating exhibit. Our Museum also holds a permanent display of Oswego history. OHC Heritage House and Museum hours are Monday through Friday 10 am to 3 pm.

In addition to building relationships with the aforementioned organizations, OHC appreciates you, our members. We appreciate your support on several levels including emotional and financial. We hope that you might be interested in becoming more involved with OHC - Perhaps by volunteering as a museum docent, or helping to decorate the Heritage House during the holiday season, for example. We are also reaching out for help with grant writing and fundraising. In the meantime, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to call our office. We look forward to helping you learn more about Lake Oswego’s origins. Thank you again for being a treasured member of Oswego Heritage Council.

Candee Jones,
President

“I’d rather have Roses on my table than diamonds on my neck.”
Emma Goldman –
Those of us who grew up in Lake Oswego remember the William Stafford Family fondly. Two of the rose bushes planted in OHC’s historic rose garden came from the family home on Sunningdale Road near Forest Hills Elementary School. Dorothy Stafford was an avid gardener, she had a vast array of plantings in her yard, but roses were one of her favorites. Although I don’t know the exact names of the two roses, I do know one is a coral color and one is yellow. According to Margaux and Jeff Lewis, who rented the house after Dorothy passed away, Dorothy planted the yellow rose outside the picture window of her husband’s office where he did his writing so he could be inspired by its beauty. The coral rose was planted near the deck.

William Edgar Stafford was born in Hutchinson, Kansas, the oldest of three children in a highly literate family. During the Depression, his family moved from town to town in an effort to find work for his father. Stafford helped contribute to the family’s income by delivering newspapers, working in sugar beet fields, raising vegetables, and working as an electrician’s apprentice.

After attending junior college, he received a B.A. from the University of Kansas. He was drafted into the United States armed forces in 1941, but declared himself a pacifist. As a registered conscientious objector, he performed alternative service in the Civilian Public Service camps. The work consisted of forestry and soil conservation work in Arkansas, California, and Illinois for $2.50 per month.

While working in California in 1944, Stafford met and married Dorothy Hope Frantz, with whom he had four children, (Bret, who died in 1988; Kim, writer; Kit, artist; Barbara, artist). He received his M.A. from the University of Kansas in 1947. His master’s thesis, the prose memoir, Down In My Heart, was published in 1948 and described his experience in the forest service camps. Stafford moved to Oregon in 1954 to teach at Lewis & Clark College. He received a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa that same year. Stafford also taught at Manchester College in Indiana and San Jose State, before returning to the faculty of Lewis & Clark in 1956. In 1970, he was named Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress, a position that is now known as Poet Laureate. In 1975, he was named Poet Laureate of Oregon; his tenure in the position lasted until 1990. In 1980, he retired from Lewis & Clark College but continued to travel extensively and give public readings of his poetry. In 1992, he won the Western States Book Award for lifetime achievement in poetry.

Traveling Through the Dark, Stafford’s first major collection of poetry, won the 1963 National Book Award for Poetry. The title poem is one of his best-known works. It describes encountering a recently killed doe on a mountain road. Before pushing the doe into a canyon, the narrator discovers that she was pregnant and the fawn inside is still alive. Among predecessors whom Stafford most admired are William Wordsworth, Thomas Hardy, Walt Whitman, and Emily Dickinson.

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William and Dorothy Stafford.

William Stafford died in an accident on August 28, 1993, having written a poem that morning containing the lines, ‘You don’t have to / prove anything,’ my mother said. ‘Just be ready / for what God sends’. In 2008 the Stafford family gave William Stafford’s papers, including the 20,000 pages of his daily writing, to the Special Collections Department at Lewis and Clark College.

Kim Stafford, who serves as literary executor for the Estate of William Stafford, has written a memoir Early Morning: Remembering My Father: William Stafford (Graywolf Press). Foothills Park has several large obelisks erected honoring William Stafford. Each has a portion of one of his poems etched on it.

Dorothy Hope Frantz Stafford was born on a farm near Holmesville, Nebraska. She was the youngest of three children, following her sister, Helen, and brother, Russell. The family moved to California where Dorothy earned a bachelor’s degree in teaching from La Verne College. During World War II, while visiting a camp for conscientious objectors with her father, a Brethren minister, Dorothy met William Stafford. They immediately recognized their shared love of books and language. They were married in 1944, and after the war the couple moved to Portland, where Bill took a position teaching English at Lewis & Clark College. Dorothy and Bill traveled with, read to, encouraged and nurtured their children, Bret, Kim, Kit and Barbara. Dorothy taught for years in the Lake Oswego School District. She will be remembered by scores of students, friends and a grateful family as a woman of great integrity, lively wit and contagious energy. Her love of the people in her life inspired beautiful correspondence saved by many. She had warmth, radiance, a quick laugh and just the right joke for any occasion.

Nancy Dunis

Stafford photo courtesy of the Estate of William Stafford, and the Lewis & Clark College Watzek Library Special Collections and Archives. Rose photos by Nancy Dunis
First Wednesday Series

August 2, 7 pm. The fascinating history of the PT Boat. Ron Taylor, from Save the PT658, will share the history of this rare surviving PT Boat. He will also present information about the new museum in the PT Boat House.

September 6, 7 pm. Jane Kirkpatrick, author of All She Left Behind. Please note location change for this event. Lakewood Center for the Arts, 368 South State Street, Lake Oswego (lower level). Jennie Pickett is a natural healer, but her dreams to become a doctor in 1870s Oregon put her at odds with the world around her. As she struggles to keep her dream alive, she finds that the road to fulfillment winds past love, heartache, and plenty of surprises along the way. Jane Kirkpatrick is a New York Times bestselling author and lives in Central Oregon. We have been told that there is a character from Oswego in this book.


OHC Docent Workshop

August 19, from 11 am - 12:30 pm. Do you have a passion for history? Do you like to talk with people? Do you enjoy sharing your knowledge with others? Do you enjoy learning yourself? If you answer “yes” to any of these questions, we would like you to consider becoming a volunteer docent at the Oswego Heritage Museum.

We will provide all of the training and information necessary to feel truly comfortable engaging with visitors about the history of Lake Oswego. Previous experience in public speaking or leading tours is not necessary, nor is any prior knowledge of our local history. If you have the desire to join us and can be here a few hours a week, then we will take care of the rest!

We will have an informational meeting and docent training session at the Oswego Heritage House on Saturday, August 19, from 11 am - 12:30 pm. A light lunch will be served. We welcome any and all interested members! Whether you decide to become a docent or not, a fun time is guaranteed!
The Belgium Connection

Oswego, like every city, big and small, in the United States at the turn of the last century played host to the profound late nineteenth century European immigration onslaught. Oswego accepted four families from Belgium. The Puylaerts Americanized to Pollards, the Vanpuymbroeckes eventually Americanized to Pembrokees after at least four different versions, the Dhooges name remained, and the Gontys, whose name mercifully never changed, but tormented future genealogists by naming their two offspring Edmond and Edward both of which went by Ed. Edward had a son named Edward who also went by Ed.

Pietrus Puylaert (1851-1933) from Antwerp and Joanna Verkruijsen (1860-1926) from Verrebrock Oost-Vlaanderen (1865-1947) from Ghent, Oost-Vlaanderen came to the United States in 1889 winding up in Oswego just after 1890 on a farm just west of the Pollard farm off South Shore. Having four beautiful daughters, one of which, Mary Agnes, became the United States Postmistress on the 12th of April 1918 following the tenure of George Prosser. Her best friends were Lucy and Hannah Puymbroeck. There is a wonderful photo of Hannah and Mary clowning around in “Hobo” outfits. Most photos from this era are usually staid, somber Victorian images. The photos in our collection of these young women reveal a wonderful, youthful Joie de Vivre that brings a smile to your face.

The archival documents, both letters, and photographs, in the Oswego Heritage House show a deep interrelationship between the three families. The restored nitrate negatives in the Pollard Family Collection show many images of Lucy Pollard and Mary Agnes Puymbroeck as well as the other sisters, Lizzy, Lena, and Leona.

Lucy and her brother Henry took a trip in June of 1924 to visit Dhooge family members in Ashland and DeVere Wisconsin. The restored, and digitized photos show classic rural America in its purest form.

Lucy Pollard nee Felicie Marie Virginie Puylaert (1889-1974) married Edmond Gonty (1887-1951) late in 1919 after a six-month courtship that, if not “arranged” by the Pollard and Gonty elders, was heavily influenced by their respective Belgian families. Edmond Gonty was born in Eberbeumont, Luxembourg, Belgium and came in 1917 to Portland with his mother Mary and brother Edward setting up a business on Second Avenue as a taxidermist. At that time Lucy was quite popular and had many options for marriage. I get the sense that despite the flowery purple ink love letters she was reluctant to marry him. The marriage failed quickly, Lucy returned home in abject failure with her mother, Joanna, to Oswego where she spent the rest of her life.

There were many letters exchanged between the Oregon Pollards and the Antwerp Puylaerts. Half, in the pre-WW2 era are in German. The other half, and everything after 1945 are in English. The deprivation during and after the war were felt by the Belgium family members. For three years, 1945 to 1947, the Oswego Pollards sent care packages containing socks, shirts, blankets, tins of meat, cookies and holiday cards to brighten the bleak lives of their cousins in Europe. The gratitude of the Belgian Puylaerts is quite evident in letters and cards back to Oswego.

The Pollards, Dhooge, and Puymbroeck families, bound by ancient European Flemish tradition, and a deep Catholic faith went on to embrace their new country with enthusiasm, becoming involved in leadership roles in all aspects of Oswego community life. Phillip Pollard and his family lived on Sixth Street and served in city government for several years shepherdng the City of Lake Oswego into incorporation in January of 1910. Lucy lived on her farm off Stafford and Bergis for the rest of her life. Edward Pollard married and lived on a farm adjacent to Lucy. John Pollard died in 1918, a victim of the Spanish Flu that devastated families throughout the country. Lena Pollard lived a few short months after birth and died in 1901 devastating her mother for years. The Pollards are buried in the Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery Section A 3, 18-26.

The Puymbroeck girls flourished. Lena went to the University of Washington, starring in basketball and track, then becoming a teacher in Seattle. Mary was involved in the film industry, first as a film booker in Denver, and then managing auditions in Brooklyn New York and Los Angeles. Mary came back to Oswego at the end of her life, away from the bright lights of Broadway and is buried with her veteran husband in Willamette National Cemetery. Elizabeth and Leona married with husbands working in the cement plant. Ferdinand and Milanie are buried in the Mount Calvary Catholic Cemetery.

The Dhooge’s, not to be outdone by the Puylaert’s fecundity, filled the Oswego streets with children for the next several generations; many worked in the cement plant, iron foundry, or were loggers or farmers.

Frank and Virginia are buried in the Sacred Heart Catholic Cemetery Section A 2, 24-25 next to their dear friends the entire Puylaert family. Emile, Frank Alvin, and Sadie Dhooge are buried in the Oswego Pioneer Cemetery Block 6, Row 24, Plot 24, Space E,C,D.

Ed Gonty went on to marry widow Anna Jane Bewley in September 1931.

There is much research to be done on these families. I have just been given access to a Dhooge Family photograph source. A preliminary review shows a few duplicates of our collection and many more I have never seen. Many are identified, a source of joy to an archivist heart.

A very special thanks to Sue Marvin and Glenn Harris. Their donation in time, materials, and education of the Davidson Family Collection is precious. The Davidson family legacy is secure in our archives for decades to come. I’m eternally grateful for their contribution. Their materials are being digitized, catalogued, and will be ready to share online in the future. Thank you both!

Mark C. Browne