

## 2015 BMHS Officers

**President:**  
Paula Moisio

**Vice-President:**  
John Hutchens

**Secretary:**  
Tara Brenner

**Treasurer:**  
Randy Barton

**Directors:**  
Rose Engelbrite  
Shellie McLeod  
Jim Peterson

Newsletter - Diane Longanecker

## The Palus Museum



426 East Main Street  
Dayton, Washington

### Visit Both BMHS Museums!

**Fridays 1 pm to 4 pm**

**Saturdays 1 pm to 4 pm**

**March – December**

Or Year Round By Appointment Call:  
Rose Engelbrite

**(509)386-7348**

## Smith Hollow School



113 North Front Street  
Dayton, Washington

## Blue Mountain Heritage Society

— Meets Monthly —

• 2nd Thursday – 5:00 pm

• Smith Hollow School

Dayton, Washington

*Everyone is  
Welcome!*

# BMHS Mourns Loss of Key Founder



**Elizabeth Kay Thorn**

July 24, 1948 - February 6, 2015

Elizabeth Kay Thorn, lifelong resident of Dayton and civic-minded volunteer, died Friday, Feb. 6, 2015, at the Spokane Hospice House. She was 66. Private family services have been held and committal was in the Dayton City Cemetery.

Elizabeth was born July 24, 1948, in Dayton to Dr. Edward J. and Elsa (Ahonon) Harri. She grew up in Dayton, attended Willamette University, and graduated from Washington State University with a degree in political science, after which she undertook advanced studies in early childhood development, also at WSU. She married Wilfred Eric Thorn in Walla Walla on Christmas Eve of 1969. They settled on the family farm near Dayton in 1972 and pursued minimum disturbance farming, focusing on conserving and enhancing the soil, and raising natural beef.

Elizabeth kept busy as a loving wife to Eric and devoted mother to her daughter, Elissa. She also found time and energy for a variety of community projects. Elizabeth led Sunday school classes, helped develop an

award-winning gifted student program for Dayton schools and taught in that program as a volunteer teacher. While her daughter was in school, Elizabeth served as a driver and chaperone for school, church and 4-H events.

Elizabeth served as a board director and secretary of the Columbia County Courthouse Restoration Project, helped archive photos and memorabilia for the Dayton Historical Depot Society, and was a founding member of the Blue Mountain Heritage Society. She led BMHS as president from 1999-2007 and served as a board member continuously since 1999. Since 2002, she was the exhibit chair and director of the Palus Museum. She used her experience and skills for administration, program development (including interactive exhibits), research, grant writing, archiving, fundraising and coordinating preservation efforts for the Smith Hollow School.

In an ongoing oral history project, Elizabeth interviewed over 60 people to capture their home, school, farming, military and community service experiences on tape and on film. As co-editor of a three-volume history of Columbia County, she collected and verified primary materials, worked with authors and reviewed the final presentation. Her care for others and high expectations will be part of her lasting legacy.

Elizabeth is survived by her husband of 45 years, Eric, at their Dayton home; her daughter and son-in-law, Elissa and Gary Eastvedt, and her grandson, Escher, all of Long Beach, Calif; her brothers and their wives, Edward and Pat Harri of Salem, and Dr. James and Mary Harri of Walla Walla; and many nieces and nephews. Elizabeth's parents preceded her in death.

The family suggests memorial gifts in her memory be made to the Blue Mountain Heritage Society, PO Box 163, Dayton, WA 99328 for either the Palus Museum or the Smith Hollow School Restoration Project.

## BMHS - President's Message

The Blue Mountain Heritage Society is a nonprofit corporation formed in 2004 and dedicated to preserving the history of Columbia County and Southeastern Washington. Since the organization's inception, Elizabeth Thorn's far-seeing vision and steadfast passion have guided BMHS efforts in safeguarding our local heritage.

Yes, we mourn Elizabeth's passing. Yet we also celebrate her life, and we appreciate the organization she helped build. We can think of no better way to honor her than to continue on with the important mission of keeping Columbia County's past connected to the future.

With an eye toward fulfilling that mission, *our most immediate goal is meeting the match needed to secure the Sherwood Trust grant that will fund a maintenance endowment for the Smith Hollow School.*

Other short and long term goals for BMHS include:

- Landscaping the schoolhouse grounds and finishing renovation details on the schoolhouse
- Finishing the Rob Anderson Memorial Bike Rack at the school
- Keeping both the Smith Hollow School and Palus Museum open to the public on Friday and Saturday afternoons during tourist season (from March through December)
- Completing a three-volume set of books that capture important facets

of Columbia County's history

- Moving and restoring the two-story log cabin on the Smith Hollow schoolhouse property
- Creating an Agriculture Antique Museum and a Columbia County Fire Museum

We salute Elizabeth Thorn and the many others who have helped BMHS build our strong foundation. Together, we have shown that, with enough determination, anything can be accomplished.

Let's continue to build upon that foundation. We have projects and committees that would welcome your talents. Come be a part of preserving Columbia County's legacy!

*Paula Moisio, President BMHS*

## News Briefs

### Volunteers Busy with Spring Landscaping –

Anne Strode and Terry Steinhoff planted a locust tree on the north side of the Smith Hollow School, thus replicating the one growing there at the school's original location. Eric Thorn has been preparing the school grounds for seeding. Owen Agenbrood donated garden hoses for the project, and Duane Dunlap and Larry Fairchild have volunteered to handle the watering. *We appreciate all your donated efforts!*

**Welcome Aboard** – In March, Rose Engelbrite and Jim Peterson graciously volunteered to be BMHS Directors, and they were unanimously elected to the board.

**Yard Lights Donated** – Columbia Rural Electric Association has donated, and will be installing, two yard lights at the Smith Hollow School.

**Fundraising Committee at Work** – At their March 11 meeting, the BMHS board appointed Eric Thorn chairperson of a fundraising committee. That committee has since set a goal of helping BMHS raise \$40,000 by October. The funds will be used to meet the balance needed for the Sherwood Trust \$20,000 grant match, cover several annual \$3,500 contributions to the school's maintenance endowment fund, and pay operating costs for the Palus Museum and

Smith Hollow School. Currently, the Ground Hog Sausage Fest, Spring BINGO, and Dayton High School Class Challenge are BMHS's main fundraisers. The committee now adds a new one: "Farm a piece of ground for history" enables farmers to honor the past by pledging bushels of their crops to support BMHS projects that preserve the history of our area's heritage.

**Museum Contact Person** – Rose Engelbrite has generously agreed to fill Elizabeth Thorn's place as the contact person for both the Palus Museum and the Smith Hollow School. Rose's name and phone number will now appear on museum literature as the contact for information and to arrange after-hours special tours. Rose can be reached at 509-386-7348.

**County History Book Project** – Candy Jones is moving forward with the three-volume Columbia County history book project that she and Elizabeth Thorn had been working on. Professional writers have completed several chapters, and a \$2,600 grant has been received to print the three-volume set.

**Volunteer as a Museum Docent** – Both the Palus Museum and the Smith Hollow School museum are now open 1-4 pm on Fridays and Saturdays (March–December). So, why not become a docent and serve as a volunteer

museum host, even for just one afternoon a month? It's a fun, meaningful way to contribute to your community, meet new people, and enjoy our historic treasures. Since training is provided, no prior experience is necessary. Call Rose Engelbrite at 509-386-7348 for details.

**Help/Items Needed** - We need members to take on the following projects: 1) setting up an info/educational table at the June 5, grand re-opening of the Lyons Ferry State Park; 2) building a BMHS "float" for the local parades; 3) creating a BMHS booth at the Columbia County Fair. Also, donations of paper towels, toilet paper, copy paper, envelopes, and other office supplies would sure be a help in operating the Palus and Smith Hollow School. Contact Paula Moisio, 509-382-2767, [prmoisio@gmail.com](mailto:prmoisio@gmail.com)



**Finishing Touches** - Jim McCary has been busy putting up rain gutters at the Smith Hollow School. Jim said he would have had them up sooner "but I've been delayed by rain!"