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# PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Published monthly by Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society, a non-profit organization furthering the appreciation, preservation and use of the Theatre Pipe Organs of yesteryear. PSTOS is a Chapter of the American Theatre Organ Society.

Volume 18 No. 7

July 2007

A Chapter of American Theatre Organ Society



**Reserve NOW—A Fun "Triple-Play Day" to Remember!**

## Summer Organ Adventure

**Saturday, July 21**

**A full day of Fun, Food and Music for just \$10! Don't miss it!**



**10–11:30 AM...Centralia Fox Special Sneak Peek  
Open House—Open Console**

Visit Centralia's Fox Theatre to see, hear and play the newly installed 3/7 Wurlitzer donated to the theatre and Opera Pacifica by PSTOS members Fred and Eva Beeks. No-Host lunch at Arnold's Country Inn in Yelm.



**1:30 PM...Main Event**

featuring **ANDY CROW**

On to Yelm where you'll enjoy a program of organ favorites with ANDY CROW playing Father Terence's 3/16 Robert Morton at St. Columban Church. Open console follows for one and all.



Enjoy a yummy Dessert Buffet and beverages by the Church Ladies!



**ADMISSION \$10 per person • Kids 16 and under FREE with adult  
RESERVATIONS REQUIRED! Please also let Barbara know if you  
plan to have lunch at Arnold's... see page 3.**

Phone Barbara Graham, 206-525-7859 or [barbara@pstos.org](mailto:barbara@pstos.org)  
**DEADLINE for reservations—Wednesday, July 18**

**After-Glow...**

Andy Crow's newly installed residence Wurlitzer



Drive the short distance to Andy's Olympia home—see, hear and try his newly installed 2/12 Wurlitzer! Everyone who has been there says this is a great sounding installation!

**Complete drive directions are on page 6**

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**SAVE THIS PAGE and  
don't leave home  
without it!**

## PUGET SOUND PIPELINE

Vol. 18, No 7 – July 2007  
Published monthly by  
Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society  
6521 NE 191st ST  
Kenmore, WA 98028-3453

Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is a non-profit organization furthering the appreciation, restoration, and use of the historic Theatre Pipe Organs of the 1920s, through education.

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Paramount Theatre—Tom Blackwell • Wash. Center—Andy Crow

### Listing of non-PSTOS events in the Pipeline

PSTOS, upon request, will list non-conflicting non-PSTOS theatre organ events in the "Other Events" column of the two Pipelines immediately preceding the event, providing Pipeline editors receive sufficient prior written notification. Venue, artist, type of event, date, and contact information will comprise the included information.

### Advertising in the Pipeline

Classified-type ads for member-owned electronic, electric, or pipe organs, and/or pipe organ parts, will be published at no charge. Please limit copy to include brief description, contact name and phone number. Prices will not be listed. Ads may be edited for content and length. Mail ad copy to address above. Other advertising is not accepted.

**Joining Puget Sound Theatre Organ Society is quick and easy!** For a one year membership, send a \$20 check payable to PSTOS together with your name(s) as you would like them to appear on your name badges, your address with complete 9-digit ZIP code, and your email address (optional) to:  
Norman Miller, Treasurer, 2644 NW Esplanade,  
Seattle, WA 98117-2527.

## PRESIDENT'S Message

Hello PSTOSers:

Thanks to the generosity of those who attended the recent Jim Riggs concert at Wurlitzer Manor benefiting our Scholarship Fund, we are able to send 16 year old Tyler Pattison to the first ever ATOS "Theatre Organ Adventure" Summer Camp in Wheaton, Illinois July 20-23. I understand our friends at CROC (Columbia River Organ Club) will be supporting Nathan Avakian so he will attend as well. Many of you remember Tyler and Nathan from the Kenyon Hall event featuring them both in February of last year.



### Member practice time at Haller Lake

Looking for more practice time on the PSTOS-owned Wurlitzer at Haller Lake Community Club? Clint Meadway has been working with the HLCC Board and Creative Dance Studio staff (the primary tenant in the building) to identify more predictable time slots when we can use the instrument. Contact [clint@pstos.org](mailto:clint@pstos.org) for more information.

### Summer Organ Adventure coming!

Next up on our event calendar is our ALL NEW "Triple Play Summer Organ Adventure" on July 21 featuring theatre organs in Centralia, Yelm and Olympia. We will start our day at 10:30 a.m. in Centralia with a "sneak peek" at the Fox Theatre, now owned by Opera Pacifica and currently undergoing renovation. A 3/7 Wurlitzer has been donated and installed by PSTOS members Fred & Eva Beeks and this will be our first opportunity to hear it. According to Fred, the organ really fills the theatre. Our next stop will be St. Columban's in Yelm. Andy Crow will be our featured performer on the fine 3/16 Robert Morton owned by Father Terence. Then, it's on to Andy Crow's residence in Olympia for a first look at his newly installed 2/12 Wurlitzer. All three venues will feature open console. Drive directions and more details are included elsewhere in this issue. Hope to see you there.

### Date set for Paramount Wurlitzer event

We have a date for our Fall 2007 Paramount Theatre Mighty Wurlitzer benefit/fundraiser concert: Sunday afternoon, November 18! Watch for an artist and program announcement coming soon!

## PSTOS Coming Events

*Don't miss these fun  
summer events planned  
JUST FOR YOU!*

### ◆ Head south for a Triple Play Day!

#### SUMMER ORGAN ADVENTURE

Begin your day at the Centralia Fox with Open Console at its newly installed 3/7 Wurlitzer. Then on to Yelm for a no-host lunch followed by ANDY CROW at Fr. Terence's outstanding Robert Morton pipe organ. More Open Console, a wonderful dessert buffet and beverages presented by the St. Columban Church Ladies! Then a short drive to Olympia to visit Andy's home and hear his newly installed Wurlitzer. What a fun day! Lots of music, lots of opportunities to play, lots of food and camaraderie.

**Saturday, July 21**

### ◆ PSTOS Member Cameo Extravaganza in Kent at the Jack & Mary Lou Becvar Home

Featuring Tom Roughton, Jo Ann Evans, Roger McNair and others at Becvar's 3/19 Wurlitzer. Enjoy "make-your-own" strawberry shortcake, cookies and beverages on the deck. More details coming soon.

**Saturday, Aug 11, 1:30 PM**

### ◆ Paramount Theatre Wurlitzer Benefit-Fundraiser

Coming in the fall, another great evening at the Paramount Theatre. Artist and theme to be announced. Mark your calendar... you won't want to miss this!

**Sunday, November 18**

### PSTOS website now boasts 850+ pages!

Have you visited your PSTOS website lately? We now have over 850 pages of Northwest Theatre Organ facts and photos, many of them contributed by PSTOS members. Go to [www.pstos.org](http://www.pstos.org) and click on the "N.W. Theatre Organ History" button.

...Tom Blackwell, President

# Other NW Theatre Organ Events

## ◆ Kenyon Hall in West Seattle

Latest news can be found on the web at [www.kenyonhall.org](http://www.kenyonhall.org) or by email at [kenyonhall@earthlink.net](mailto:kenyonhall@earthlink.net)

## ◆ Lincoln Theatre in Mt. Vernon

Hear the Wurlitzer every Mon/Tue at 7PM & Fri/Sat/Sun at 5PM.

## ◆ Columbia River Organ Club

For info and latest news go to [www.croconline.org](http://www.croconline.org)

## ◆ Paramount Theatre *Silent Movie Mondays Fall Series* to feature **Charlie Chaplin**

All accompanied by Dennis James at the Paramount's original 4/21 Wurlitzer

**Monday, Sept. 10, 7PM**

*The Floorwalker, The Fireman and The Vagabond*

**Monday, Sept. 17, 7PM**

*One A.M., The Count and The Pawnshop*

**Monday, Sept. 24, 7PM**

*Behind the Screen, The Rink and Easy Street*

**Monday, Oct. 1, 7PM**

*The Cure, The Immigrant and The Adventurer*

## Clyde Hunnicut entertains at Auburn Medical Center

Member Clyde Hunnicut played a free program of keyboard favorites in the Atrium lobby at Auburn Regional Medical Center recently. Clyde has been undergoing successful therapy for emphysema twice weekly at the center, and volunteered to play this program as a tribute to his friends, the personnel who have worked with him in his therapy. They transported his keyboard to the hospital for the program. A son from Phoenix was visiting and attended the event.

Clyde and his wife moved to the area several years ago after a lifelong career as a musician in Arizona. He has entertained several times for PSTOS.

Nice work, Clyde!

## Be sure to join your PSTOS friends for a no-host lunch at **ARNOLD'S COUNTRY INN** in Yelm at 12:15 on July 21st before the Andy Crow program

Arnold's is famous in the Yelm area for impressive food, great variety, good prices and friendly servers. **Let us know if you'll be there so a room may be reserved for PSTOS folks.**

If you haven't yet reserved, please tell Barbara Graham you'll be there for lunch.

If you've already reserved, contact her to get your name(s) on the lunch list.

Even if you skip the Centralia Fox, you're welcome to join everyone for lunch. Skip dessert, however! Desserts and beverages will be served after Andy's program.

Arnold's is located five blocks east of Yelm's main intersection at 717 East Yelm Avenue

Check it out at [www.arnoldscountryinn.com](http://www.arnoldscountryinn.com)

## In Memoriam

### Mary Carson

Mary Carson peacefully passed away at her home in Caldwell, Idaho, May 27th. Mary and husband Bill were active in PSTOS for over 25 years. She helped Bill work on several organ restorations, including the organs at Pizza & Pipes, and their home organ. After Bill's death in 1981, she sold the home organ to Jerry Gould and moved to Centralia, where her mother lived. Later she relocated in Caldwell to be near her son and grandchildren.

Mary was also active in the Seattle Doll Club and was known nationally for her miniatures.

### Bill Epperson

Long time member, Bill Epperson, passed away May 17 from congestive heart failure. His last days were spent at home with hospice.

Bill with his wife, Mary, lived for many years in Puyallup.

Sincere PSTOS sympathy goes to Mary, other family members and friends.

## Have a van? Willing to volunteer? We need YOU at Becvar's on August 11!

Things can change overnight! The busy street in Kent where the Becvar home is located will get busier. Equipment is moving in to tear it up and enlarge it to five lanes! This project means there'll be no parking on the street for the fun PSTOS Member Cameo Extravaganza event planned on August 11.

Ah! But there's a solution! Arrangements have been made for everyone to park in a nearby school administration lot. It's a bit too far (and too challenging) to walk, so folks will be shuttled back and forth.

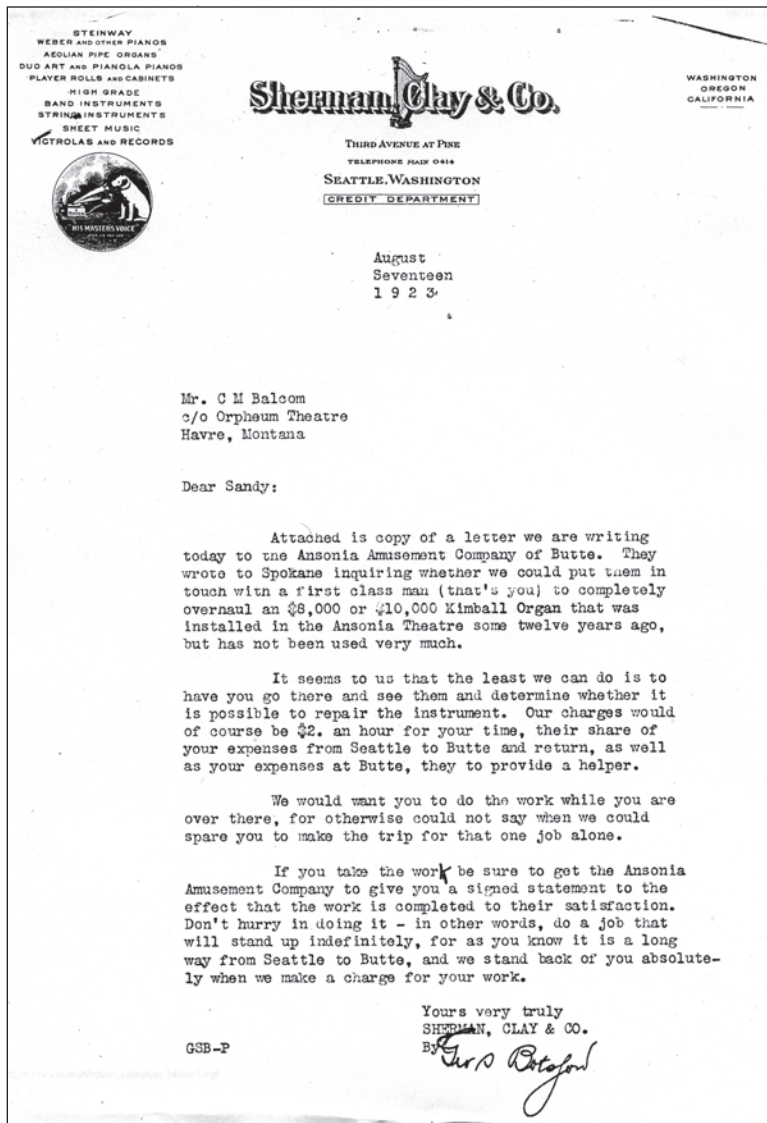
That's where YOU come in! We need two or three folks with vans to help out with the shuttling.

If you can help, please contact Tom Blackwell by e-mail at [tom@pstos.org](mailto:tom@pstos.org)

Many thanks for helping out. It takes a lot of volunteers to make everything work!

# Pages From The Past..

The second in a series of articles about Clyde M. "Sandy" Balcom—Mr. Pipe Organ on the West Coast—and the firm he built, Balcom and Vaughan Pipe Organs.



Letter of instruction and praise from Sherman & Clay, 1923

### **Balcom & Vaughan prospered, even during the Great Depression**

By 1932 Balcom & Vaughan had built a prospering firm. Together they launched a service organization which later became one of the largest service groups in North America. The two men, each with a helper, took care of 789 organs. Some of these were very odd instruments, most were on quarterly contracts, some oftener. Pop Vaughan was most conscientious in this field, always mailing post cards ahead to his customers so as to have the room properly heated when they arrived. The first church instrument of any size, contracted this way by the firm was in 1927, when the 3/29 Austin located in First Church of Christ Scientist, Seattle, was added to the list.

"Pop" Vaughan, after the decline of Morton sales, represented George Kilgen and Son in St. Louis, from about 1932–1947. A few of the Morton organs sold during this era were, in Seattle: the Roycroft (2/5); Music Box (2/5); Mayflower, later Music Hall (4/16); Madison (2/14); Pantages, later Roxy (3/10); McKinley Park (2/5); and the Liberty in Pasco,

Pantages and the Orpheum in Portland.

Mr. Balcom had taken on the representation of the Estey Company which lasted from 1934–1947, and for the ten years following, during 1948–1958, he represented the Reuter Organ Company in the Northwest and as far east as Montana.

### **Survival during World War II**

During World War II, materials were nearly impossible to obtain and although difficult, the firm managed to survive in even better shape than before. Although almost unbelievable, the entire business was operated from Mr. Balcom's residence, a smallish abode at 114 East 51st St., Seattle. The basement with its ever-growing collection of fine power tools, turned out a steady stream of parts for new and re-build work. In many instances, hundreds of pneumatics were sent by Mr. Vaughan and his helpers on the road to Seattle by Greyhound Stage Lines. These were picked up, completely recovered with such material as was available at the time, and again placed on the stage for delivery on location.



Sandy at work in a chamber in 1937

It is said that no one can succeed entirely alone. No matter how able and conscientious we are, we need the cooperation and friendly confidence of others. Bit by bit the firm of Balcom and Vaughan began, in the 1930s, to grow—slowly at first, but always steadily. One of the firm's oldest employees, J. Clark Rush, first met Mr. Balcom in 1924, and several other of the personnel had been with him over 30 years.

### **Bill Bunch joined Balcom & Vaughan in 1939**

In 1939, the well known organist of radio station KOL, Don

# Pages From The Past...continued

Isham, a lifelong friend of Balcom and Vaughan, introduced to Sandy Balcom a young organist, William J. Bunch. This young man, of great talent and mechanical ability, was to add materially to the vision and progress of the firm. He eventually became shop superintendent, demonstrator and coordinator, all rolled into one. His charm and ease in getting along with everyone soon won him a place of great respect and distinction in the firm. Bill Bunch indeed represented the firm in every respect for some 17 years, until such time as he was offered a position with the Boston firm of Aeolian Skinner.

In Boston he became superintendent of Plant #2, General Factory Superintendent, and later, Chief Engineer and Vice President of the organization.

## ***New building acquired in 1945***

The year 1945 marked the next step in Balcom and Vaughan's progress. That year the purchase of a building large enough and more suited to the business was negotiated and consummated. The firm consistently remained in the Green Lake District of Seattle, for the most part, among well kept residences, with ample parking area and one direct bus line to the center of the city. Two items of interest are connected with the purchase of this building. First it had originally been the old Meridian Theatre, in which a model 45 Fotoplayer was used. The second, after having been a garage for some time, it was used as a warehouse by a competitor, Mr. Charles W. Allen, since 1949 associated with the Wicks Organ Company. In order to facilitate the task of moving Mr. Allen from the premises with every vestige of good will, another warehouse close by was found, and Mr. Balcom paid Mr. Allen's rent there for a period of six months.

It was always the policy of the firm's president to put back into the firm everything possible to insure continued improvement and progress. Consequently the building at 5413 Meridian was immediately launched into a never-ending improvement program. The basement was completely dug out and cemented. The upper two floors were made acceptable in every way possible for the manufacture of fine pipe organs, including hardwood oak flooring, varnished and waxed, over the entire first floor area, and divided into suitable shops, offices, erecting rooms, windchest departments, etc. It soon became a building of which both the owners and the neighborhood were most proud.

## ***An unexpected tragedy***

No one could foresee the future when the Council of St. Paul's Evangelical and Reformed Church in Seattle contracted for a pipe organ. It was agreed that the small Wurlitzer located in the Raymond Theatre was ideal for their needs for the moment, with the substitution of one rank of pipes for a soft voice. In due time Ernest Smith and "Pop" Vaughan left for Raymond to remove the instrument from the theatre.

This job was to spell a tragedy for the firm. After a few days work, Mr. Vaughan returned to the hotel after dinner one evening to lie down. When Ernest Smith returned from a walk, he found the firm's partner had passed quietly away while resting in his hotel room. This was in 1947.

"Pop" Vaughan's death marked the end of a happy partnership of some 25 years. Although 12 years Sandy Balcom's senior, Pop loved the organ and everything connected with it in a most enthusiastic way. He was an efficient organizer and extremely well thought of by a great host of people. Indeed it spelled a grave loss for the Seattle firm.

## ***Electronic organs—a brand new era***

Almost simultaneously, the appearance of the post-war electronic instruments spelled the first of an association with several well known names. Through Sherman Clay, Mr. Balcom had been offered the Hammond dealership, which was refused, and afterwards a number of others. The Wurlitzer company had bought out the rights to the

Everett Orgatron and had begun to manufacture them under their own name.

Because of the legal (although not financial) partnership of the firm, it became necessary to raise a rather large amount of cash to buy out the interest now belonging to Mr. Vaughan's widow. This was done in very short order through the introduction of the electronic Wurlitzer and the super sales effort of Mr. Balcom. The instrument was put on display in the lobby of the University Methodist Temple, and was demonstrated by organist Walter A. Eichinger, FAGO.

This unexpected explosion into the electronic organ field brought about a decision. With the furnishing of a very lovely corner located in the Music Hall Theatre building downtown, Balcom and Vaughan took on several dealerships for pianos and organs, (photo below) as well as continuing the pipe organ business. The growing of this business brought about yet another decision in 1950—giving up the organ service business. This

was sold to four interested parties in four different areas, two in Seattle, one in Portland and one in the Utah area. The largest group of about 200 contracts went to the newly formed partners of Northwest Organ Service, J. Clark Rush and Del Feely. Mr. Rush had previously worked in service, and it removed just one man from the plant, Mr. Feely. Each obtained the services of a helper and thus began a partnership in the organ service business that lasted until January, 1965.

This new business had no connection with Balcom and Vaughan, although parts and material were occasionally ordered through the firm.

After 1950 the electronic business grew by leaps and bounds. This is not to say the pipe organ business stood still, far from it. For five years, from 1950 to 1955, the firm was approached by the Mormon Church to build organs in addition to their regular course of work. In this period, organs of every size were shipped in the firm's own trucks from Seattle to Utah, Idaho, New Mexico, California and Colorado. The firm finished an outstanding 3/36 organ for the Ogden State Center Tabernacle. Many of these instruments were opened by the Tabernacle organists from Salt Lake City, and servicemen were trained in Seattle to care for these organs. Occasional work continued to be sandwiched in for the Salt Lake area, including a 2/9 known as Opus 742, for Winder 6th Ward Chapel, Salt Lake City.

In all, some 83 instruments were completed in that time. Mr. Balcom asked for a temporary moratorium from the work just to catch up with some local needs.

...To be continued in the August Pipeline.



**PUGET SOUND THEATRE ORGAN SOCIETY**

Russ & Jo Ann Evans, Newsletter Editors  
6521 NE 191st ST  
Kenmore, WA 98028-3453

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Drive Directions to  
Centralia, Yelm  
and  
Olympia  
for the July 21st  
"Triple Play"  
Summer Organ Adventure**

These directions are provided for your reference. Because everyone is starting from a different location, it is recommended that you verify these directions against your own printed map or favorite Internet mapping site: MapQuest, Google Maps, Yahoo Maps, etc.



**The three addresses are:**

- Centralia Fox Theatre: 119 S Tower Ave., Centralia, WA 98531
- St. Columban Church Hall: 506 1st St S., Yelm, WA 98597
- Andy Crow's House: 3259 Capitol Blvd., Olympia, WA 98507

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and don't leave home  
without it!**

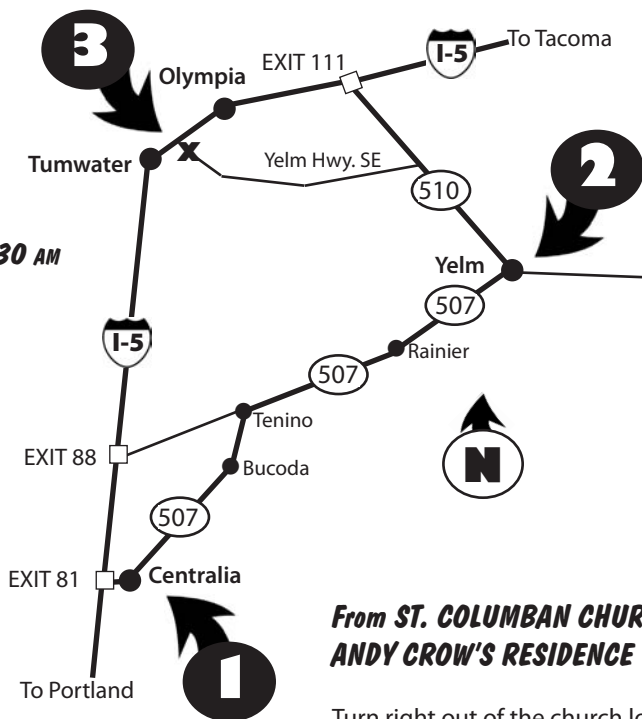
**To the CENTRALIA FOX THEATRE, 10:30 AM**

**From I-5**

Take exit #81 and turn east on MELLEN ST/WA 507. Continue on WA-507 for a short distance to ALDER ST. Turn slightly left on Alder and drive for .3 mile. Slight right on W. CHERRY ST. Go .3 mile and turn left onto S. TOWER AVE/WA-507 N. Go .3 mile to the Fox. Park on the street.

**From the CENTRALIA FOX to SAINT COLUMBAN CHURCH HALL, 1:30 PM**

Start out going NORTH on S TOWER AVE / WA-507 N and drive .9 mile to W 6TH ST / WA-507. Turn left one block, then RIGHT onto N. Pearl which is also WA-507 N. Drive 25.7 miles on Hwy 507, passing through Bucoda, Tenino and Rainier to Yelm. Arrive at St. Columban Hall, 506 1st St South in Yelm. Park in the church lot.



**If you begin the day at Yelm's ST. COLUMBAN CHURCH**

**FROM I-5 Southbound**, take exit #111 MARVIN RD / HWY 510 (Between Tacoma and Olympia) onto Marvin Rd. Drive 1.5 miles, crossing Martin Way and Steilacoom Rd. You will reach an intersection where you will turn left, **staying on Hwy 510**. Continue on Hwy 510 East to the traffic light in downtown Yelm. Turn RIGHT on 1st St. S., which is Hwy 507. The Parish Hall is on the left a short distance from the traffic light. It is a large building set back from the highway. Park in the church lot.  
**FROM I-5 Northbound**, use Exit 88 and follow map at left.

**From ST. COLUMBAN CHURCH HALL to ANDY CROW'S RESIDENCE**

Turn right out of the church lot onto 1st St So. toward Mosman Ave SW. Turn LEFT at WA-510/Yelm Ave W. and drive 6.4 miles to the intersection with Yelm Hwy SE. Turn LEFT and drive 6.7 miles. Turn LEFT to stay on Yelm Hwy. SE. and drive another 4.1 miles. The road angles to the right and becomes Cleveland Ave. SE. Continue on Cleveland for 1.1 miles to E. Emerson St. Turn LEFT at E Emerson St. This is a very short street which intersects immediately with Capitol Blvd. Park on the street in any available spot. Andy's home is just around the corner to the left at 3259 Capitol Blvd.