

CODEWORD

Washington Association of Code Enforcement Newsletter

Fall 1999

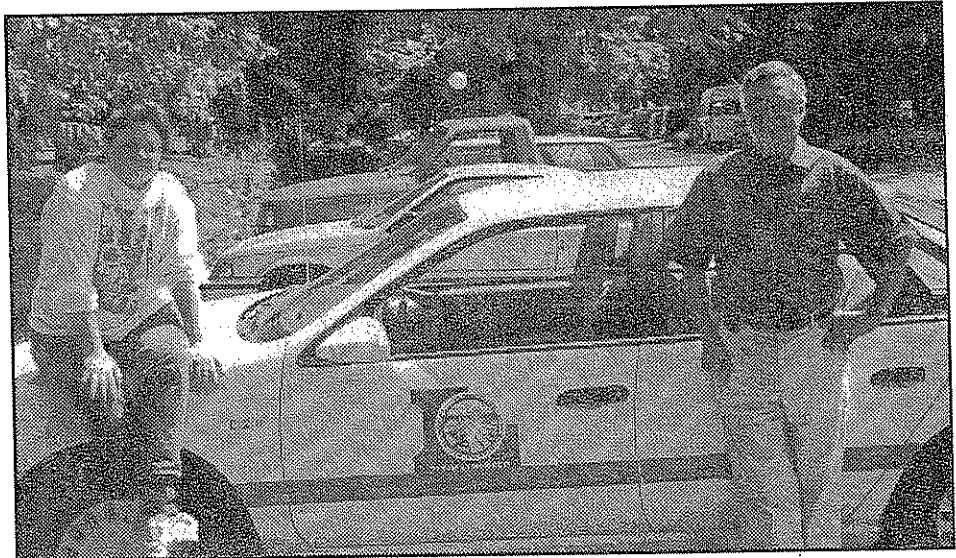
Close Up on Lynnwood

Peter Van Giesen, City of Lynnwood Nuisance Abatement Officer

Ever meet someone who, shortly after you begin talking to him, you can tell is one of those rare guys whose easy-going, "don't-sweat-the-small-stuff" sense of humor and confidence quickly put you at ease? Then, as your conversation progresses, you realize that his comfortable disposition comes not only from a natural love of life, but from having had a broad range of experiences, and, thus, a keen appreciation for what matters in life along with the well deserved respect of peers and colleagues. Well, the city of Lynnwood has just such a guy in Nuisance Abatement Officer, Peter Van Giesen.

Peter came out of retirement five years ago to accept the Lynnwood post. Prior to that, he had always worked on the other side of the fence, so to speak. In other words, he'd had a career in the private sector, which included being a builder, developer and architectural engineer. But, once retired, says Peter, "I was always hanging around my old colleagues who told me, 'For God sakes, get a job!' I had never worked for the government before," explains Peter, with a chuckle of irony. He recalls the surprise of some of his colleagues, people like Frank Wycoff of Snohomish County. "He used to check my plans when I was a developer," he says. Some of the plans included, among other things, several residences in the once brand-new city of Mill Creek. He was also involved in the development of the community of Sudden Valley. Now he finds it ironic that, in his new career, he has actually been involved in condemning apartments he once helped to develop.

Now, says Peter, he is able to use his considerable and varied background to make a difference in the city of Lynnwood. This community, just a few miles north of Seattle up



Ruth Ross, Zoning Code Enforcement Officer and Peter Van Giesen, Nuisance Abatement Officer.

the I-5 corridor, is home to some 33,000 with a daytime population of 150,000 shoppers, students and workers. Known for its abundance of retail stores and lacking any discernible downtown core, Peter says, jokingly, that "The heart and soul of Lynnwood is Fred Meyer." He explains that there are a lot of enterprising folks in Lynnwood, including hundreds of home occupations. "Lynnwood is a place where you come and try to make it," says Peter. "I have a lot of respect for that."

While there are certainly several established neighborhoods in Lynnwood with a sense of community identity, much of this busy city's population is transient. Two thirds of Lynnwood's housing is rental, the majority of it being constructed during the Boeing Boom of the late sixties, says Peter. That fact alone, coupled with a diverse ethnic population, is more than enough to keep him, along with

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Ruth Ross, who handles much of the commercial enforcement, very, very busy. "We often team up," he explains. But residential code enforcement is only one among many duties Peter handles in the city that he says "does not sleep". He also handles restaurant complaints - ("If it stinks or crawls, it's mine") - in the town that boasts the highest concentration of fast food restaurants in the state. As a licensed land surveyor, he is often called upon to settle property line disputes.

He carries a police badge "which allows me to exercise certain limited police powers", he explains, "I get a lot of support from the

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Don't forget to send in your:

Executive Board Nominations Ballot

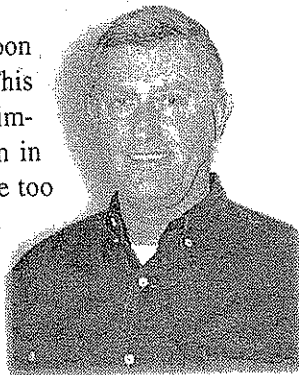
W.A.C.E.
Fall Conference '99
Sept. 22-24, 1999
Iceicle Inn, Leavenworth
(Sign-Up form on page 3)



President's Message

A few words from W.A.C.E. President Jim Gough

The summer is passing quickly and soon our Fall Conference will be convening in Leavenworth. This year's subject, the Endangered Species Act, and all that implies, is a timely and critical issue with any jurisdiction in Washington where salmon spawn. I'm not sure there are too many where that doesn't occur. Our presenters are subject experts who will cover every aspect of the ESA, from Federal to local. I recommend highly your participation.



This year will be unique in that we will be having the elections for the WACE officers during the Fall Conference. All officer positions are open, from President to Sergeant at Arms. This issue of the Code Word has information on nominations and voting. Every member will have the opportunity to nominate and vote, this year, not just those attending the conference. Even if you are not able to be with us at Leavenworth, I encourage you to participate in the process by nominating and/or voting by mail. Those who are at the conference will be able to vote as long as they haven't already voted by mail.

This will be my last message to the membership as president. It has been an eventful 2 _ years. We have had excellent membership involvement with the Fall Conferences and educational meetings. We have attempted to meet the needs of the membership and to advance the profession of Code Enforcement. I feel that WACE has become an excellent forum for Code Enforcement. The networking and common problem solving has been invaluable.

I would also like to recognize the dedicated work of our Executive Committee. The officers and board members have put in many hours of work to continue the success of WACE. Each has contributed to the Association with blood, sweat and tears. I feel very grateful that WACE has had such a fine group of people working in behalf of the members. I wish to thank them for their time, efforts and commitment.

I would also like to thank the members of WACE for supporting the Association during our tenure. It has been gratifying to me to represent such a professional, ethical and determined group. I will continue to be anxious to hear from you and will be looking forward to supporting WACE in the future. I have accepted a seat on the Certification Committee for AACE and will be supporting the continued success WACE has had with the AACE Certification.

Thanks again, for your confidence and support.

Jim Gough, WACE President

Kathy will be missed

Katherine Elaine Kohl, former Code Compliance Officer, for the City of Yakima, died in June after a 2 year battle with lung cancer.

Kathy was the first WACE member to represent the City of Yakima, and the first female ICBO certified zoning inspector east of the Cascades in Washington State. Kathy later became certified in building, plumbing & mechanical codes and was promoted to Building Code Inspector for the city of Yakima. Due to her failing health, Kathy transferred from her position as Building Code Inspector, and held the position of Land Use Planner upon her death.

Kathy was a wonderful friend & co-worker, and I am happy to say that I had the opportunity to let her know how very special she was to me... (Spring Robinson)

W • A • C • E

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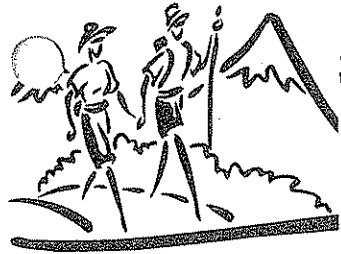
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CELEBRATE TEN YEARS OF W.A..C.E.!!!



W.A.C.E. Fall Conference '99

Sept. 22-24, 1999 • Icicle Inn, Leavenworth



The tradition continues! Meet your colleagues once again for the annual retreat to picturesque Leavenworth. Celebrate W.A.C.E.'s tenth anniversary with a bit of professional development (ie; great seminars and field trips) along with a little personal rejuvenation (aka; fun!). Check out the itinerary and then check in with the Icicle Inn for your reservations & help.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 22

Evening Check-in and Registration

THURSDAY, SEPT. 23

- Informal get-acquainted get-together in Brenda Woods' suite. Look for details at check-in.
- If you come in early on Thursday, bracelets for activities next door at the Icicle Junction will be only \$9. This includes unlimited use of bumper boats, train, mini golf and tokens for the arcade. (Just to give you an idea of what a good deal this is; one boat ride is \$2.50)

THURSDAY SEMINARS

- 8:30 a.m. **BASIC 101 OF ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT:** Presented by a Washington State Attorney. The liability of each jurisdiction to enforce this law: Even if it's not your responsibility to enforce this, it is your responsibility to recognize when it is being violated and to know who to report it to.
- 11:00 a.m. **BUSINESS MEETING** Candidates will be announced and current W.A.C.E. business discussed.

12:00 Noon **LUNCH** (and possible extension of business meeting)

1:30 a.m. **FIELD TRIP TO ICICLE CREEK FISH HATCHERY & STREAM** – Speakers from the Icicle Creek Watershed Council and National Fish Hatchery Staff will share the story and demonstrate the results of the National Fish Hatchery Study which was conducted by Washington Trout and the Icicle Creek Watershed Council under a federal grant. This study successfully redirected the salmon, which had been previously unable to get upstream.

THURSDAY NIGHT DINNER, CASINO NIGHT AND AUCTION

Following dinner at the Icicle Junction, we will once again host a Casino Night at Carroll's Club. An evening of gambling with "play" money will be followed by an auction. Each jurisdiction or individual attending the conference brings an auction item on which we use our winnings to bid. Last year's attendees can attest to the uproarious fun that is the result.

Don't miss this event!

FRIDAY SEPT. 24

MORNING BALLOT BOX AND ELECTION COMMITTEE TABLE OPEN FOR VOTING

Ballots will be cast all morning for W.A.C.E. elections. The ballot boxes will be open until the close of the morning break.

FRIDAY SEMINARS AND ACTIVITIES

- 9:00 a.m. Effect of Endangered Species Act on Local Jurisdictions Federal, State and Local representatives will discuss the impact of this federally mandated law. Though it comes from the National Marine Fisheries Service, it is passed down to local jurisdictions to enforce it. Even though you may not be the final inspector, you may often be the first one on site. Find out what you need to know to meet your obligations in enforcing the E.S.A.
- 12:00 Noon Lunch and Election Announcements
- 1:00 p.m. Most Amazing Cases

Don't miss the session that has become a W.A.C.E. favorite! Bring pictures on a photo board to share your story about one or more of the following:

**Worst Case • Most Dangerous Case
Biggest Gross Out Case • Funniest Case
Most Unusual, Etc.**

These story boards will be for display, discussion and interaction and should be displayed throughout the conference. Also, if you have a case that you are having problems, bring it to the floor to share with your colleagues. This is your chance to cash in on the wealth of experience that exists among W.A.C.E. members. We will then vote on the cases and present certificates in each category.

Make Your Room Reservation Now!

phone (509) 548-7000, fax (509) 548-7050

Identify yourself with W.A.C.E. to get low conference room rates. (Room rates not included in conference fee)

Reservations must be made by August 22, 1999. Don't wait: you can always cancel a reservation, but if you wait, the Icicle Inn will begin to give away rooms to the public.

single, 1 bed, 1 person: ... \$74.00	deluxe, 2 bedrm, 2 people:\$90.00
doubles, 1 bed, 2 people: \$79.00	king suite: \$125.00
twin, 2 beds, 2 people: \$84.00	mini suite, 2 queens: \$109.00

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

"Fall Conference"

September 22 – 24, 1999 • Icicle Inn • Leavenworth

Name _____ Title _____

Jurisdiction _____

Address _____

Phone (____) _____ Fax (____) _____

Purchase Order # _____

Amount enclosed (*check one*)

\$175, WACE member

\$220, non-member

Registration fee, per person, includes breakfast, lunch and dinner on Thursday; breakfast and lunch on Friday (room rate not included).

Mail payment and registration form to:

Yvonne Smith, WACE Treasurer
Zoning Inspector, City of Vancouver,
PO Box 1995, Vancouver, WA
98668-1995



(continued from front page)

...Close Up on Lynnwood

police department. If anything gets remotely dicey, they're right there to back me up." Recently, that came in pretty handy. A Lynnwood resident threatened him, claiming he possessed more firepower than the Lynnwood Police Department. In fact, things like survivalist and terrorist literature were found in his residence along with his cache of weapons. The incident received its fair share of press coverage and the suspect was incarcerated on a million dollars bail.

While Lynnwood could use three or four more of Peter and Ruth, they both manage to accomplish a great deal. As far as managing his enormous caseload, Peter says, "I pick and choose. There are some people I could make a career out of, but it's like raking leaves. The stuff keeps coming back! I pick the cases where a little nudge or a letter will make the difference."

Making a difference is what keeps Peter interested. "I really do enjoy the challenge. I like to resolve different situations." He enjoys working with Lynnwood's diverse immigrant population. "I'm an immigrant from Holland myself," he explains, having emigrated from his home country at age 21. "I'm always interested in people's backgrounds and their ethnic situations." He also enjoys helping elderly residents in difficult situations. In fact, he does a volunteer stint as an ombudsman for the state of Washington monitoring long term elderly care facilities. Sometimes the job, he says, just "takes a little bit of sympathy." It also takes a bit of positive action. He has authored several brochures covering such subjects as solving neighborhood disputes and descriptions of city functions and resources. Additionally he is working with the police department and the landlord association to provide "landlord school". His goals for Lynnwood include creating a stable living environment where more people can own their homes, developing standards for multi-family housing (condos), and creating a sense of neighborhood in various residential areas. "It is a team effort," he points out, but "having the police and politicians behind you are great ingredients."

If bringing a little humor to his work day is one of his success secrets "It's essential!" he asserts. "A lot of these things are not life or death", leaving work behind is as well. "I spend as much time on Puget Sound as possible," says this boating enthusiast, "and my wife Susan keeps me busy in the garden." His philosophy? "Life is like dessert."

Enjoy it every day!"

Comment *By Jim Gough*

Once again there is a case which should make all of us pause and reflect if our personal "officer safety" procedures are adequate to meet any and all circumstances we may encounter. I refer to the citizen Peter Van Giesen, Code Enforcement Officer for Lynnwood, encountered earlier this year. (See cover story for more details).

I can say that I have not always followed the most prudent procedures when investigating complaints, but I can say that times have changed and it is *always* better to err on the side of caution. Within the last few years, according to the AACE Perspective, there were forty Code Compliance Officers killed in 1997 and 7200 assaulted. We always need reminding that we have a greater exposure to violence based upon the type of job we do. It is time that we all keep our guard up and be wary of those situations or people who could cause us harm. I think that we spend more time worrying whether or not we will be "attacked" through a lawsuit than we spend thinking about physical danger.

The classes we had in Vancouver during our educational conference dealt with how to deal with the mentally ill, and how to respond if attacked physically. It behooves us all to stay current on the ways to protect ourselves, to establish procedures, which limits our exposure or peril, and to maintain that awareness that is necessary for our well being. Let me know your thoughts or experiences.



CODEWORD

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