

The Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society is a group of individuals dedicated to the preservation of the history of the area just north of Spokane, Washington. The Society collects oral, literary, and pictorial history to publish and otherwise make accessible to the public.

The Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society meets on the second Saturday of each month at 9 AM. We gather at the Clayton Drive-In, located just off Highway 395 on Railroad Ave.

THE

CLAYTON/DEER PARK  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Mortarboard

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## BECOMING A MARINE

By: Art Stelting

Free — Take One

### Chapter 1—Joining Up

In 1941, four kids from Clayton, Washington quit school at the end of their sophomore year and enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. For what reason, I don't know. Maybe it was for the blue uniforms? They were Silvio Costa, Laverne Westby, Ralph Huffman, and Ralph McNeil. (McNeil was KIA, at Tarawa). I wanted to go with them, but Dad wouldn't sign for me until I graduated from high school or turned 18 years old. I graduated on June 6th. I turned 18 on June 8th. Sure fooled Dad!

The morning of June 8th, I borrowed the car and went into Spokane to the recruiting office. I took my physical and was one of six who passed that day. I went back home and the folks took me in to catch the train that night, bound for Seattle.

Right-Art Stelting as a high school student walking down the street in Spokane .



Mom and even Dad shed a few tears as the train pulled out. Free at last, I thought!

Other classmates said they would sign up with me, but as they say, "Talk is talk!"

The reason I went to Seattle was because there wasn't a Marine office in Spokane to swear me in. I reported to the Recruiting Office (RO) the next morning. There were three others from the Aberdeen area who enlisted the day before. I was the senior man, Serial # 402925, and the one designated to be the "man in charge" for the trip to San Diego. "Promotions came fast in the Marine Corps!"

At one of our lunches, the other guys ordered Lucky Lager for drinks so I figured they were from the logging country, they knew what they were doing, so I ordered the same. Being I wasn't too quick on the draw and dumb, I figured it was Lucky LOGGER. Wrong!

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**Art Stelting and his dad, Jim, on the streets of Spokane. This photo probably taken by a street vendor. . Photo from Art Stelting Collection**

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## **Chapter 2—Boot Camp**

Two or 3 days later, we pulled into the railroad station in San Diego. Late that afternoon and since we had bus fare to the Marine Corps Base, it gave us a chance to see the big city. Wrong again! As we got off the train, we were greeted by a sergeant with more stripes than we'd ever seen. After a good cussing out, he informed us that we were no longer in God's hands and we were now the property of the



**Art and his dad in San Diego at the time of graduation from boot camp. Photo from Art Stelting Collection**

USMC! After the not so cordial greetings, we were herded into a 6x6 truck. We were going to see San Diego after all! Wrong again! They covered the rear of the truck with heavy canvas so there we were in total darkness, but to top it all off, the engine exhaust was directly over and behind the cab. The heat was bad enough. By the time we got to the base, we were nearly all overcome from carbon monoxide.

After we arrived at the Receiving Barracks, which was more like a prison, we were assigned to double bunks, and after more screaming and profanity, some words we hadn't heard before, we were taken

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**Leonard Link, Jim & Ruth Stelting, Art is standing behind his parents. Photo from Art Stelting Collection**

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to chow. After chow, it was back to prison for the correct way to make our sacks, take showers with a bunch of other guys, and then it was “lights out.” Some of the guys thought it was time to reminisce over the past days when suddenly, the swing doors flew open. If that continued, we would have stayed up all night and gone for a run the rest of the night until morning chow. That didn’t sound like a very good idea, so it was pretty quiet the rest of the night.

Reveille was at 0500 hours, then to chow, and we marched over to our new homes for the next few

weeks. They were two man tents with wooden decks, floors which had to be scrubbed before morning chow. After that we were issued “sea bags” for all our gear---clothing and a bucket containing stationery, pencil, toothbrush and paste, chits for haircuts, weekly movies passes, two bars of soap (bath and clothing), scrub brush, and razor blades. We were then given “shots.” At times, we were given a shot in each arm at the same time. Then it was time for haircuts. There was nothing left after that!

We were then assigned to Platoon #470, of about 60 men.

From there, we marched out on the parade ground to learn the fundamentals of “close order drill.” Some of the guys had to learn that the left foot was on the same side of the body as the left hand. What a mess! We were scattered all over the parade ground. After much yelling and cursing, it was left flank march, right flank march, and to the rear march. The drill instructors finally got us back together as a unit. A few days later, we were issued entrenching tools (small shovels) and were marched out into a large sand area (now the international airport) to learn how to dig foxholes. That didn’t take much training, but as soon as we learned that, we learned how to fill the holes back up, and then start the whole process all over again. We had no problem figuring that out. Even guys with two left feet could do it!



**Link and Art in San Diego. Photo from Art Stelting Collection**

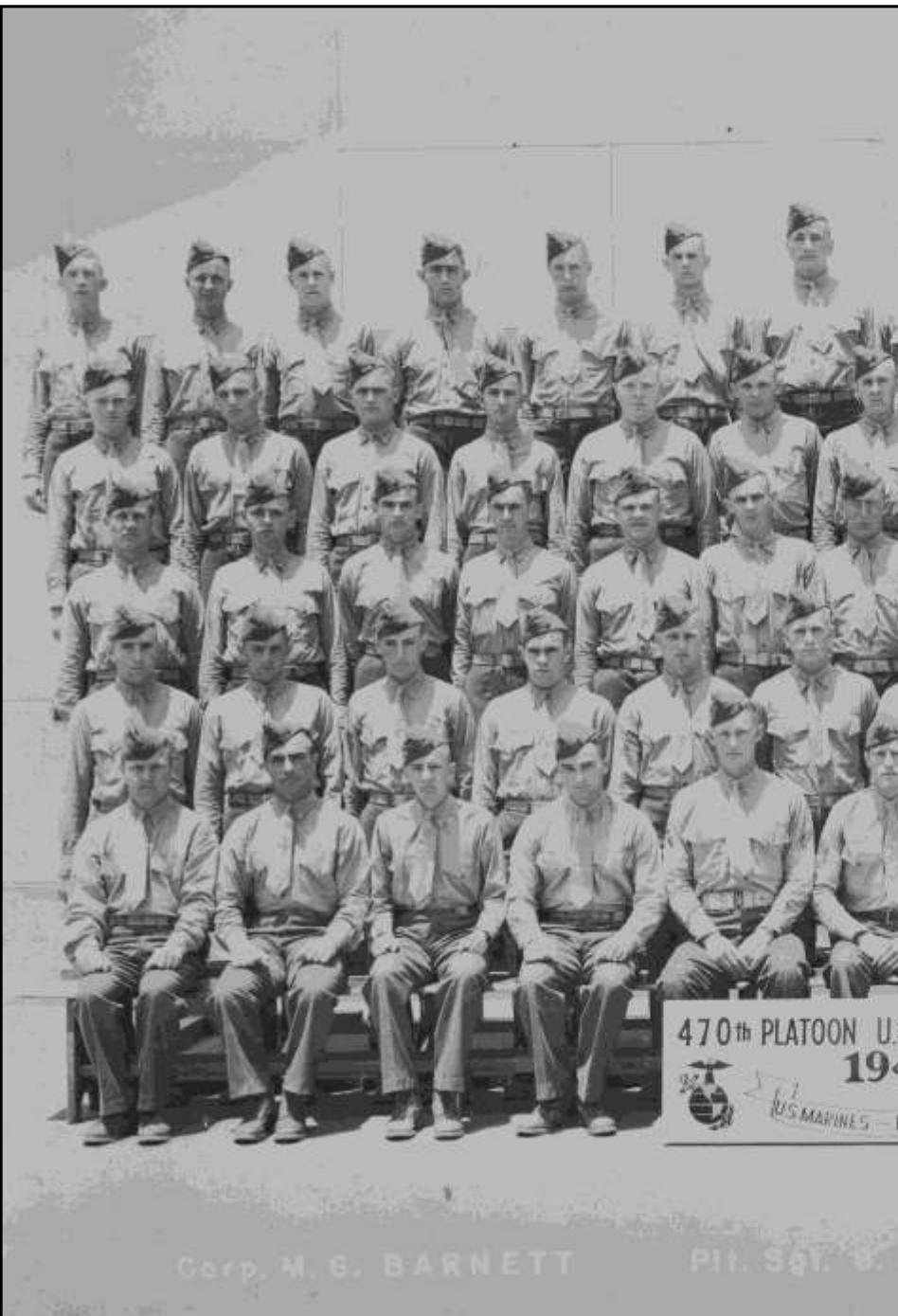
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**Right—Marine Platoon #470, 1942 graduates at San Diego. Art Steltng is 5th from the left in the top row. The men are generally arranged by height with tallest in the back center. Photo from Art Steltng Collection**

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After the third day, we were issued rifles. They were the old Springfield bolt action, magazine fed, caliber .30. I can't remember if that's the correct nomenclature or not, but good enough. We were also issued bayonets, so bayonet drills for several days. Our enemies were wheat sacks stuffed with rags.

About the fifth week, we went to the rifle range at Camp Mathews north of San Diego, where we dry fired. We learned the sitting position with the instructor sitting on our backs to be more comfortable(?) in the kneeling, prone, and off-hand positions. We also dry fired the old 1911 caliber .45 Colt pistol. Next it was working the butts. We ran the targets up and down and spotting the scopes with large paddles to show the shooters where they were hitting the target. If we waved a red flag, they knew they were missing the whole target. I did better at the 500-yard prone position. The three categories were marksman, sharpshooter, and ex-





pert. I missed expert by 1 point. Sharpshooter was paid \$3.00 a month and expert was paid \$5.00 per month for one year. I was happy with what I got. I didn't do so well with the pistol, but did make Marksman.

At the end of the second week, it was back to the base for more Troop Stomp (close order drill) for another week.

The Saturday following that, it was out on the parade ground with other platoons for our final drill and inspection by the Commanding General of the Recruiting Depot (RD). Upon graduation, we were issued the insignia of the Eagle, Globe, and Anchor. That was the end of Boot Camp!

### Chapter 3 — Training

We went back to our quarters for further assignment. We were all lined up with our transport packs and sea bags, and then we were on our way to WAR! Not quite all of us! Every other man stepped forward one pace and the rest of us were dismissed. Those of us left were ordered to take ten paces forward, take off our packs, and stand by to be dismissed. MESS DUTY for the next thirty days was directly to our front.

Mess Duty wasn't all that bad. Five of us were assigned to the Spud Locker. We peeled spuds and carrots, and chopped lettuce. We were

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supposed to peel the spuds and cut the eyes out. The spuds were put into a large washing machine to take the skin off. Rocket scientists that we were, we soon discovered by washing them long enough, presto! The eyes were gone also. There wasn't much left of the spuds. We started at 0400 hours and were usually done for the rest of the day. We were free to go to the PX. When finished on Saturdays, we had liberty until midnight in San Diego. With there being so many marines in town, you hardly saw the town itself. It was mostly bars and tattoo joints. After our thirty days were up, we were assigned to different units in the Corps.

I was assigned to H&S Company, 2nd Amphibian Tractor Battalion, Second Marine Division. It was later referred to as Amtrac S (amphibian tractor vehicle). They were developed for use in the Everglade swamps in Florida and from there used for ferrying troops and supplies from ship to shore landings. They were about 26 feet in length



**Art Stelting posing again in San Diego after graduation from boot camp. Photo from Art Stelting Collection**

and 8 to 10 feet wide, weighing around 12 tons. The hulls on the outside were about ten inches thick from stem to stern and were simply watertight compartments for ballast or pontoons. The tracks went around the wheels, and had cleats or grousers about 3 inches, which propelled the craft through the water, swamps, etc. They were named "Alligators" on that model. We first located at the west end of the Marine Corps Base near a small inlet of water from the San Diego Bay, and were directly across from the West Coast Naval Training Base. I went over there one day to see my cousin Wayne Stelting, who was going through Boot Camp. I found him walking across the Parade Ground eating an ice cream cone. That was boot camp?

**Below: LVT-1 in training at Hampton Roads, VA during WW II**  
*Photo courtesy of Olive-Drab.com*



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The Company was split up in September. We were then designated as Company A, 3rd Amtrac Battalion, 3rd Marine Division. We were transferred to Oceanside, California, to a newly built area named the Boat Basin. It was later named Camp Delmar. It was located across Interstate 101. It was still under construction. Soon after that, it was named Camp Pendleton. Our Barracks were still not finished. We didn't have any heat so it was pretty chilly. We did have a roof over our heads and walls to keep the wind out.

On or about January, 22, 1943, we boarded trucks to take us up to Pendleton to catch the train to San Diego. It was pouring down rain. In the meantime, the trucks were washed out so there we stood. Some officer decided we should go into the station, which we did. There was only one problem! There wasn't a roof on the building yet. It was just as wet on the inside as it was outside, but what the heck! We were Marines now and questioned no one. We didn't have a college degree. All we had was common sense and that didn't count! Trucks finally showed up (without covers) and gave us a nice ride to dockside in San Diego. There sat the *Mt. Vernon*, 637 feet in length--an old 4 stacker converted luxury liner which had been converted into a troop ship. The only thing remaining in the luxury liner was a spiral staircase leading to the upper decks. As I recall, there had been five swimming pools which had been covered over and bunks were placed in them, 4 to 5 feet high. There were varying accounts as to how many troops were onboard, between 10,000 and 11,000. I guess we had the last available space in #5 hold, which was on the fantail in the bottom deck, next to the screws.

I believe there were five mess halls. We were each given a card to identify which mess hall to eat in. Anyway, if you were first in line for morning chow, you would go to the end of that line and then be first in line for noon chow, and ditto for evening chow.

On the morning of January 24th, we went up to the main deck and low and behold, the ship was moving and going around Point Loma. We soon encountered ground swells in the ocean. A lot of guys were all ready getting rid of breakfast. While we

were having roll call on the main deck, some of the breakfasts on the deck above us blew down onto our deck. Our platoon leader, Lieutenant Raymond F. Garrity had just gotten out of Platoon Leaders' Class, a "ninety-day wonder." He leaned out over the rail and hollered to those above us to knock it off, and you guessed it, he got a face full.

## Chapter 4 —New Zealand

It was claimed that our ship could outrun any Jap warship. We were all alone. We headed south and west of South America, crossed the Equator on the 29th, and then headed west for New Zealand. We arrived in Auckland and boy was it good to see land again! We tied up at Queen's Wharf, where we were greeted by the New Zealand Air Force Band playing the *Marine Hymn*. All onboard rushed over to the side of the ship to see them. The ship started to list from all the weight. The band was out of sight under the side of the ship. Loudspeakers were blaring and the crew was chasing everyone back to the other side before it tipped over. They thought it could very easily tip over. "The First Ship to Sink in the Auckland Harbor" would have made headlines around the world!

Through a luck of the draw, or something like that, our company of about 135 men loaded up our transport packs and sea bags and marched about a quarter of a mile. We were quartered in an abandoned Pan American Airways hangar for planes coming in from the USA headed to Australia and New Zealand. Planes in those days were seaplanes. There were no land planes in that part of the world at that time.

Now would be good time to introduce the lieutenant to you. Lieutenant Garrity, AKA: Lieutenant "G" got a leather shoestring and ran it through the bottom of his pistol holster and tied it around his thigh, just like the old "gunslingers." Our platoon became known as Garrity's Raiders. Every day, we hiked a mile or so from our camp to some grassy field with "fixed bayonets." We went back and forth across the fields, killing everything in our path. About all we did was squish a few worms. We had liberty every other night until curfew at 2300 hours.

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One night Jerry and I headed back to camp past curfew time and were on a shortcut and were picked up by the Navy Shore Patrol. Luckily for us, also onboard the command car was Platoon Sergeant Metcalf. He was onboard the West Virginia (battleship) when it was sunk at Pearl Harbor. Sgt. Metcalf was later killed at Bougainville. The Navy officer took us to camp and demanded to see Captain Goodpasture. We didn't give him any help so he started banging on doors until he found the Captain, just to have us arrested. The Captain told him to get the hell out and that he'd take care of it in the morning. Captain G. had a lot of respect for Sergeant Metcalf. He couldn't punish him or us, so we came out of that O.K. A few nights later, the whistles from all the trains in the terminus started blowing. The engines were kept fired up all the time just in case the Japs landed, which to them was still a possibility. This went on for several minutes and when they quit Sergeant Capps came in quite under the influence. He had decided to have some fun and had all the train men chasing him from one train to another. They were afraid he'd pull the throttle by mistake and take off for Wellington. Sergeant Capps was an old veteran of the "Banana Wars" in Central America so nothing came of that either.

We were in Auckland for about three weeks, and then we got orders to move out about 60 miles north to Whangateau. When we arrived, we pitched tents in an old school yard. We were told that there was a small village of about 50 people just a couple miles north.

One day, G's Raiders made up a bunch of blank ammunition and just before dawn they had the village surrounded. Just as it was dawn, the Raiders attacked the enemy. Chickens were crowing, cows were mooing, and people were coming out of their houses in their nightgowns. There was rifle fire all around. I don't think we made a very good lasting impression on them. Lieutenant "G" was very happy though.

We were given liberty on Saturdays; however, it was up at 0500 hours. We boarded trucks and then

drove fifteen miles to catch a train. After several stops for tea for the crew, we got into Auckland at 1100 hours. Curfew was at 2300 hours. We were back in camp in time for breakfast.

We made a 90 mile hike further away to fire machine guns, which were hauled out in trucks. We did have our packs and rifles, but even with sore feet, we did it. We were kind of proud of ourselves. The night before getting back to camp, we camped in a small meadow. I found a nice little depression on the ground with tall grass for a cushion. We woke in the morning in an inch of water in the hole and were soaking wet. Some of the guys had a bonfire going. Out of nowhere a farmer came with buckets of milk for us. What a grateful bunch of guys! The farmer sure touched our hearts. We thanked him profusely. I don't think anyone will ever forget it.

We went back to camp, for more hikes and infantry training. We went on a "compass problem" training exercise one night. Our officers had it already planned. They set up a route for us to follow---they instructed us to tag a certain tree, fence post, or rock so we could show that we had found the "target" and that we could find our way back to camp by compass. It was a pitch black night, and pouring down rain. We topped a ridge by following a fence. We saw the lights of camp far below us. Being Marines that we were, we abandoned the use of the compass and groped our way in a straight line for camp. Our Officers were really proud of us for completing the course in such a short period of time. Good thing they didn't go back the next day to see if we'd identified our tags.

We went on hikes, hikes, and more hikes and infantry training. We hadn't seen our Amtracs since we left Camp Pendleton and wouldn't see them again until we got to Guadalcanal ('Canal).

We moved to a racetrack in Wakaraki, which was another mud hole just outside Auckland. I saw Ralph Huffman from Clayton for just a few minutes while we were there.

**To Be Continued in Mortarboard #40.**

## Editors Corner

Grace Hubal, our secretary and Penny Hutton, Acting Webmaster, drove from Deer Park to my home in Medical Lake to help assemble “Mortarboard 38” and Volume 10 of the “Collected Newsletters”. I sent them the below e-mail and copied our board, however, I forgot to thank them at our June meeting.

**Thanks for coming all the way out to Medical Lake to help me put together the Mortarboards and Collected Newsletters and for bringing the beautiful flower arrangement from C/DPHS. We put together all the**

**Mortarboards and 14 of the Collected Newsletters. It will be a breeze to finish things up.**

**Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!**

They also plan to help assemble July’s edition and I much appreciate it.

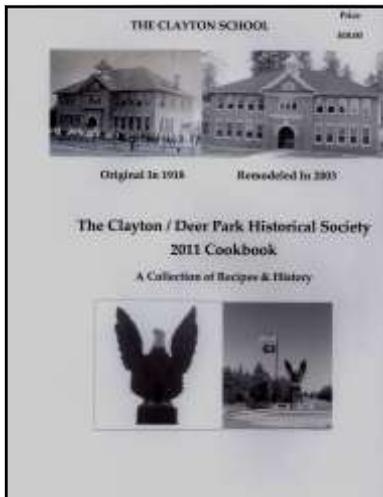
Your editor,

Sharon Clark

## Calendar of Events

Event	Date & Time	Location
C/DPHS meeting	July 9, 2011 9:00am	Clayton Drive-In
Old Settlers Picnic <i>Display at Mix Park</i>	July 23, 2011	Deer Park Mix Park
Clayton Brickyard Day <i>Display of Memorabilia</i>	August 6, 2011	Clayton School
C/DPHS meeting Quillow Raffle Drawing	August 13, 2011 9:00am	Clayton Drive-In
Clayton Fair <i>Display of Memorabilia</i>	August 26, 27, 28, 2011	Clayton Fairgrounds
C/DPHS meeting Quillow Raffle Drawing	September 11, 2011 9:00am	Clayton Drive-In

The Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society would like to thank the Clayton Drive-In, the Pizza Shoppe, the Salty Dog Eatery, the Gardenspot Floral Shoppe, and Odynski's Accounting for all their hard work and support. Picku a copy at Settler's Day, at the Clayton Brickyard Day and the Clayton Fair in August. If you are interested in purchasing any of our Collected Newsletters, they are on sale at Odynski's Accounting in Deer Park for the small price of \$4 each.



**Clayton/ Deer Park Historical Society**  
**"EAGLE BLANKET AND PILLOW"**  
**RAFFLE**  
*Blanket folds into the pocket of the blanket*



**TICKETS \$1 EACH**

**New Raffle:** Tickets on Sale at Settlers' Day, Brickyard day and by Society members in the interim. The drawing will be at the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society meeting August 13, 2011 9:00am at the Clayton Drive-In



**Clayton/ Deer Park Historical Society Minutes -June 11, 2011**

In attendance: Grace Hubal, Pete Coffin, Bill Sebright, Mark Wagner, Sharon Clark, Lorraine Nord, Warren Nord, Bob Gibson, Lily Gibson, Roxanne Camp, Sue Rehms, Don Ball, Betty Burdette, Lynn Wells, Allan Fackenthal, Karen Kievit, Vern Ziegler, Bob Clouse, and Bog Sobczuk.

Society president, Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM. Bill met with Wally and Pat Parker, Glendine Leonard, and Janet Thomas in Colville Thursday. The meeting started with Wally requesting permission to use images of their Prestini paintings, but moved to a discussion of Leno's life and death. We decided to make a timeline of Leno's life, putting in what materials we have, etc. We talked about doing some kind of a book at a future date. Wally delivered a script of Standing Watch to Chris Atella. Chris will start the process of putting the book on CD.

Our thanks to Bog Sobczuk for bringing Bob Clouse to the meeting today. Bob is living at Manor Care at Francis and Assembly, Room 115. His phone number is 509-444-0231. Mary is living at Bob's daughter in law's in Colbert.

Treasurer, Mark Wagner reported that there is \$3,120.13 in the main checking account. There was \$145 in deposits in the main checking account and a \$25 deposit to set up the shadow checking account to pay for the web hosting service. \$125 was also transferred out of the main checking account to the shadow account. The shadow account now has \$150 in total funds. As soon as we get our secondary checking account debit card Jake Wilson will be able to get the new website started. Karen Kievit is new to the Deer Park area and has become a new Society member. Also Wally and Pat Parker became members again.

Secretary, Grace Hubal reported that 5 Cookbooks sold last month. \$50 deposited into checking account on 6/10/11. Twenty cookbooks are still available at the local businesses. We have 5 cook-

books on hand. Unsold cookbooks will be picked up from the local businesses by the end of June and on display at Settler's Day, Brickyard Days, and the Clayton Fair.

Print Editor, Sharon Clark handed Mortarboard #38 and Collected Newsletters #10. Free monthly Mortarboards can be picked up at Deer Park City Hall, Deer Park Chamber of Commerce, and Standen Insurance. The Collected Newsletters can be picked up from Odynski's Accounting for \$4 each. Sharon brought up the remains of the old Forrester School. Amy Trueblood Lindh said that the remains are on the Wentz's property by Spotted Road. More studying will be done.

Vice President, Pete Coffin reported on field trips Bill Sebright and he took since the last meeting. Pictures of the Arcadia highline flume were passed around. He has been involved with Tom at the DP Tribune with the digitized newspapers.

Bill brought artifacts and set them up in the display cabinet at the Clayton Drive-In. There is more space available to add more artifacts. Make sure to take a look when you are in.

Lorraine Nord discussed the 'Qwillow Pillow' raffle for Settlers Day and Brickyard Day. The drawing will be at the August 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Tickets are now on sale.

Pete devised a list of Deer Park citizens from the 1940s and 1950s. The names were read, discussion followed, information and names were added.

Sue Rehms brought a painting to share. It is a painting of Paul and Alice Peak's old pickup. Peaks lived in Big Foot Valley. As a girl Sue could hear them starting down the hill towards the Jenkins' farm in the old truck. Chet Whisman painted it.

Don Ball has an idea. The old vet clinic building is for sale in Deer Park. We are looking for someone to find out about it.

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Mark Wagner is stepping down from being the treasurer. He will still take care of business until someone is willing to take over the position. Let Mark or Bill know if you are willing to be treasurer.

Meeting adjourned at 10:07 AM.

Respectfully submitted by Grace Hubal, Secretary

Next meeting is July 9, 2011 at 9:00 AM.

### Editorial Policy Regarding Correcting Errors and/or Omissions

Information published here is compiled from many sources, including personal memories. It is often difficult or impossible to verify such recollections through outside documentation. Our editorial policy toward the veracity of personal recollections tends toward the casual – since little harm is normally done by such errors. But our editorial process also invites public review and input regarding the accuracy of the information we publish, and when such review either suggests or reveals errors or items open to dispute our “Letters” department will act as a forum allowing the airing of such disagreements in an effort to ascertain the truth and correct any probable or demonstrated errors. We also believe it’s important that such disagreements be recorded, even if they can’t be settled to the satisfaction of all parties.

We encourage everyone to submit any arguments as to fact to the editor in writing — since the written form reduces the chance of further misunderstandings. As is standard policy, all letters will be edited for spelling, word usage, clarity, and — if necessary — contents. If advisable, the editor will confer directly with the letter writers to insure that everyone’s comments and corrections are submitted in a literate, polite, and compelling manner — as best suits the editorial image of this Society’s publications.

### Society Want Ads

WANTED: Information and photos regarding the history of Trysil/Zion Lutheran Church	Area	(Rollosdotter@gmail.com) 466-3564.
WANTED: Any stories and photos of your family’s history in connection with their occupations and settlement in the Clayton/Deer Park	WANTED: Any stories and photos from Williams Valley #452 and Gardenspot #278 Granges	FOR SALE: The 2011 Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society Cookbook, “A Collection of Recipes and Stories” (see our ad on page 466 for details)
	WANTED: Any information on the Williams Valley Grange Orchestra	
	Contact: Ann Fackenthall, WVG	

### Society Contacts

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Special Thanks to this month’s volunteer proofreaders — Grace Hubal, Florene Moore, Bill Sebright, Peter Coffin