



Clark County 1929???

No, this photo was taken by Larry Easter two days ago almost in the middle of Vancouver, along the Burnt Bridge Creek Trail near Andresen Road looking west toward Devine Road. Easter is a retired Clark College professor and former violinist for the Vancouver Symphony.

Lodging space increased but occupancy rates went up too

Business improved for most local hotel and motel operators in 2005.

Although the number of hotel and motel rooms in Clark County grew by nearly 10 percent last year with the opening of the 226-room Hilton Vancouver Washington, the average occupancy rate for all lodging establishments also increased, says **Kim Bennett**, president and CEO of the Southwest Washington Convention and Visitors Bureau.

According to the bureau's March *Tourism Update*, the local hotel industry reported average hotel occupancy for 2005 of 57.9 percent, a 3.6 percent increase over 2004. Moreover, average lodging revenue increased 19.7 percent over 2004. This represented the second highest increase in the state, according to the state Department of Revenue.

The Hilton in downtown Vancouver, near one of the community's top tourist attractions, Esther Short Park, is one of the reasons for the local increase in hotel room occupancy. The convention and visitors bureau is successfully marketing increased meeting and hotel-room space.

Tourism in Clark County is pretty big business according to the numbers. Last year, tourism generated \$320 million in direct visitor spending, \$84 million in travel-related job earnings, and \$23 million in local and state taxes, according to Bennett.

Clark County offers visitors 30 lodging establishments, only four of which are smaller than 20 rooms each. A total of 2,440 rooms are available for tourists and conventioners.

Last year the bureau answered 28,071 individual visitor inquiries, according to Bennett.

What does Vancouver have to offer visitors? Bennett is quick to answer: Location. Attractions include Mount St. Helens, the Columbia Gorge, the Historic Reserve, the ocean, mountains and Portland.

The number one local tourist attraction is the Historic Reserve. Esther Short Park and the Farmers Market are high on the list, too. But, Bennett says, there are other places visitors like to see, such as the Grist Mill near Amboy and the Pendleton Woolen Mills in Washougal.

To see what potential visitors see when they go to the bureau's website, go to

www.southwestwashington.com.

Molly Gloss to headline library foundation fair

Molly Gloss, award-winning Oregon historical novelist, is the luncheon speaker for the Fort Vancouver Regional Library District Foundation's Friends Fair, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, April 29, in the Water Resources Education Center, 4600 SE Columbia Way. The luncheon is at noon.

Gloss's books include *The Jump-Off Creek*, *Wild Life*, and *Outside the Gates*. The luncheon is at noon.

There is no admission or luncheon charge for members of Friends of the Fort Vancouver Regional Library. Non-members will be charged \$10 for the luncheon. For further information, call, **Casandra Franzen, 699-8846.**

Calendar

Clark College honors **Robert M. Schaefer**, class of 1950, with its 2006 Outstanding Alumni Award during a 6 p.m. dinner ceremony this evening in Gaiser Hall. ☞ Storyteller **Will Hornyak** entertains with humorous stories this evening at 7 p.m. in the Water Resources Education Center, 4600 SE Columbia Way. The free performance is sponsored by the Clark County Department of Public Works and the City of Vancouver. ☞ Curtain time for Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, directed by **Dennis Fitzpatrick** and produced by Vancouver's OnStage Productions, is 7:30 p.m. this evening in the Columbia Arts Center, 400 W Evergreen Boulevard.

Thursday headlines from at home and around the world

Thursday on the air

Clark County Focus (4/6)—4:30 p.m. CVTV

Clark County Close Up (4/2)—5 p.m. CVTV

City Minutes (4/2)—5:30 p.m. CVTV

Building a Healthy Washington and Oregon Economy (3/16)—6 p.m. CVTV

Texas at Seattle Mariners (live)—7 p.m. FSN, KFX

Former Attorney General John Ashcroft (4/12)—7:30 p.m. CVTV

Bravo! Vancouver: St. Paul - An Oratorio—9:30 p.m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the weather

Barbara Miller taking on new chores. ☞ **Kathleen Bulloch** making phone calls. ☞ **Nancy Simmons** getting another mention. ☞ **Cheri Cole's** fetes beginning. ☞ **Nancy Olson** generating the facts. ☞ **Jeff Williams** understanding as usual. ☞ **Thursday**, starts out nicely but late showers follow, 66. **Friday**, possible early showers, late sun breaks, 62. **Saturday**, should be dry and mostly sunny, 70.