

Longest Tenured Club in Oregon Celebrates 99th Annual Banquet

By Gina Perkins

On Feb. 13, 1916 Belle Fisher founded the Rock Creek / Muddy Creek Mutual Improvement Club which celebrated its 99th Annual Fall banquet Sunday, Oct. 25 in the Fellowship Hall of the Haines United Methodist Church. The Mutual Improvement Club was, and still remains, a social and service club for rural women. Philanthropic, community-minded and home-oriented, the Mutual Improvement Club is the longest tenured club in the State of Oregon.

In addition to Belle Fisher, there were 12 charter members in 1916 which included: Cora Fisher, Grace Perkins, Ella Brown, Francis Brown, Lizzy Caster, Electra

Fisher, Georgia Hoberg, Nannie Hoberg, CJ Osborne, Nena Perkins, Edith Polley and Cornelia Potter.

For many years, membership was limited only to women living in Rock Creek or Muddy Creek. That requirement no longer exists and members are from throughout the community. The club also met twice monthly for years, but now meets monthly. Beginning in 1943 and continuing until 2007, the Club partnered with OSU Extension Service to offer members education, skills, and information on a broad topic of homemaking skills.

Following president Ruth Cole's welcome and introduction, several people spoke about what being a member in the Mutual Improvement Club has meant to them.

Mac Kerns was asked to give the response and shared that his family had moved to the Haines area in the late 1930s. He said there are two ways go get involved in a new community: one was to have kids



Belle Fisher / Photo courtesy of Mutual Improvement Club

and the other was to join an organization like Mutual Improvement Club. Kerns complimented the excellent service work of the women throughout the years.

Evelyne Fisher of Haines said she has been a member for 75 years. She shared history from the Club's archives about the 25th Banquet which was held at the Hotel Baker with 100 in attendance. She noted that founder Belle Fisher remarked at that time how amazing it was the club had existed for 25 years. Evelyne wondered how she might feel knowing it was well on its way to 100.

"Perseverance is the keynote to success," stated Fisher, who then added, "Friendship is the cement to hold our club together."

Marjory Peck also shared several thoughts and stated that on Founders Day in 2016, members can be proud of being part of a club which has remained vital and dedicated to its purpose

Shetler who played guitar after the dinner catered by Trish and Chuck Everson.

Boyer, whose mother, Joann, was a long time member who passed away in 2005 at the age of 96, reminisced by saying, "We'd get out of grade school at Muddy Creek and we'd walk to wherever the club meeting was."

Lynn Perkins, whose grandmother, Nena Perkins was a charter member, said that he remembered one meeting in particular as a little boy where he was fascinated with the baby chicks in the hostess's basement.

Members honored Betty Vanderwall who passed away earlier this year. She had been a faithful member for years and was known for her beautiful singing voice and exceptional cooking ability. She and her husband, Bert, often sang duets together and were members of the last graduating class of Muddy Creek School in 1947.

Community service projects have been, and continue to be, an integral role of the Mutual Improvement Club since its inception. They have always supported the Muddy Creek and Haines School projects and have made hundreds, if not thousands, of pies and popcorn balls throughout the decades. They also have faithfully sent packages to soldiers from the area. Their 2015 project list alone has included:

- Sponsorship of the 4-H Livestock Junior Showmanship Trophy
- "We Are Thinking of You!" care packages for local military personnel stationed abroad and within the U.S.A.
- Donations to: Haines Food Bank, Neighborhood Watch, Haines School 'Hawk Store', Sierra Bingham Medical Fund, Canine Companions for Independence, Ronald McDonald House, and Save One Life
- Warm Coats for Riikki's Room
- Over 150 popcorn balls made for the Haines Grade School Holiday Program
- Gifts for children in the

- Angel Tree Gift program
- Homemade cookies/baked goods for causes such as Red Cross Blood Drive and Friends of Haines
- Volunteer hours at the Eastern Oregon Museum and in the Reading For Literacy In Schools Program

Following the dinner, program and entertainment, the 2016 installation of officers was held. It is fitting that Evelyne Fisher, having been a member for three quarters of a century, will lead the Mutual Improvement Club into their 100th year as president.

During her speech, Fisher reminded members to look ahead and be thankful. "We still have a future," she said.

New residents to the area, Helen Marsh and Lori Thompson will serve as co-vice presidents, Dotty Miles will serve as the Secretary / Treasurer, Historian is Ruth Cole, and Mary Rider is in charge of Hospitality. If you are interested in joining this organization, contact Dotty Miles at 541-377-5795.

Those in attendance of the 99th Annual Fall Mutual Improvement Club Banquet included: Mary Boyer, Mary Rider, Florance Mahugh, Marjory Peck, Viola Perkins, Edgar and Elsie Newman, Cliff and Debbie Cole, Evelyne Fisher, John and Linda Berg, Jacqueline and Virgil Berger and their youngest daughter Cheryl Anderson, Betty Kuhl and daughter, Barbara Kuhl, Lynn and Gina Perkins, Helen Marsh, Valerie Russell, Lori and Ren Thompson, Sue Richard, Beth Bigelow, Dotty and Myron Miles, Tina Edwards, Mac Kerns, Janie Shetler and Duane Boyer. Cliff Cole gave the invocation, Myron Miles provided interesting history on the Star Spangled Banner and led the flag salute. Debbie Cole read two poems, one of which she wrote in honor of the occasion. Lori Thompson, Helen Marsh, and Mary Rider decorated for the event. Viola Perkins secured the caterer, Trish Everson who, along with her husband, Chuck, provided a delicious meal which was also beautifully plated.

Spend Halloween at the Frontier in Haines

Adults 21 and over can enjoy a fun time at the Frontier in Haines. There will be music (no cover charge), a costume contest, horror movie trivia, scavenger hunts and cash prizes.



"99 Years And More Ahead"

By Debbie Cole
Oct. 24, 2015



Photo by Gina Perkins

Debbie Cole

It's been over 99 years Since our club got its start And, as we look back and ahead, It's still close to our hearts. We've reached out to help When we knew of a need To help our neighbors God's will to heed. We've climbed many mountains Of various sizes With determination and courage That brought some surprises. In spite of our size, We still have the drive

To move onward and upward And keep Club alive. In times of crisis or illness We've tried to be there In person to help, or at least Offering prayer. The military, Red Cross, school, And community as a whole Have all been important In reaching our goal. We're a service organization And proud of it, too. We hope that our existence Is important to you. As we face the century mark, And start looking back, It's pride and accomplishment we acknowledge And not what we lack. We have a diversity of talents With which we've been blest; By using them all gladly, Our Club is the best!

(written for 99th Mutual Improvement Club banquet)



Photo by Gina Perkins

Evelyne Fisher

and service to the community for 100 years.

Duane Boyer was another one of the handful of men present. He played the banjo and sang with Janie



Photo by Gina Perkins

Duane Boyer

Honoring the Past Presidents of Rock Creek/ Muddy Creek Mutual Improvement Club

1916-19 Belle Fisher*	1939-40 J. Hobbs	1961 E. Newman	1980-81 M. Maxwell	2000-01 E. Fisher
1920-21 Cora Fisher*	1941 R. Lillard	1962-63 V. Gard	1982-83 G. Kirkland	2002 T. Edwards
1922-23 Grace Perkins*	1942-43 A. Loennig	1964 N. Stephens	1984 T. Pritchard	2003-04 M. Boyer
1924 A. Angell	1944-45 E. Loennig	1965-66 R. Stephens	1985 B. Vanderwall	2005 J. Johnson
1925-26 F. Coleman	1946-47 L. Bond	1967 B. McCullough	1986 J. Boyer	2006-08 M. Rider
1927 E. Badsky	1948-49 J. Boyer	1968 I. Daniels	1987 D. Leggett	2009 M. Boyer
1928 E.lla Brown*	1950 D. Leggett	1969 H. Fisher	1988 N. Shull	2010-2012 S. Maxwell
1929 V. Spense	1951 J. Brownell	1970-72 H. Proebstal	1989 V. Perkins	2013-15 R. Cole
1930-31 B. Kooch	1952 V. Perkins	1973 M.J. Jacobs	1990 M. Peck	
1932 G. Perkins	1953-54 H. Fisher	1974 J. Griffith	1991 D. Boyer	
1933 N. Polley	1955 D. Green	1975-76 I. Fisher	1992-93 L. Seymour	
1934 G. Scott	1956-57 B. McCullough	1977 T. Jackson	1994-95 D. Rosmond	
1935-36 H. Osborne	1958 T. Pritchard	1978 E. Fisher	1996-97 E. Newman	
1937-38 F. Christenson	1959-60 B. Boesch	1979 M. Peck	1998-99 K. Thee	
				*Denotes original members along with members: Francis Brown, Lizzy Caster, Electra Fisher, Georgia Hoberg, Nannie Hoberg, C.J Osborne, Nena Perkins, Edith Polley and Cornelia Potter

Come get a sneak peek of the season at our Annual Christmas Open House at *The Sycamore Tree* Thursday, Nov. 5 • 4-7 p.m. Friday & Saturday, Nov. 6 & 7 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Featuring local artist: Terri Axness

Copper Belt Wine Tasting

Don't miss our **DOOR PRIZES, DISCOUNT FOR EARLY SHOPPERS, and FOOD SAMPLINGS**

Make Christmas 2015 one to remember, and get started now at the Sycamore Tree in Baker City!

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