

Murphy's Pub

18 Feb. 1993

^{has always been}
The Tavern ^{is} still located at 117 N. Main St. in Gresham & is
1 of ~~3 business~~ ^{on} 3 business establishments still selling the
same merchandise in the same location since the 1920's. The
other 2 being the Franz Thrift bakery & the Gresham Rexall
Drug.

It was purchased about 1926 from Kenneth Roberts by Dan
Murphy. He was a crusty old ^{Dan} ^{Redundant} ^{who} ^{dime-store} ^{send} ^{Prohibition was in effect from 1920 to 1933, but} ^{Murphy ran a tight ship, never allowing} ^{beer} ^{was served} ^{allowed} ^{any} ^{moonshine or home brew to be brought onto the premises} ^{for sale or consumption.} ^{When prohibition was repealed,} ^{beer} ^{was served}

Some how over the years it got the sobriquet of "Murphy's
Bucket of Blood." How it ^{acquired} ^{received} that gross reference has
always remained unknown, ^{because} ^{it} ^{never} ^{had} ^{any} ^{Domybrooks} ^{or misbehavior.} ^{public intoxication.} ^{Murph was a tee-totler &} ^{to occur.}

Card playing was a popular pastime but the winner never received
any cash. Instead they were paid in "Hickies." These were aluminum
coins about the size of a nickel ^{stamped} ^{with} ^{"Murphys"} ^{on one side & on} ^{the other it read "Good for 5¢ in Trade."} ^{However they could be} ^{converted to cash, but it took 3 "Hickies" to equal a dime.}

When The local watering hole dispensed soft drinks by the bottle only. Automatic soft drink vending machines did not exist. Prohibition still ^{was in effect} existed so, beer with an alcoholic content was unavailable. So a substitute beverage called "near beer" was dispensed. ^{which was a} ~~it was~~ beer brewed at a legal brewery, but ^{with} ~~had~~ the alcohol removed by distillation. Near would be a misnomer to describe it because ^{the near, in near beer was a misnomer because the} this ~~potation~~ ^{flavorless} never satisfied the palate. The taste was flat, insipid & lacked flavor. But there was still plenty of home brew available in Gresham ^{it} ~~it~~ could be purchased if you knew the right bootlegger.

Murph had a young son who was somewhat scatter-brained but reasonably dependable at times if so inclined & worked as a "gopher" for his Father. He was a good source of free labor & his old man never hesitated to use him to do errands.

The Pub sold hot dogs & ham sandwiches for 10¢ each which Murphy prepared as ordered. Prepackaged food & fast food outlets were still many years away. Buns for the hot dogs & ham sandwiches cost 16¢ a dozen & were purchased ^{at} where the Franz Thrift store is now located, then know as Ted Van Doninck's bakery. ^{which was located}

^{no paper} Murphy never kept ^{the} any pennies in ^{a glass jar} the cash register but in a jar next to it. When he needed buns he'd say to the kid, "count out 16 pennies

run down to the bakery & get a dozen buns. "The bid never got an allowance, ^{like the other neighborhood kids} as is commonplace these days, but he did ^{had} have some "Moxie." ^{and there} There were always more than 16 pennies ^{taken from the} jar. ^{which he ate while on his rounds} He'd stop at a confectionery store on the way & buy some candy. With no allowance he figured that small pittance was well deserved.

When the Depression came in Oct. of 1929 the economy in Gresham tightened & all business decreased, including Murphy's Pub. But the watering hole still made money primarily because Murphy kept ~~the~~ operating expenses to a minimum. He was tighter with his money than Kate Smith's girdle. But ^{by working} he worked long hours. The Pub was open from 8 AM until midnight 7 days a week including Holidays.

He had a man, George Duncan, open at 8 ^{AM} in the morning & worked until noon. ^{when} Then Murph came to work ^{the next} & spent 12 hours on the premises, closing at midnight. For his dinner at 6 PM when business came to a standstill, ^{Murphy's} his wife would prepare a hot meal & the scatterbrained bid would carry it to the Pub in an egg basket for his convenience.

^{when prohibition was repealed} In early 1933 Prohibition was repealed & real beer with 3.2% alcohol became available. The Pub got ^{only} 2 kegs of beer, because the Blitz-Weinhard brewery couldn't meet the demand, so it had to be rationed until supply

Because the initial demand was so great Blitz Weinhard had to ration amounts delivered
could deliver only two kegs. and the day they were delivered, business was brisk and the beer was sold out in a matter of hours

could meet the demand. With beer available, after an absence of about 10 years, the Pub was crowded that day & business ^{so} brisk both ^{so} begs were depleted in a matter of hours.

A tall schooner of beer cost 10¢ & a short beer sold for a nickel. Although the bid was a minor, Murph taught him how to draw tap beer with a good head. The OLC laws back in the 30's were lax & no problem arose until ^{a local minister ~~thought~~ made it an issue} some of the more astute City Fathers found out about a minor dispensing beer. ~~So~~ The word was passed to Murphy it should cease & desist so it did. ^{who complied with?}

The legacy of every small town is usually established by its inhabitants, because they are the motivating force that either produce progress in the community or remain in a status quo condition & stagnate. ^{In the 1920's} In the decade between 1920 & 30 the population was about 1,500 & just about everybody knew each other.

All small towns have their "characters" & Gresham was no exception. Some of ~~them~~ these individuals were colorful. Through the portals of the Pub passed every man with their ^{diverse} idiosyncrasys & they were welcome, especially if they made a purchase. It was the poor man's night club; it offered a place for jobless men to escape the icy cold winter East wind; it was a place to socialize with a game of cards or shoot a game of

pool, Pinball machines, video poker & other sophisticated electronic gaming devices were light years away.

"Shaky Eddie" was a real likeable personable young man who was a regular habitue. He got his moniker because he had a medical affliction or muscle spasm called a "tic," whereby his head constantly rotated from side to side. It is a common movement everybody uses to imply a silent "no."

The local ^{Murphy's} watering hole had round card tables & many men found this a pleasant recreation. Some of the local gentry were always present standing behind the card players as interested observers. Eddie was watching a hotly contested game one day & the man seated in front of him was trying to sell some firewood to another player across the table. This man didn't know "shaky Eddie" & mistook the nodding head as a "no," meaning the wood was not a good buy. Result, no sale was made all because of a misunderstanding.

"Teeter Britches" was another colorful character & aptly named because of his walk. He had a gait that a professional actor would find difficult to emulate. He worked as a laborer & always carried his lunch in a large black old fashioned food container. When walking he took up all the

sidewalk as his body lurched from side to side. His flinging arms made such a wide arc that anybody walking towards him had to give ground. With the swinging lunch container in one hand & his other flailing arm swinging wildly it was quite a sight to behold.

Murphy sold the Pub in 1934 & it has changed ownership several times over the years. The last change was in 1990 & is known as Rob & Cori's Gresham Inn, a far better upgrading in name than the "Bucket of Blood." Considerable remodeling has been done to upgrade the interior, but the original backbar ^{has not changed} is the same & located in the same place. ^{on beer money.} It would be a furniture antique collectors epitome to possess but it's not for sale.

The passing characters are some of the memorabilia that live in the ~~the~~ ^{memory} imagination of the seniors who lived in that ~~era~~ era of the "roaring 20's" decade & the carefree lifestyle that existed. There must be characters now who frequent the establishment because human nature doesn't change. Just more laws, rules & regulations now exist that sometimes makes living a little more complex; but chalk it all up to progress as Gresham is now a modern metropolis.

Submitted by ~~Dan Murphy~~ D. P. Murphy

Business

A blood bucket

by LYNN NAKVASIL
of The Outlook staff

One of the oldest taverns in Gresham will celebrate a grand opening in two weeks.

The Gresham Inn — once nicknamed “Murphy’s Bucket of Blood” — will hold a grand opening Sept. 9-11 in honor of a new owner, a new remodeling job and expanded menu.

Located on 117 N. Main Ave., the bar dates back to 1926, when Daniel Murphy owned it and served “near beer” during the Prohibition.

In its latest turn of events, Liz Donaugh bought the business in December and finished up remodeling a few days ago. Off-white paint and tan paneling replaced the green paint and dark colored paneling.

On the grand-opening weekend in September, Donaugh will feature live music all three days, including country on Saturday and 1950s and ’60s music on Sunday.

The bar’s manager, Jackie Greybill, previously worked up the street as manager of the Franz Thrift Bakery. Her first day on the job she kept tripping over the holes in the floor behind the bar, she said.

A week after hiring Greybill in July, Donaugh hired a contractor to replace the paneling, lighting carpeting and floor and paint the walls. In addition, Greybill’s boyfriend, Dave Weberg, started a small mural depicting regular customers and will be adding to it over time.

The “regulars” kept coming amidst the construction, Donaugh said.

“They were all sitting there telling where to put things. A lot of chiefs and not enough Indians,” Donaugh kidded.

Greybill temporarily drove a few out when she decided to do something about the smell in the bar.

“We went upstairs to the swamp cooler on the roof. I dumped a whole bottle of fabric softener in it,” she said. “But it smelled better and we had no static.”

Donaugh also owns Main Street Deli at the corner of Main Avenue and Division Street. She plans to improve the quality of the sandwiches at the Gresham Inn and is selling hot dogs and chili dogs.

Photos of old-time Gresham and electric beer signs decorate the walls. The wooden bar top hints of years of use. The back bar, with its mirror,

long ago, Gresham Inn revamps



STEVE KASSERMAN/The Outlook

Manager Jackie Greybill, left, and owner Liz Donaugh have renovated and made other changes to the Gresham Inn, one of the oldest bars in Gresham.

wooden pillars and hand carvings, sits in its same location after decades of use, Donaugh said.

"They say under the foot of the bar is supposed to be a brass trough that ran outside," Greybill said. "It was before plumbing and women weren't even allowed to have been in there."

Greybill is still getting used to the bar business. A family friend of Donaugh's, she took up their job offer when Franz asked her to move to the Vancouver store.

"It's very hectic. In time the little kinks will work out," Greybill said.



OUTLOOK PHOTOS: JOSH K

Kris Lively, right, is the founder of the Gresham-based Portland Oregon Paranormal Society. Lively was consulting with Tackett Friday, April 17, as he set up equipment for the group's two-night investigation.

SPIRITS, SHADOWS & THINGS THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT

Earlier this month, Jake Helfer was burning the midnight oil installing new flooring inside The District, a soon-to-open tavern in the space formerly occupied

by the Gresham Inn.

Helfer, The District's general manager, had propped the back door open for ventilation, when it suddenly slammed shut. Initially annoyed, Helfer figured someone had pushed the door closed to scare him.

He wandered outside and found a lone smoker behind the M & M Restaurant two doors up. The guy, Helfer said, claimed no responsibility for the action.

Baffled, Helfer thought maybe the wind caught the door. He tried several times to recreate the noise.

"That door has a slow release," Helfer said. "You can't slam it and I tried — I really tried."

Turns out, the slamming door was only one of several odd occurrences Helfer and others have experienced since remodeling the building's interior began. Helfer says he's heard crying, footsteps on the stairs leading to two apartments above the bar and a

"There's so much history in here and in the building. I've seen and heard things that are very hard to explain. There's definitely something weird here."

— Jake Helfer, general manager of The District

creepy feeling of being watched.

Is it possible previous patrons and proprietors still frequent the confines of the old Gresham Inn?

"I think so. I think it's hard to let go of places where you feel at home," Helfer said. "To a lot of those people, this is where they were most comfortable, even if they're spirits now."

Historical documents show the community watering hole at 117 Main Ave. has been a bar, tavern or saloon since the 1920s, when it was called Murphy's Pub.

It is one of the few establishments left in the downtown core that has retained its original brand of business.

■ Paranormal investigators look into claims of activity at the former Gresham Inn



STORY BY
ANNE ENDICOTT

Janet Tackett, a medium, was part of a paranormal investigation at The District Friday, April 17. Tackett said she identified the spirit of a despondent young woman in one of the apartments above the former Gresham Inn, in an area thought to have been a brothel at one time.

— a pool hall and tavern. The bar changed hands a few times over the ensuing decades before becoming the Gresham Inn around 1990.

It closed at the end of January 2015 after bar owner Ray Salvi and building owner Mark Darrach parted ways. Its latest renaissance, as The District, is scheduled to start with a mid-May opening, with new management and ownership — and perhaps more infor-

mation about its past.

Shortly before remodeling began, Helfer and his girlfriend, Heather Hendren, decided to film a quick video of the tavern's interior. Their intent was a "before-and-after" record of the project.

Upon review of the short clip, which was taken with a cellphone, the pair witnessed two small, unusual lights float across the screen. They weren't

caused by dust or dirt, Helfer said, because no power equipment had been in use.

Once renovation began in earnest, the frequency of strange sounds and even stranger sensations increased.

"I'd always heard stories about the place being a bar with a brothel upstairs," Helfer said. "It's like an urban

District: Locat

■ From Page A1

legend, but I don't think it's an urban legend now. There's so much history in here and in the building. I've seen and heard things that are very hard to explain. There's definitely something weird here."

Pam Wallace and Karen Anderson, owners of Norma Jean's Closet next door to the tavern, concur. Since opening their upscale ladies consignment boutique 10 months ago, the women say there's just some weird stuff going on.

"We have a bowl with wrapped chocolate candy on the front counter," Anderson explained. "I came in one morning and went around turning lights on like I do every day. I found a candy wrapper on the floor that I know wasn't there when I shut the lights off the night before."

Wallace's daughter, Sherri Young, operates a jewelry business in the back of Norma Jean's Closet. For months, Young has come into work and discovered items have been moved or tinkered with.

"I've found neckless knotted together, like they were braided," Young said. "Sometimes, they will be swinging together from side to side. There's one (necklace display) that is always turned sideways to face a mirror, too."

Hendren's short video ended up in the hands of Kris Lively, a Gresham resident and founder of the Portland Oregon Paranormal Society — POPS for short. Lively's 9-year-old business utilizes the talents of paranormal investigators and two mediums to uncover or refute the presence of spirits in buildings and homes across the metro area and occasionally, around the state.

Over the course of two evenings — Friday and Saturday, April 17-18 — POPS' team (and one tag-along newspaper reporter) brought in their equipment and expertise to determine if, indeed, the spirits of past inhabitants still belly up to the bar or roam around the two apartments upstairs.

Channeling the past

Janet Tackett is a medium, hypnotist and energy healer, who works frequently with the POPS crew. Well respected by Lively for her skills, Tackett arrived with no knowledge of the building's questionable past.

She became particularly interested in the exterior entrance to the two apartments located above the bar. As she walked through the doorway, headed toward a pitch dark stairwell, she turned to Helfer and asked if there was anybody upstairs. He shook his head no.

"Oh yes there is," Tackett said.

Surprisingly, given that she has about as much courage as my golden retriever in dark places, I followed. Over the next 20 minutes or so, Tackett revealed a rather unsavory story.

"There's a woman," she said. "She's crying. She's just heartbroken. She's here against the wall and she keeps saying she wants to go home."

Tackett expressed a feeling of overwhelming sadness in the room. She described the presence of a "young woman, 19-20 years old," with brown hair and "old-fashioned clothes." The woman had a Peter Pan collar on her blouse and Tackett estimated she was from the early 1920s. She died in the room, the medium said — a suicide.

Suddenly, Tackett turned and demanded to know, "Was this a whorehouse?"

Her angry tone was surprising. It wasn't until she repeated the question that I confirmed that was the belief.

The two apartments above the bar haven't been inhabited for 45-50 years, Helfer said. They are identical in design — a parlor, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom — and in serious disrepair from peeling paint and chipped plaster. Helfer and Hendren reported seeing the curtain sway in the room where Tackett identified the presence of the young woman and Hendren said an old-school cowboy hat just appeared one day — resting on a sink.

Back at Norma Jean's Closet, Tackett learned of a basement under the shop that Wallace, Anderson and Young all referred to as "creepy." Musty smells and noticeably chilly, the room has no windows, cement walls and what appears to be a packed dirt floor.

Tackett did not like the place. "Oh this is bad," she said, walking in a wide circle around the cavernous space. "This is where they kept the girls — where they were indoctrinated. I don't like it here."

Young explained to Tackett she had unfurled a large piece of black leather several months ago, laying it on the floor at the

on has served as bar since 1920s



tion on the ceiling by moving around in front of the window above a streetlight and watching the reflection of traffic along Main Avenue.

They were unable to conclusively determine what caused the shadow or where it came from.

Spirit entities require energy in their effort to communicate or manifest, Lively said. And with investigators using an assortment of handheld devices dependent upon batteries to operate, Lively said it's not uncommon for power to drain from a camera or meter during the course of an investigation.

Saturday's lock down was unusual, however.

"I've never had that many problems with my electrical equipment," Lively said. "Everything we tried to use both nights was a problem — even walkie-talkies. How basic is a walkie-talkie? We'd hit the button and all we'd get is high pitched static. I can't explain how those batteries drained so quickly. We don't use cheap batteries, either."

POPS investigation of The District, its upstairs apartments and the basement in Norma Jean's Closet produced countless hours of audio and visual recordings.

Since analysis of the recordings hadn't been completed by The Outlook's press time, Lively said it couldn't yet be determined if evidence pointed to a possible paranormal presence.

He did say, however, that one voice recorder did pick up distant footsteps on the stairs during the hours when no one was in the building beyond Stearns, Kordowski and the tag-along reporter.

Helfer said the name of the new bar — The District — is a nod to its somewhat questionable history. The turn-of-the-century atmosphere will offer "Red Light Specials" (otherwise known as Happy Hour) and beverages will be served in Mason jars. The bar's new logo and exterior signage are done in classic Western-style lettering and feature a subtle female silhouette.

But will staff at The District be welcoming more than simply regular paying customers when it opens its doors?

"The investigation was an opportunity to validate what we've been seeing and hearing," Helfer said, laughing. "So our doors are open to everybody — past and present."



ABOVE: It's believed the two apartments above The District, which are identical in design, haven't been inhabited for 45-50 years. Tackett explored the kitchen off the parlor where she felt the presence of the young woman.

LEFT: In the cellar below Norma Jean's Closet, co-owner Pam Wallace, center, and her daughter Sherri Young, back left, listen as Janet Tackett describes her impression that the basement was once used to house dozens of young women against their will.

OUTLOOK PHOTO: JOSH KULLA

bottom of the basement stairs. When she returned a couple days later, the top side of the leather held dusty, heavy boot prints. The underside was covered with imprints of small, bare feet.

"I called the (building's) owner to see if somebody had been down here and he said no," Wallace said. "I don't like going down there by myself anymore. I'm not afraid, but I'm just not real comfortable."

Explaining the unexplainable — maybe

Saturday night, POPS investigators Damah Stearns and Tom Kordowski began their search for paranormal activity in the basement of Norma Jean's Closet.

Armed with tiny video and digital cameras, voice recorders and a bevy of handheld in-

struments that measure temperature and electromagnetic fields, we descended into the cellar and shut off the lights.

Paranormal investigators say pockets of cold air in a room indicate the presence of a spirit or entity. Twice, Norma Jean's co-owner Anderson and I felt a cold breeze pass by, which set off lights on a meter that measures electro-magnetic energy in my hand.

Was it the spirit of one of the more than 20 young women Tackett had felt in the space the night before?

Stearns, Kordowski and I moved upstairs to the two apartments above the bar. For nearly three hours, we monitored the infrared static cameras placed in what became known as "Mary's room," after Tackett identified the despondent spirit as "Mary."

The pair of investigators asked numerous questions into the still night air — "Were you a regular customer here?" "Did you play cards or pool?" — hoping that later review of their small voice recorders would yield a disembodied response.

Paranormal investigation, I discovered, involves a lot of sitting, listening and waiting.

But Stearns and Kordowski, who have both been conducting investigations for more than 10 years, take a scientific approach to the paranormal by essentially myth busting when something defies logic.

The three of us witnessed a circular white shadow shoot across the ceiling of one room and disappear into the opposite wall. Stearns and Kordowski immediately attempted to recreate the shadow's loca-

Dan Murphy: Father's

Dan Murphy, 72, Portland, is the kid with the moxie in this story about Gresham's old tavern, Murphy's Bucket of Blood. Murphy, the son of Dan and Marie Murphy, is a retired pharmacist and delights in leading tours down Gresham's Main Avenue.

Nobody can remember how Murphy's Bucket of Blood got its name, but it was the only pub in Gresham in the 1930s. The address is 117 N. Main Ave. and it is still doing business as a tavern.

It was purchased about 1926 from Kenneth Roberts by Dan Murphy. Murph was a crusty old Irishman and he ran a tight ship. Prohibition still existed but he never allowed any moonshine or home brew to be brought onto the premises. For entertainment there were two pool tables and a snooker table.

Card playing was popular but the winner never received any cash. Instead, they were paid in "hickies," aluminum coins about the size of a nickel that said "Murphy" on one side and on the other read "Good for \$.5 in trade." They could be converted to cash, but it took three hickies to equal a dime.

The local watering hole dispensed soft drinks and near beer, real beer that had the alcohol removed at the brewery, that lacked flavor and tasted flat. The pub sold hot dogs and ham sandwiches for 10 cents each which Murph made as ordered. The franks cost 15 cents a pound and delicious boiled ham was sliced as you waited and the franks were sold by the weight as you desired.

Murph had a young son who was somewhat scattered-brained but reasonably dependable and who worked as a "gopher." He was a good source of free labor and his old man didn't hesitate to use him to do errands.

Murph never kept any pennies in the register but in a jar next to it. When he needed buns he'd say to the kid, "count out 16 pennies and run down to the bakery and get a dozen buns." The kid never got an allowance, as is commonplace these days, but he had some moxie. There always were more than 16 pennies to come out of that jar and he'd stop at a confectionery store on the way and buy some candy. With no allowance he figured that small pittance was well deserved.

The Great Depression descended in October 1929 and the economy in Gresham tightened up. All the business



Dan Murphy visits the tavern once

establishments, including Murphy's pub, saw a decrease in the economy. The pub still made money primarily because Murph spent very little on operating costs. He was as tight with his money as Kate Smith's girdle. But he worked long hours. The pub was open seven days a week including holidays. He had a man open up at 8 a.m. and work until noon. Then Murph came to work and spent 12 hours on the job, closing at midnight. For his dinner at 6 p.m., when business came to a standstill, his wife would prepare a hot meal and their son carried it to the pub in an egg basket.

In early 1933 Prohibition was repealed and real beer with 3.2 percent alcohol became available. The pub got two kegs of beer, because Blitz-Weinhard brewery

GROWING UP

s tavern once only one in town



BRIAN McNEILL/The Outlook

owned by his father and known as **Murphy's Bucket of Blood.**

couldn't meet the demand. With legal real beer available, after an absence of about 10 years, the pub did a rousing brisk business that day and sold out in a matter of hours.

A tall schooner of beer cost 10 cents and a short beer sold for a nickel. Although the kid was a minor, Murph taught him how to draw tap beer with a good head. The OLCC laws back in the 1930s were lax and no problem arose. But one day a prominent Protestant minister was walking by and saw the kid serving beer. He felt that it was highly improper for a minor so he brought it before the City Council, who policed anything that was slightly irregular. Notice was given to Murph that serving beer by a minor must cease, so it did.

Through the portals of the pub passed

every character in Gresham at one time or another. It was the poor man's nightclub and also afforded a place to escape from the icy East Wind and cold of the winter months. Some jobless men used it as a hangout to keep warm. If they didn't spend money Murph referred to them as "lounge lizards" but he never kicked them out.

"Shaky Freddie" (his name is changed) was a real likeable personable young man who was a regular. He got his moniker because he had a medical affliction or muscle spasm called a "tic" whereby his head constantly rotated from side to side. It is a common movement everybody uses when they mean "no." The card tables were round and one day there was a routine card game in progress. Some of the local gentry were present, standing behind

the card players as interested observers. Freddie was watching and the man playing cards in front of him was trying to sell some firewood to another man across the table. This man didn't know Freddie but he mistook the shaking head as a "no," meaning the wood was not a good buy. Result, no sale was made all because of a misunderstanding.

Murph sold the "Bucket of Blood" in 1935 and it has changed ownership several times over the years. The last change was in 1990 and it is now known as Rob and Cory's Gresham Inn. It is one of three business establishments of that era on Main Avenue in old town Gresham still selling the same merchandise. The other two are the Franz Thrift Bakery and Gresham Rexall Drug.