Tacoma Historical Society to Open New Exhibit: “Spanning Tacoma”

WHAT: Tacoma Historical Society will open its newest exhibit, “Spanning Tacoma,” on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the first Tacoma Narrows Bridge.

WHEN: Exhibit Opening Reception: Tuesday, July 14, 2015, 6:00-8:00 pm
(Other events in conjunction with the exhibit listed below.)

WHERE: Tacoma Historical Society Museum, 919 Pacific Avenue in the historic Provident Building

DURATION: The exhibit will be open to the public from July 15 through November 28, 2015. Admission is free and donations are welcomed.

In the late 19th and early 20th century, Tacoma’s waterways and deep gulches presented challenges to an expanding city. Tacoma’s bridges – designed for trains, trolleys, pedestrians, autos, and bicycles – linked industry to city and neighborhood to neighborhood. This exhibit explores the historic significance of these bridges, some of which have served as community icons.

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“Tacoma is known around the world for the disastrous collapse of the first Tacoma Narrows Bridge,” said guest exhibit curator Chris Erlich. “However, Tacoma also has a fascinating history of other bridges such as the World’s Longest Bicycle Bridge, the iconic Murray Morgan Bridge, and now the Bridge of Glass. Perhaps more importantly, Tacoma’s bridges have created vital connections, while adapting to changing transportation needs. The exhibit will include artifacts and images on loan from private collectors and local museums, plus items from within the collection of Tacoma Historical Society.”

“We’re fortunate to have a copy of 1938-1939 bridge construction video footage donated to Tacoma Historical Society by John Woodworth,” said Bill Baarsma, Tacoma Historical Society president. “We were surprised to see images of workers trudging on and off the emerging bridge structure pushing hand-wheelbarrows filled with concrete for the bridge decking. The first Tacoma Narrows Bridge was built with intensive manual labor, truly a credit to our hard-working community.”

The exhibit will include a custom bridge “bricktorial” created by Dan Parker, “lego Artist,” whose studio is at Freighthouse Square. (Learn more about Dan’s work at brickabledesigns.com.)

Tacoma Historical Society is hosting a creative calendar of events in conjunction with the exhibit, many suitable for families.

**“Spanning Tacoma” Exhibit Events**

- **Tuesday, July 14, 2015, 6 - 8 pm:** “Spanning Tacoma” Exhibit Opening Reception, Guest Curator Chris Fiala Erlich, Tacoma Historical Society Museum, 919 Pacific Avenue.
- **Tuesday, July 28, 2015, 6 pm:** Book Signing and Reception with Deb Freedman, celebrating Tacoma Historical Society’s new book: “Rising Up from Tacoma’s Twenty-One Disasters & Defeats,” Tacoma Historical Society Museum, 919 Pacific Avenue.
- **Thursday, August 13, 2015, 5:30 - 7:30 pm:** “Floating Ferry Farewell.” Re-live the last 1940 ferry ride celebration before the opening of the first Tacoma Narrows Bridge, and hold a “wake” for the “departed” ferry Kalakala. Leaves Point Ruston Dock promptly at 5:30 pm. (Boarding starts at 4:30 pm.) Admission is free or Donate-As-You-Can. Due to limited capacity, please register in advance by calling Tacoma Historical Society (253) 472-3738. This event is sponsored by the City of Tacoma’s Historic Preservation Office and Point Ruston, LLC.
- **Thursday, Sept. 10, 2015, 4 - 6 pm:** “253 Day” Build-a-Bridge Block Event with Dan Parker, “lego Artist.” Celebrate the 253rd day of the year by exploring what you can build with 253 blocks. Ages five and up, pre-registration encouraged. Tacoma Historical Society Museum, 919 Pacific Avenue.
- **Monday, September 14, 2015, 7 pm:** “Renovating the Murray Morgan Bridge,” presented by Tom Rutherford, Tacoma Public Works Project Engineer. Murray Board Room, Wheelock Student Center, University of Puget Sound.
- **Monday, November 9, 2015, 7 pm:** “The Other Woman – Building the 2007 Tacoma Narrows Bridge,” presented by Dennis Engel, WSDOT Project Engineer. Murray Board Room, Wheelock Student Center, University of Puget Sound.

The exhibit is supported by generous donations from Woodworth Financial, Inc. and the Port of Tacoma.
About Tacoma Historical Society: Tacoma Historical Society is a volunteer-supported 501(c)(3) charitable, nonprofit corporation, and is dedicated to the preservation, promotion and presentation of the history of the City of Tacoma and its people. Tacoma Historical Society works to forge connections between past and present generations, fostering an appreciation of the past and a sense of place within our community’s history.

www.tacomahistory.org