

## Fort Steilacoom Event Schedule for 2007

All events are at Fort Steilacoom, 9601 Steilacoom Blvd., Lakewood, WA (on the grounds of Western State Hospital).

### February 10 – Tea with Mrs. Casey

Reenactors will portray Mrs. Casey, the wife of the fort Commander, Col. Casey, and friends she invited to tea. Tea and cakes will be served at 2 p.m. Reservations required with paid fee.

### March 3 – Civil War Era Swap Meet

Come to buy and sell Civil War and reenactor items of that period, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Quarters 2.

### March 18 – “An Etiquette Symposium”

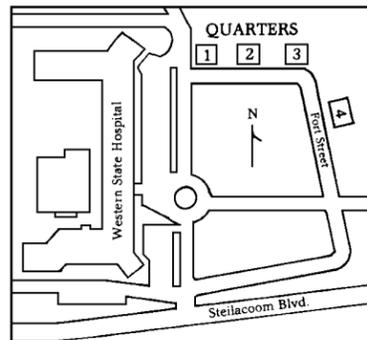
Nancy Keller-Scholz, Fort board member, will present a light-hearted look at manners of the 1850s as she portrays Mrs. Mouat, a visitor from Victoria. 2 p.m. in Quarters 2.

### April 15 – “Black and White and Read All Over”

Nancy Covert, award winning Pacific Northwest journalist, using examples, will discuss Washington State newspapers, past and present. 2 p. m., Quarters 2.

### Historic Fort Steilacoom

P.O. Box 88447  
Steilacoom, WA 98388



### April 22 - Indian War Miniature Gaming

Lawrence Bateman, researcher of the 1850s Puget Sound Indian Wars, will guide participants to fight historic skirmishes using 3-D terrain and miniatures. 12-4 p.m., Quarters 2.

### May 20 – “Developing a First Person Persona”

Gideon Pete, president of Fort Steilacoom and reenactor of 30 years, will demonstrate how to develop a historical persona. 2 p.m., Quarters 2.

### May 27 – “The Army Sutler”

Lawrence Bateman, Fort Steilacoom board member, will explain the role of the pre Civil War army post trader. The audience will visit the replicated Sutler’s Store and participate in the ribbon cutting ceremony. 2 p.m., Quarters 2.

### June 10 – “The Evolution of the McClellan Saddle”

David Scroggins, master leather worker, using illustrations will explain the various stages of the McClellan saddle. 2 p.m., Quarters 2.

**August 19 - Founders Day Picnic**  
Fort volunteers will be honored at a potluck picnic. All are invited to participate. Come to Quarters 4 and bring a main dish, salad, or dessert. 2 p. m.

### Sept. 22-23 - Living History Immersion Event

Fort Steilacoom will come alive as reenactors live and work as soldiers, officers, their wives, and friends during the 1850s and 1860s. 22<sup>nd</sup> 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; 23<sup>rd</sup> 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

### October 21 - Historic Fort Steilacoom Annual Meeting

Program: “An Etiquette Symposium”  
Nancy Keller-Scholz, Fort board member, will present a light-hearted look at manners of the 1850s as she portrays Mrs. Mouat, a visitor from Victoria. 2 p.m. in Quarters 2.

### December 8 - Christmas at Fort Steilacoom

Reenactors will present a candle-light Christmas in the four remaining officers quarters. There will also be children’s craft activities and the gift shop will be open for Christmas shopping. Tickets are available at the Fort Steilacoom Interpretive Center in Quarters 4 during the event. 4-7:30 p.m.

### Dues Reminder:

*If you have not paid your Fort Steilacoom Association dues, please do so now. The last number after your name below shows the latest year for which you have paid.*

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# Fort Steilacoom

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## Restoring Historic Fort Steilacoom

by Charles R. Collier

Through the efforts of Cyrus and Rita Happy, the four remaining officers’ quarters of Fort Steilacoom were placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976.

The State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) hired the architectural firm Tonkin/Gressinger in 1979-80 to study the buildings and prepare a “Historic Structures Report” and drawings for guidance in restoring the buildings back to their original configuration. These buildings had been used as housing for hospital staff for more than 70 years, until the mid-1960s, and considerable remodeling and enlarging had been done. DSHS restored the exterior of Quarters 1 and 2.

In 1983, the nonprofit Historic Fort Steilacoom Association was formed and assumed the responsibility of restoring the exteriors of Quarters 3 and 4, and the interiors of all four buildings. In the fall of 1983 we started on the inside of Quarters 1. Lyle Dunkin and Chuck Collier were soon joined by Bob Weir and Jack Langstrom. Arnold Stern joined the crew to work on Quarters 2, 3, and 4. Jim Lawer helped on Quarters 3 and 4. We generally worked from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays and on weekends only when another group came to help. Ray Egan was the principal fund raiser and scrounger.

Quarters 1 was the only building where the inside was restored as near to the original as possible so that it could be furnished as the



Lyle Dunkin, upper left corner on porch roof, directs Sea-Bees from the U.S. Navy Reserve Construction Battalion #18 in the reconstruction of Quarters 4.

living quarters of that era for an officer and his family.

Caroline Gallacci, Pierce County Preservation Planner, arranged for help from the Juvenile Offenders Restitution program. Each Saturday during the school year and most days during the summer, from one to six teenagers and a supervisor would come to work and were a big help. They helped remove many layers of wall paper, the plumbing and steam heating pipes, and two layers of flooring that had been added over the years. A layer of fir flooring was probably put down about 1910, as a newspaper of that year was found under it. Maple flooring was installed in the 1930s, as several metal state sales tax

tokens used at that time were found beneath that.

Arrangements were made with Bates Voc-Tech to do the electrical wiring and sheet-metal work for the heat ducts for all of the buildings. We supplied the materials and the students did the installation as part of their training. For his Eagle rank community project, a Boy Scout installed the insulation under the building and led his troop in painting the upstairs walls and ceiling (and sometimes themselves). After the building was restored, several women of the Association made drapes for the windows.

Quarters 2 had been extensively remodeled upstairs over the years. Again, we used a Boy Scout troop to

(Continued on page 3)

**HISTORIC FORT  
STEILACOOM  
ASSOCIATION**

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 Telephone ..... (253) 756-3928  
 Web Site ..... [www.fortsteilacoom.com](http://www.fortsteilacoom.com)

**President's Message**



Usually, as anyone who is even vaguely familiar with me knows only too well, I am never at a loss for words. Writing this issue's col-

umn regarding the topic of volunteers, however, really had me stumped.

Just what is a volunteer, exactly? To gain some insight into the matter, I, of course, first went to the old Webster's. "Volunteer; a person who enters into military or other service of his own free will, to offer or bestow voluntarily." Well, that's nice, I thought, but somehow it just doesn't seem to fit. How about using the word steward instead? "Steward; one who manages affairs for another, one who helps to manage a public function." Hey, that's better, but it still seems to miss the mark somehow.

Then, just the other day, a person came by and referred to the folks that make up the Historic Fort Steilacoom Association as "Angels." ANGELS? Wow, now I like that! Angels!

So, back to the old Webster's I go. "Angel; a divine messenger, also an old English coin worth ten shillings." Ten shillings? Now let me see, that comes to about a hundred and twenty pence. Now that's more like it!



*Many volunteers participate in activities at Fort Steilacoom, as in the recent Immersion Event.*

Oftentimes as we toil along don't we sometimes feel like no one really cares? Heck! Some days I think a dollar twenty would be an exaggeration for whatever worth I may present. But just wait a darn minute! An angel is also, and foremost, a messenger. This *is* what we are and do. The Fort visitor was really oh so correct in making his assertion. We *are* messengers. We carry the message of the not so distant past to a modern populace that oftentimes has no ear to hear.

We keep on in our work despite the occasional indifference because apathy is not what we are here for. We maintain and interpret this old Fort not only for those who look to the past from a sense of nostalgia, but also for those who seek guidance concerning the events that impact them today.

The message of old Fort Steilacoom and the service men who struggled there seeking justice and equality for those they served is just as germane today as anything one might read in the daily news. The old adage, "Those who do not remember the past are doomed to repeat it" has never been so true as for the events we are facing today.

Let's all be angels, let's all continue in our message regarding the

preservation of the memory of the servicemen and their families who helped to settle this great land. We owe it to those who have come before, we owe it to ourselves, and we owe it to those yet unborn.

Before I leave you to read the rest of this newsletter, I have to pass on some extraordinary good news. This past year the Historic Fort Steilacoom Association was incredibly fortunate in finding a true angel for our cause in the person of Senator Michael Carrell of the 28<sup>th</sup> District. Through his strong efforts on our behalf we have finally secured the funding necessary to not only replace all four of Fort Steilacoom's leaking roofs, but also for painting the exteriors of all four quarters. A BIG THANK YOU to Senator Carroll and his staff and to all of you who took part in the legislative process of calling, e-mailing, and writing on behalf of the Association. Your efforts resulted in the setting aside of \$250,000 from the State of Washington expressly for the continued restoration work at our old Fort. You are *all* angels and I thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Your humble servant,  
*Gideon Pete.*



*Lyle Dunkin, left, headed the reconstruction project with help from Jack Langstrom, Arnold Stern, Charles Collier, Robert Weir, and others.*

**Restoring the Fort** (from p. 1) help remove a number of partitions. After the wall paper was removed, the location of the original partitions was apparent. One Scout, for his Eagle project, led in removing the wall paper (13 were the most found) from the east downstairs rooms and prepare the plaster for painting. A painting party, including Lou Dunkin, Pat Collier, Jill Fluker, and Vikki Nelson, helped us paint the hallway and meeting room. Lou papered the restroom, and Pat made drapes for Quarters 2, 3 and 4.

Quarters 4 was our greatest challenge. This building had been moved from its original location and had settled considerably around the fireplaces. It had been converted into a two-story duplex with a two-story addition and double garage on the east side. The stairway had also been moved. Extensive water damage and rotting had occurred to the building.

The U.S. Navy Reserve Construction Battalion #18 (Sea-Bees) were a great help in removing the addition, leveling the building as much as possible, and in constructing the back rooms. They also helped to

completely rebuild the porches. The Sea-Bees were here one week-end a month for their active duty training.

Again, a Scout completed his Eagle project by leading in the removal of layers of wall paper, filling the thousands of tack holes, and painting the south room upstairs.

Several members of the U.S. Air Force 593<sup>rd</sup> Area Support Group painted the outside of Quarters 4 during one weekend.

The chimney was replaced by trainees in the Brick Layers and Tile Setters apprentice program. They also rebuilt both chimneys on Quarters 3.

The security systems were installed by a class at Clover Park Voc-Tech. Their carpenter class helped dry wall the downstairs of Quarters 4 and papered the kitchen and rest rooms.

Quarters 3 was in relatively good condition, but did have a two-story addition and double garage on the back, which the Sea-Bees helped remove. That, rebuilding the porches and chimneys, and painting took care of the outside. The inside needed the layers of wall paper removed, some plaster patching and painting.

Another Eagle Scout community project installed the sign along Steilacoom Boulevard. This required remodeling the old "Fort Steilacoom Community College" sign which had been donated to us when the college changed its name. Local Boy Scout Troops 35, 53, and 471 all helped at various times throughout the restoration project.

Jack Langston was instrumental in obtaining the two Napoleon cannon for display. They are on a long term loan from the City of Olympia. The carriages were paid for by the Association and built in Coatsville, Pennsylvania, by the Jeff Stafford Wheel and Carriage Company. They were delivered at cost by a trucking company in Olympia that had a flat-bed truck on the East coast and a driver who wanted to get home for Christmas. We were greatly relieved to find that the cannon barrels fit perfectly onto the carriages. David Fogg designed, made, and donated the plugs for the muzzles. Jack Langston and Arnold Stern made the limb stock and the worm and swab for them.

A final "Historic Structures Report" was prepared that describes in detail the restoration done in each room of the four quarters. Our goal was to complete the restoration by the 1989 State Centennial. With the help of numerous grants, donations by businesses and individuals, and efforts of many organizations, we met the goal.



*Lou Dunkin painting in Quarters 2.*