MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release: July 25, 2014

Tacoma Historical Society: (253) 472-3738

Contacts: Bill Baarsma, 253-759-6765, wbaarsma@harbornet.com
Deb Freedman, 253-377-4157, volunteer@tacomahistory.org

“Be Our Guest: Tacoma Hotel 1884-1935”
Tacoma Historical Society to Open New Exhibit

WHAT: Tacoma Historical Society will open the “Be Our Guest” exhibit remembering the grandeur of the former Tacoma Hotel, its artifacts, characters and fire.

WHEN: Exhibit Opening Reception: Thursday, August 7, 2014, 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 run from August 8th through November 29, 2014. Admission is free.

Mention the oldest hotel in Tacoma’s rich past and some would think of Stadium High School - built originally as a hotel in the 1890s. But it was a decade earlier when the distinctly beautiful Tacoma Hotel, designed by noted architect Stanford White, first received guests. Occupying an entire city block on A Street, between South 9th and 10th Streets, the hotel and grounds quickly gained a reputation as the grandest hotel north of San Francisco. After a spectacular fire destroyed the hotel in 1935 the site was paved and used for parking. A half century later, George and Jane Russell constructed a custom granite building there. Today it is occupied by State Farm Insurance, which partially funded this exhibit.

“Tacoma Historical Society is recognizing one of Tacoma’s lost landmarks,” said Bill Baarsma, Tacoma Historical Society president. “Built in 1884 when Tacoma was booming, the great Tacoma Hotel announced that Tacoma had become a destination. Over its fifty-year history, the Tacoma Hotel provided lodging for an array of famous visitors – Mark Twain, Rudyard Kipling, Sarah Bernhardt, a string of U.S. presidents, and athletes from Babe Ruth to the entire USC Trojan football team.”

-more-
“The exhibit will include not only fascinating artifacts on loan from private collectors, but historic post cards and images from within our collection of Tacoma Historical Society,” said exhibit curator Deb Freedman. “The exhibit will present a fitting tribute to the hotel’s ill-fated pet bear, Jack, and the history of the neighboring totem pole.”

Tacoma Historical Society is hosting a creative calendar of events in conjunction with the exhibit.

**Be Our Guest** Tacoma Hotel Exhibit Events

- **Thursday, August 7th, 6 - 8 pm:**
  Opening Reception
- **Friday, August 8th, 11am - 4pm:**
  Exhibit Opening (130th anniversary of Tacoma Hotel opening)
- **Friday, August 8th, 6 pm at The Forum, 815 Pacific Avenue:**
  Tacoma History Trivia Night, co-sponsored by the City of Tacoma Landmarks Preservation Commission
- **Saturday, August 16th, 1 pm:**
  Totem Tales and Jack the Bear stories with Deb Freedman (suitable for children six and up)
- **(Third) Thursday, August 21st, 6:15 pm:**
  Tacoma Hotel neighborhood walk led by Tacoma Public Library’s Brian Kamens, in the footsteps of Jack the Bear
- **(Third) Thursday, September 18, 6:15 pm:**
  The Man Behind the Totem: W F Sheard, portrayed by Rich Repp
- **(Third) Thursday, October 16, 11 am - 8 pm:**
  Open House to honor Tacoma Firefighters active and retired (Remembering the anniversary of the fire, October 17th, 1935)

Note: Tacoma Historical Society will be CLOSED August 1, 2014 through August 7, 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](http://www.tacomahistory.org)