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.

BECOMING A MARINE
By: Art Stelting
Continued from Issue 39—July 2011

Chapter 5—Guadalcanal

After a couple of weeks, we went aboard ship and headed north. Our ship, the Crescent City, linked up with the rest of the convoy. Our ship was part of “The Unholy Four” with the Hayes, Jackson, and the American Legion. After a couple of days and during the night Jerry and I decided to go topside and spend the night in the fresh air and cooler temperatures. During the night, we had some terrific rain, and got in real storm! The ship was pitching and rolling so badly that we decided to go below. We went down a ladder and stepped into water about a foot deep on the main deck. That was the closest I had come to being seasick. They claimed that area was bad for storms as the Pacific seemed to collide with the Tasman Sea. I believe it was the next day that we had an alert for a possible submarine attack.

We had an escort of 4 destroyers. All of the ships fired “Y” guns or depth charges. We were on the

USS Crescent City (AP-40;/APA-21), formerly the civilian passenger liner DEL ORLEANS, following her conversion to a naval attack transport. Photo courtesy of NavSource by Jim McCoy.

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fantail again when the concussion was causing the bulkheads to pop and crack. We felt like our ship would suffer. We never did find out if they got the sub or not!

I think we landed on ‘Canal on July 6, 1943, 106 degrees and humidity high. It was winter when we left New Zealand so it was quite a change for us. We set up camp in an area called Tetere, about 12 miles east of Henderson Field. It was a newly constructed airfield the Japs had built and we renamed. It was a grassy area of approximately 10 acres. We put up tents under coconut palms, which surrounded the area. This was our new home away from home until we got back from Bougainville. Our first introduction to enemy fire was when the Jap bombers came over nightly to bomb Henderson Field. I thought it was exciting to see until shrapnel from all the anti-aircraft fire started falling around us. It was nasty stuff. We started looking for shelter. The thrill of war soon left us. Daylight brought Jap fighter planes around and dog fights were high above us. Planes were falling from the sky. We were cheering until we saw that some of them were ours. That was the end of the celebration.

Our time there was uneventful to say the least. We were back to the same old routine. Our Amtracs finally arrived from New Zealand so we were busy for a short time cleaning them up, repainting rust spots, and cleaning machine guns. At that time, we had 3-.30 caliber, and 1-.50 caliber guns for protection against low flying Jap planes. We used them a couple of times without success on Bougainville. First Sergeant of “B” Company shot one down and was put under arrest. The higher ups said that wasn’t our job. That job was assigned to the Anti-aircraft Battalions. First Sergeant was exonerated and that was the end of that. We couldn’t beat priorities or going by the book.

We had movies once a week. We had about 3 different movies. By the time we had seen them a few times, we could almost recite them word for word. We had some logs that we fashioned for seats. With helmets on and ponchos over us, we endured, rain or shine. A few of us gathered up some old wooden boxes and made our own lounge chairs with camouflage strips woven for the seats and backs. It was just like downtown. The officers had manufactured ones, and had them in a roped off area just in front of the projector so that we couldn’t interfere with their privacy. When we brought our own lawn chairs out, the officers decided that we were too comfortable, just like them. After a couple of nights, an order came down that we had to destroy our chairs and go sit on the logs again. Good for morale!

There was nothing to look forward to except mail call, which could have been improved on. Generally, it took a week or two, in some cases a month to get mail. I did write a lot of letters to old school chums and would sometimes get a reply. Mom was really the one I depended on and a girl named Jose-

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Phine Ellis, who I met in New Zealand. Mom and her were standouts and kept me supplied with cake and cookies, which were sometimes the worse for wear and tear and sometimes moldy. What I would not or could not eat, Jerry Wilson, a really good friend from Evansville, Indiana would. He was my garbage disposal. He would eat about anything.

Boredom was the worst of all while we were on the "Canal. At night, we were busy trying to kill mosquitoes that got under our nets that were draped around our cots. If we forgot to take our shoes in with us at night, we'd have to look for a hole in the ground to find them in the morning. The land crabs were quite large and would try to drag our boots in their holes.

The natives were quite primitive. Sometimes they wandered into our camp at night and sat and leaned against a tree. They’d still be in the same spot the next morning. The poor souls only had some sort of sarong for clothing.

One time, we had orders to cover the outdoor showers with camouflage netting because a "dignitary" was coming. Oh Boy, the beautiful girls from the USO were coming to entertain us. Real white girls!

At the time, our B-24 bombers came back from Bougainville all shot up and needing fighter escort badly. Besides, we lost a lot of gunners. A few marines went on some of the flights as gunners. Orders came down saying that had to stop that or else they’d lose their life insurance. A short time later, a lone C-46 cargo plane came overhead, escorted by nearly fifty Corsair fighter planes. They were about 4,000 feet overhead. It was a good thing that we covered our showers or they would have seen a bunch of naked men down below. Our pinup girls turned out to be “The First Lady.” We could have cared less when she landed at Henderson Field. From pictures we’d seen, she was the most unattractive woman we’d ever seen. Poor old Eleanor! The worst thing about the whole scenario was that our (Continued on page 496)
bombers were crying for fighter escorts and Eleanor got more than the whole Solomon Islands put together. No matter, Eleanor, the President’s wife deserved to be protected!

Chapter 6 — Bougainville

About the 28th of October, we boarded ship and headed north, up the Solomon Island chain and landed there on the morning of November 1st. We encountered small arms fire, but nothing serious.

What a hell hole that was! Just a few feet from the beach was nothing but swamp, huge banyan trees, and long hanging vines to the ground. The vines had long stickers. Anything that touched them was “hooked up.” We called them “wait a minute” vines. They were much worse than nettles. The swamp went inland for about a mile and then there was a grassy plain with kunai grass about five feet tall. Our Amtracs were the only vehicles that could move through the swamp. We were the only means to get troops, ammo, and food to the infantry. On our return trip back, we carried the dead and wounded marines to the aid stations on the beach. Through some maneuvering, we had somewhat of a trail to follow. Our trails eventually became a road that was later used as a bomber strip. Trucks were buried all over the place as well as bulldozers with only the exhaust pipes sticking out of the mud.

There was a small island called Purata, which was about 600 yards offshore. It was more suitable for LSTs to unload supplies. Purata was probably twenty to thirty acres in size. We arrived on the morning of November 10, 1943, so we could take supplies to the mainland.

I decided the first thing I needed was a foxhole just in case we got bombed. I could only dig down about sixteen inches because I hit solid coral. Sergeant Vern Johnson and Private First Class (PFC) Charley Schuh made a joke about me digging away. During the night, about 2200 hours, bombers came. They knew we were the best transportation for the mainland and that we had also built up our supplies so they decided we would be a good place to drop some bombs. My foxhole wasn’t deep but it was long enough to lie in. When the bombs fell, I jumped for my hole and ended up lying on Johnson (he beat me to it) and then Charley landed on top of me. A bomb went off in the top of a coconut tree just above us and another one hit some acetylene tanks nearby and set them afire. It was a blazing inferno! First Johnson hollered that he was hit and likewise Charley. How could that be? I couldn’t feel any blood on Johnson. I figured out later that Johnson just had a concussion and Charley had a

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back full of splinters from the tree. It was not serious, but we were plenty scared. A few minutes later, we were given orders to get out in the water in our Amtracs. We got out OK, but apparently the Japs saw the wake of our Amtracs because it was a clear moonlight night and they bombed us some more, thus killing nine of our men and wounding another twenty. Sergeant Bechtold and I came across PFC Whitey Hagen barely afloat. We held his head above the water to keep him from drowning. I don't know what happened to Sergeant B. The next thing I knew, PFC Roy Clark from Virginia and I got Whitey aboard a serviceable Amtrac and took him to the mainland to an aid station. The bombing started again. We made it to an occupied makeshift bunker. We told the person in there to get out so we could get Whitey inside to avoid any further injuries. When the guy came out into the moonlight, we recognized him as our Battalion Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Hammose Sylvester Stephan. He was a reservist from Ohio and a civilian grade school teacher. Go figure! We found an aid station in the darkness and got Whitey inside the tent. Right then, they amputated one leg below the knee. We didn’t realize that his injury was that bad. It was a wonder that he didn’t die from loss of blood. The next morning, the first thing we wanted to know was how many Amtracs were still running. It didn’t matter about our casualties!

The “Powers to be” decided that Purata wasn’t the place we needed to be so we were moved over to Cape Torokina. It looked good on paper. The CBs Naval Construction Battalion were building a fighter strip there. The Japs didn’t like that so they bombed it. Another great place not to be was right on the end of the strip. Luckily, we didn’t have any casualties. We moved further back into the jungle and set up camp in the bunkers that the engineers had built on one of their mail trails leading back into the mountains. It was called the Numa Numa Track. It was also called the MLR (main line of resistance) in case the Japs made a counter attack through our lines. We set up our machine guns, listening posts, etc.
One night, horns and sirens sounded off down on the beach. No one knew what was going on so Lieutenant “G” decided he would investigate. He got a volunteer to go with him in the black of night, and off they went. Lieutenant “G” hollered his name and rank, announcing his presence as his voice faded off into the distance. How crazy could you get? It was a while later when we heard his voice getting louder and louder. They returned with the news that the Japs went out to sea to make a counter landing behind us. Our Navy sank some of their ships later that night. The Japs that remained behind retreated back to Rabaul, New Britain.

It was nearly Thanksgiving when the Army Engineers came to the beach and planted small charges of dynamite in the sand. When the “soldier boys” hit the beach, they set off the charges. We got some replacements when we got back to the 'Canal. They had already seen news reels showing the Army landing under “heavy artillery” fire. So much for propaganda!

A day or so before Thanksgiving, they brought in canned turkey, canned peaches, pears, and all kinds of goodies for their troops on the extreme left flank of the Marines. We were given the job of delivering it to their troops. I don't know how we got “lost,” but we couldn’t find our delivery point. Instead of just dumping it anywhere, we hauled it up to our front lines so our infantry could enjoy it. We kept some of it for own use. I guess the Army ended up eating C and K rations like we had been living on since November 1st.

One day, there seemed to be a lull in the area and I found Leonard Link. We decided to find Silvio Costa. We found him. Leonard had a brother there someplace in the Army. We found him. We all had a short reunion. We were four guys from the little town of Clayton, together, about 6,000 miles from Home!

A couple of days before Christmas, we got back to the 'Canal where we again had the luxury of cots, warm showers, and spam---baked, fried, or cold---cook’s choice: powdered milk, eggs, tomato juice, everything powdered. We had movies and got our mail, which was about a month old, more or less. We got a chance to dry off after a couple months of rain!

Chapter 7—Water Buffalos

Sometime in January of 1944, we crossed Sealark Channel (in the Solomon Islands) or as it was later nicknamed “Iron Bot-
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“tom Sound” after all the Jap ships and our Navy ships which had been sunk there. The island was called Tulagi. It was about fifteen miles from the ‘Canal. They had the latest Amtrac model, which was nicknamed “Water Buffalos.” We drove them back across the channel to their new home. They were not that much faster, a little wider with armor around the cab and sides. It had an improved track system which ran on Bogie wheels. The old ‘gators had the tracks running in channel iron. If we turned too sharply, the tracks would fall off. While on Tulagi for a couple of days, we put up in an abandoned Naval Hospital with new sheets and pillow cases (didn’t have pillows though). Boy, those sheets felt good!

On the 18th of May, we loaded the LSTs (landing ship tank). We called them Large Stationary Targets. They were pretty well flat bottomed so they could get closer onto the beach. They were 328 feet in length and had a 50 foot beam. They had large doors in the bow so we could drive the Amtracs and trucks directly into the hold. They had elevators that lifted the smaller trucks and the desalting trailers. These trailers had boilers to heat the salt water, the steam would be fresh water. The desalting trailers were lifesavers! We also stored ammunition, barrels of gas, and other smaller items on the top deck.

On May 19, 1944 (Mom’s birthday), we headed for Guam. We spent several days at sea. We stopped at Kwajalene to resupply and refuel our convoy of about 16 LSTs, LCIs. (They were converted into rocket firing ships), and destroyers to be used as escorts. After a couple of days we were attacked by a lone Jap torpedo plane. It was presumably from Truk where the Japs had their largest naval base in the central Pacific. Our LST was the command ship and it was forward on the starboard (right) side of our column. Apparently, the Japs targeted us and headed straight for us. Lucky for us, an LCI to our right saw what was happening and hit his throttle just before the Jap launched his torpedo. The skipper of the LCI took the full blast, which blew everything forward of the bridge to smithereens. Parts of the ship, guns, and bodies flew all over the place. After getting all the survivors and body parts off, it was sunk with gunfire. We heard later the skipper of the LCI was awarded the “Medal of Honor” posthumously, which he certainly deserved. The Jap flew directly over us. The gunners on all the ships shot at it, disregarding the other ships. They killed and wounded marines standing on the adjacent ships’ decks. To top it off, early the next morning, some Navy planes from a carrier far below the horizon were out on patrol when the gunners on our convoy, still pumped up from the previous day’s episode, accidentally shot one of our own planes down. So goes it in war!

We were scheduled to be floating reserve for the landing on Saipan as needed on the 18th of June and then on Guam on the 21st. While standing by at sea, the Jap fleet came out of hiding, west of the Philippines. They caught our Navy by surprise and ended up being about the “last sea battle” of the war. We were victorious of course. The Japs lost most of their planes and aircraft. Because they lost so many, it was called “The Marianas Turkey Shoot.” Needless to say, our battleships, carriers, and cruisers joined in on the fight and left us with no support for our landing on Guam. Orders came down for us to return to the Marshall Islands so our ships could refuel, and above all, get food for us all. We were nearly on starvation rations until we got to Eniwetok. We completed all the necessary projects and headed west again for Guam. We finally made the landing on the 21st of July. We had been at sea since May 19th and were anxious to get some dry land under our feet once again---although, we weren’t looking forward to any of the consequences.

In the early morning hours, we saw flashes far off in the distance. It wasn’t long before we heard the salvos from the big guns. The whole picture looked impressive from a distance, but when the firing stopped, the Japs came out of their caves and did their thing, which was to kill marines.

(To be Continued, Issue 41 September 2011)
Grand Marshalls of the 2011 Clayton Brickyard Day Parade

WARREN NORD

Warren came to Clayton in 1938 from South Dakota.

He attended Clayton & Deer Park Schools. He would have graduated from high school in 1946 if he hadn’t joined the Marines. It was a great honor to get his high school diploma in 2003.

He delivered the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* in the Clayton area, worked at the Clayton Mercantile (for Kap Westby and Ole Wind) and the Clayton Brickyard on Saturdays.

(WARREN NORD Continued on page 501)

ART STELTING

Art was born and raised in Clayton. He went to grade school and one year of high school at Clayton School. He was in the last freshman class at Clayton High School. He graduated from Deer Park High School in 1942. The next day he joined the Marine Corps, serving with the 3rd and 5th Divisions. Art spent the next 3 years in the Pacific Theater, serving in the Iwo Jima, Bougainville, Guam campaigns.

After he was discharged from the Marines, he came home and worked at the Clayton Brick Yard for 2 years before working many years for the Pacific Northwest Bell phone company.
In 1945 he joined the Marine Corps and went to Basic Training at the San Diego Marine Base. After Boot Camp, he was transferred overseas to China by way of Hawaii, Okinawa and Tsingtao, Peking, and Tientsin, China where he joined the 1st Marine Air Wing. He was there for better than a year. Then the Wing Headquarters moved to Guam, where Warren stayed about 6 months, until they were moved to El Toro, Santa Ana, California. He stayed there for 2 years and was discharged in 1949. Warren came home to Clayton.

After the Marines he worked at and then owned the Globe Garage, worked for the State Highway Department and farmed. In 1958 he moved the old Clayton Grange to his farm.

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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 in selling the 2011 Cookbook. You can pick up a copy in our booth 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 available at Odynski’s Accounting in Deer Park, at $4 each.

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The Clayton School

Original in 1968
A Collection of Recipes & History

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Calendar of Events

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<th>Event</th>
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<td><strong>Clayton Brickyard Day</strong></td>
<td>August 6, 2011</td>
<td>Clayton School</td>
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<td><em>Display of Memorabilia</em></td>
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<td>C/DPHS meeting</td>
<td>August 13, 2011</td>
<td>Clayton Drive-In</td>
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<td><em>Quillow Raffle Drawing</em></td>
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<td>Clayton Fair</td>
<td>August 26, 27, 28, 2011</td>
<td>Clayton Fairgrounds</td>
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<td><em>Display of Memorabilia</em></td>
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SETTLERS DAY 2011

Our booth was again set up and manned by our members. I saw Pete Coffin, Bill Sebright, Lorraine Nord, Penny Hutton. I am sure others helped but I couldn’t stay. Your editor, Sharon Clark

Right: Lorraine Nord poses with the Quillow objects to be raffled in the Society’s booth at Settlers Day

Below: Lorraine poses in our booth at the Settlers Day Picnic with guest/member Daryl Click from Clarkston, a graduate of Deer Park Grade School.

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.

See you at Clayton Brickyard Day and at the Clayton Fair.

Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society Minutes — July 9, 2011


Society president, Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM. Bill showed the group the framed and matted photo of the 1920 DPHS football team that Margret Budega donated to the Society. Ben Hunter contacted Bill about writing a college class paper on the history of Clayton. Bill sent him a copy of a timeline for the early history of Clayton and the history of the Clayton School. Ben hopes to interview members who are familiar with the history of Clayton. Bill showed thank you letters from Lorraine Nord for the flowers in honor of her Mother and a letter from Harold Hall thanking the Society for the GN railroad station pictures. Harold sent a $30 check. Grace sent thank letters to both Margret and Harold. We are set for our booth at Settlers. It will be beside Betty Burdette’s 40 year Settler table. Plans are in order for Art Stelting and Warren Nord being Grand Mar-

(Continued on page 503)
shall for the Brickyard Day Parade. Wally Parker and Bill met last week with Tom Bristol, President of the Chewelah Art Guild. Tom loaned us cassette tapes of Leno comparing his paintings to others of his day and of Battista describing Leno’s painting. Leno’s tapes are earlier and of a poorer quality. Wally hopes to “clean” the tapes up electronically and put them on CDs. Bill showed the guest book from the 2002 Prestini Exhibit in Chewelah. Our thanks go out to Jack and the Chewelah Art Guild. Bill showed the 3 bound collected Bogwen Newsletters from Wally Parker. They were passed around and are available to anyone wishing to borrow them.

Treasurer, Mark Wagner reported that there is $3,125.13 in the main checking account. Withdrawals were $150.00 for the shadow account for website hosting; deposits were $155.00 for the month. Secretary, Grace Hubal reported that 17 Society cookbooks are on hand to sell at the summer displays at Settlers Day, Brickyard Day and Clayton Fair.

Print Editor, Sharon Clark handed Mortarboard #39. She had a question regarding the Old Forreston School and the old Burroughs School. Were there two schools? Are they the same building? Discussion followed. Research is required to authenticate the school question.

Vice President, Pete Coffin reported: 1.) Bill got a call from the Deer Park Chamber of Commerce Wednesday asking that the Society provide historical pictures of Deer Park for a new Chamber website. Bill asked Pete to find out what was wanted. Pete spent some time with the Secretary of the Chamber, Rose Whaples, going through a binder of Deer Park Pictures he put together for the Winterfest in January and all the Society publications. Rose chose what she wanted and Pete put it on a CD for her. He is giving a duplicate disk to Bill for the record. 2.) The digitization of the Deer Park Union is just about complete. Pete is using it for his research and can see how very useful it really is. He has emailed the Board of Directors about perhaps putting a copy in some public place where it could be used by many people, not just him if Tom Costigan approves. What does the membership think, the Deer Park Public Library, the Northwest Room of the Spokane Library, the Northeast Genealogy Society, a traveling set of disks for member use, or what? 3.) He has been going through the front pages of the 1913-1923 Deer Park Union that he and Tom Costigan ordered. He has some folders with articles of interest to him that he has printed out so any interested Society member can see what can be gotten for research purposes. 4.) He has some transcribed sheets of history written by people who lived the history and wrote to the Deer Park Union about that history. They were passed out to interested members. 5.) Pete has been putting together a story board about the founding of the Picnic and showed it to the membership. 6.) Pete has most of the digitized Deer Park Union loaded on his laptop and had them available after the meeting for interested members to view.

Website chairperson, Penny Hutten reported on the new website. She has let Jake Wilson just run with it. She is very pleased with his progress.

Karen Kievit talked about her historical drawings. She showed us some of her art from the Colorado area. A picture of an old mill in Marble, Colorado was passed around. A picture of the 20 Mile House was also passed around. Her first attempt to draw in this area was of an 1896 picture of the Deer Park Open Door Congregational Church. We hope her husband Mike will come to our next meeting and share his stories of preserving buildings, etc., in the Colorado and Tennessee areas. Her drawings are absolutely breath-taking.

Ben Hunter told us about his college writing assignment on the history of Clayton. He would like to interview Clayton natives.

Marilyn Reilly donated a 2009 Deer Park High School Antler year book. She brought 2 Chewelah Independent newspaper articles from 100 years ago, 1911, about the Chewelah Brick and Lime Company getting the contract for bricks to build the Deer Park High School and the addition to the Olson building.

Bill reported on Bob Clouse. Several people have visited him at Manor Care. He appears to be stronger. He had hoped to come to our meeting, but didn’t make it. Bob is still living at Manor Care.
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. FOR SALE: The 2011 Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society Cookbook, “A Collection of Recipes and Stories” (see our ad on page 501 for details) |
| 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 |
| Wendy Fackenthal, WVG |

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Grace Hubal, secretary — (ghubal@hotmail.com)