MEDIA ADVISORY

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“Greetings from Tacoma: Souvenirs and Boosterism”
Tacoma Historical Society to Open New Exhibit

WHAT: Tacoma Historical Society will open “Greetings from Tacoma,” an exhibit featuring souvenirs from Tacoma’s icons and attractions and a variety of Tacoma booster booklets from a century past. Included in the exhibit will be seven salvaged figures from Tacoma’s beloved Never Never Land.

WHEN: Exhibit Opening Reception: Monday, December 8, 2014, 6:00-8:00 pm
(Free and open to the public.)

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

DURATION: The exhibit will run from December 8, 2014, through March 2015. Admission is free, donations are welcomed.

As Tacoma has grown and changed, her souvenir items have promoted the current favorite. Along with many schools, parks, churches and hospitals, Tacoma’s keepsakes have featured St. Peter’s Church and bell tower, City Hall, Stadium Bowl, Union Station, Cheney Stadium and the Tacoma Dome.

“Tacoma is fortunate that many of her early landmarks still survive,” said Bill Baarsma, Tacoma Historical Society president. “Stadium High School will be available for another generation of Tacoma students to come, and Union Station is a working example of a community supporting historic preservation. Tacoma Historical Society is continuing that tradition by preserving and presenting artifacts such as the promotional materials created by Tacoma’s Booster Club in the early 1900s.”

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However, not all of Tacoma’s landmarks have been as fortunate. Included in the exhibit will be seven storybook figures from the former Never Never Land in Point Defiance Park, one of three similar enchanted forest parks created by Vancouver’s Alfred Pettersen in the 1960s. After Never Never Land closed, the fiberglass figures were stored in the basement of the Pagoda at Point Defiance Park. Many were damaged or destroyed when the building suffered an arson fire in April of 2011. “We’re fortunate that a few of the figures were salvaged,” said Melissa McGinnis, historian for Metro Parks Tacoma. “We’re happy to loan them to Tacoma Historical Society so the public can once again view them.” The exhibit will also feature nearly two dozen Never Never Land souvenir banks and figurines from the personal collection of Kyle Smith, founder of Tacoma’s Smith-Western Company.

“As we prepared this exhibit we realized it was about much more than collecting plates and spoons and postcards,” said exhibit curator Deb Freedman. “It’s about preserving memories. Whether we are visiting or call Tacoma home, we take pictures and buy souvenirs to help us remember a person, a place, an experience. After that person or place is gone, the photos and memories are all we have.”

Tacoma Historical Society invites the public to share their personal Never Never Land memories and photos on the Society’s Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/tacomahistoricalsociety#!/TacomaHistorical

And, yes, Tacoma Historical Society’s retail store carries a variety of Tacoma-related books, gift items and souvenirs to help preserve your own memories.

Note: Tacoma Historical Society will be CLOSED December 5th and 6th, 2014, to change exhibits.

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

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