

Past Programs & Speakers

September 8, 2008

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church

7410 S. 12th St.

Tour and presentation, 7 p.m.

"St. Andrew's Church and Tacoma's Westward Growth."

Presenters: Fr. Martin Yabroff & Ms. Patty Mannie

Fr. Martin Yabroff is Rector of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, having arrived to serve the congregation in April 2007. Prior to that, he was Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. James, South Bend, Indiana, and Founding Vicar of St. Phillips Episcopal Church, Scotts Valley, California.

In South Bend, Fr. Yabroff researched and promoted the history and mission of the downtown cathedral, and brought congregational growth, closer ties with the community and other churches, and re-focused ministries after a prior period of upheaval.

Patty Mannie is a former member of Tacoma Historical Society's Board of Directors.



October 13, 2008

Tacoma Public Library

1102 Tacoma Ave So.

Tacoma, WA 98402

"The Selden Saga"

Presenters: Dr. Ron Magden and Stan Selden

Dr. Magden and Mr. Selden will recount the history of this long-time Tacoma family whose furniture store has served the community since 1940.

Stan Selden is a graduate of the University of Puget Sound. He worked his entire career in the family business, Selden's Home Furnishings, from which he recently retired. The Selden family has long been a part of the Tacoma Community.

He was one of the key organizers who brought us Tall Ships Tacoma 2005, and worked hard to promote the 2008 event. He is the founder and current president of the newly formed Tacoma Waterfront Association, and is also a current member of the board of directors of the Tacoma-Pierce County Economic Development Board.

Dr. Ronald E. Magden earned his bachelor's degree from University of Idaho, and his Ph.D from University of Washington. He is a former president and Lifetime Member of Tacoma Historical Society. In 1996, he received the Society's Murray Morgan Award. A former chairman of the Social Science Division of Tacoma Community College, Dr. Magden continues to teach at the college as a professor emeritus. He has published many books, including *The Working Waterfront* and *The Working Longshoreman*. He is the author of an unpublished biography of Fred T. Haley, and has been commissioned by the Selden family to write an account of the family's history.

November 10, 2008

Grace Baptist Church
2507 North Vassault

“Pictures from a New Home:

Early Nordic Immigrant Painters in
Tacoma and Pierce County”

Presenter: Professor Brian Magnusson



Professor Magnusson will share insights on the influence of Swedish culture on the Pacific Northwest

Brian Magnusson was born and raised in Tacoma and is a Stadium High School alum. He holds an M.A. in Scandinavian Studies with supporting areas in Art History from University of Washington and a Ph.D. in “A Cross-Cultural, Interdisciplinary Study of North European Prehistory (and Art)” at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Magnusson’s focus on Northern Europe’s early material culture and art has led him to teaching positions in the Pacific Northwest and in Scandinavia. He is currently serving as Assistant Professor in the Department of Art and Culture (Nordic and American Art and Culture) at Jyväskylä University in Jyväskylä, Finland.

While living in our region in 1980, he presented a paper on the Swedish-American artist Jonas Olof Grafström at a symposium at Pacific Lutheran University. (Grafström spent seven years in Oregon, Washington and California.) It was at this time that Dr. Magnusson “realized ... that virtually no research had been done in these areas in the Pacific Northwest. For that reason I decided to focus on both Nordic-American painting and early Nordic-American building traditions in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.”

He is currently working on an exhibition catalogue, titled, “From Parlour, Boarding House, and Atelier: 150 Years of Swedish Art in Tacoma, Washington.”

December 8, 2008

Theater on the Square
913 Broadway

“So Many Things to Do Yet: the Saga of Thea Foss”

A one-woman living-history show by **Karen Haas**

Made possible by a grant from Greater Tacoma Community Foundation



Karen Haas enjoys both telling in "modern times" and bringing the past to life with living history presentations. Her effervescent style engages emotions, from the sublime to the ridiculous, in audiences both young and old.

An experienced Teacher and Museum Curator of Education, Karen is on Humanities Washington's [Inquiring Minds](#) speakers list and was the recipient of the Association of King County Historical Organization's *2005 Heritage Education Award*. She is active in re-enactments at Northwest historic sites such as [Fort Nisqually](#), [Fort Steilacoom](#), and [San Juan Islands National Historic Park](#). Her living history presentations have been featured at [Fort Clatsop](#) and [Whitman Mission National Historic Site](#). She feels especially rewarded telling the tales of those whose voices are usually silent in history – the women.

To learn more about Karen Haas please visit her website www.karenstoryteller.com

January 12, 2009

Tacoma Public Library
1102 Tacoma Ave So.

Tacoma, WA 98402

“In Hot Pursuit of a Cold Case: Investigating the Burning of Washington's Major Cities During the ‘Year of Evil Destiny’ – 1889”

Presenter: Charles Hansen

Charles Hansen is a retired Deputy Fire Marshal for the City of Tacoma. He served as the Lead Fire Investigator in the late 1990's. Altogether, he investigated over 500 fires and was accepted as an expert witness in criminal court. He has shared his expertise on the subject of children and fire as an Adjunct Instructor at the National Fire Academy as well as at several regional conferences.

Charles became aware of and interested in the unique series of 1889 city fires of Washington Territory while attending professional conferences throughout the State. Retirement has allowed him to research further. With the encouragement of Curator Erin Black, he has written and spoken on the subject at the Kittitas County Historical Society Museum in Ellensburg.



February 9, 2009

Tacoma Public Library
1102 Tacoma Ave So.

Tacoma, WA 98402

“The Mosquito Fleet of South Puget Sound”

Presenters: Robin Paterson and Jean Findlay

Robin Paterson has spent most of his lifetime on and around Puget Sound. Many know him as the skipper of the “JOE,” a retired Foss Tugboat. Robin lives in Gig Harbor, and is a member of Tacoma Historical Society. He is co-author, with **Jean Cammon Findlay**, of Mosquito Fleet of South Puget Sound, one of Arcadia Publishing’s “Images of America” series. Interest in South Puget Sound’s maritime history led Paterson to collect photos, postcards and promotional materials about the Mosquito Fleet - a common form of public transportation around the Sound in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries.

The larger, impressive ships assigned to routes between the ports of Olympia, Tacoma, Seattle and Victoria are, generally, more well-known. On South Puget Sound, routes were run by smaller, less notable boats, but they were no less important to those people who had settled in remote areas such as Ballow, Puget, Victor and Rosedale. In his presentation, Paterson will discuss the many landings, watercraft and communities that formed a complex network, servicing the needs of rural settlements that were more easily accessed by water than by land.

March 9, 2009

Tacoma Public Library
1102 Tacoma Avenue South
Tacoma, WA 98402

“The Life and Times of “Gentleman Jim” –
The story of Tacoma’s Admiral James S. Russell”

Presenter: Malcolm Russell

Learn about Admiral Russell’s illustrious career, which began in the Merchant Marine in 1918 and included service in the U.S. Navy during much of the 20th century. Admiral Russell retired as a U.S. Navy four-star Admiral and Vice Chief of Naval Operations and Commander-In-Chief of NATO forces in Southern Europe.

Malcolm Russell is the grandson of Admiral James S. Russell. Malcolm is one of three male grandchildren and the only son of the Admiral's youngest of two sons, Kenneth M. Russell. Malcolm enjoyed the paternal attention of his grandfather through his schooling and college experiences. While growing up, Malcolm always respectfully referred the Admiral as "grandfather" and, in a seemingly unusual manner for a youth, Malcolm enjoyed long and in-depth conversations with his grandfather over the years.

The Admiral’s stories and advice had a great influence on Malcolm and inspired a deep sense of service, devotion and responsibility to others and to the community at large. Malcolm Russell has a career in community service and nonprofit development. He serves his community of various boards, commission and committees. Malcolm currently serves as Vice Chairman of the Pierce County Planning Commission and serves his hometown of Lakewood as a member of the Public Safety Advisory Committee.

Malcolm has compiled the Admiral’s biography and numerous historical photos. His presentation on the Admiral shares both a historical and a personal family perspective on one of Tacoma's greatest military commanders – an officer and gentleman warmly referred to by those who knew him well as "Gentleman Jim".

April 12, 2009

Bates Technical College
1101 South Yakima
Tacoma, WA 98402



“A Tale of Two Mayors” –

Mayor Baarsma shared the stories of two men (Angelo Fawcett and W. W. Seymour) who served the City of Tacoma as mayor during the early years of the twentieth century – competition based in opposing styles of leadership and personal values.

Bill Baarsma was elected Mayor of Tacoma in 2002, after a 33-year career teaching business and public administration at the University of Puget Sound. Bill, a native Tacoman, served on the Tacoma City Council from 1992 to 1999. Previously, he served on two Tacoma charter review commissions, the City's 1980 redistricting committee, and three citizen advisory committees to Pierce County government. He continues as a member of the Tacoma Urban League.

Bill, who holds a bachelor's degree in political science, a master's degree in government and a doctorate in public administration, lives in the North End with his wife, Carol.

Bill is a longtime member of Tacoma Historical Society and has made a particular study of Tacoma's mayors. He'll be discussing the "odd couple" of Tacoma's mayors, the urbane W.W. Seymour and the rough-and-tumble Angelo Vance Fawcett, who kept knocking each other out of office.