

HISTORY OF MOUNT VERNON ELKS LODGE #1604

Mount Vernon Elks Lodge was instituted March 31, 1937. Sponsored by Everett Lodge #479, the installation was conducted by the Officers of Port Townsend Lodge #317 with 34 Charter Members present.

The first meeting was held over a sparkling facility, a local café. A later move took us to the O'Neil Building. Sometime later a beautiful cocktail lounge was added. It was at this facility that women were admitted for the first time.

On June 8, 1954, Exalted Ruler, Oliver Noce, appointed a feasibility committee to study the possibility of building a new facility. Their investigation showed that the Lodge had \$75,000 in assets, and they recommended proceeding with the building project. On May 15, 1955, the Lodge voted 118 to 59 lodge in favor of the proposal. Building Bonds totaling \$225,000 were soon sold. Howard Hovind was employed as architect and Phil Anderson as contractor. Construction started in mid-1956; the first meeting was held August 6, 1957. Exalted Ruler, Cornelius Van Lierop, presided over the grand opening September 13-14, 1957. The mortgage was burned May 20, 1969.

In the late 90's the Lodge was sold to Christ the King Church. While looking for a place to build we were meeting at a warehouse on Pease Road. From there we moved to the Shamrock Tavern. August 2002 saw us moving into our present building at 2120 Market Street in Mount Vernon.

In March 2017 we celebrated the 80th Anniversary of our Lodge. Following are some highlights of those years:

1937 – During the first year, Bellingham, Anacortes, Everett, and Ballard lodges visited quite frequently. The minutes of these sessions were terse, but the legends of these visits belie the briefness of these meetings.

1939 – The Lodge purchased its first liquor license for \$300.

1944 - As his first official act as Exalted Ruler, Brother Alfred McBee announced that the price of bourbon, brandy and rum drinks were advanced to 35 cents due to an increase in taxes.

1952 - The Lodge voted to allow the Lions Club to have their dinner meetings on Mondays. We also hosted a Christmas party for children at the different theaters with 1,535 children attending.

1957 – The first was held in the new building. The Little League Park was started.

1963 – A By-Laws change was made to the initiation fee from \$25 to \$35.

1964 - Linda Lou Johnson of Mount Vernon was #1 in the State Youth Scholarship contest.

In 2015-2016 we received the ALL AMERICAN LODGE award.

At its peak, the Lodge boasted a membership of 3,200. Today we number over 600. Still, projects that were started long ago are still supported by the Lodge today. They are Elks National Foundation, Hoop Shoot, and Washington State Elks Therapy Program. We sponsor the Elks Scholarship Program in our high schools, a local Boy Scout troupe, a “Read a book, See the movie” program with our Library, and the local Back-to-School Back Pack program.