

Third Groundbreaking at Lopez Clinic Kicks Off New Expansion

by Leta Currie-Marshall

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For the third time in 26 years, a groundbreaking ceremony has taken place on the grounds of the Lopez Clinic.

Bursting at the seams due to a swelling population and expanded services over the past couple of decades, the Clinic is getting a much-needed addition that will more than double the size of the present building.

Mireille Paulson, Director of the Catherine Washburn Memorial Association, wielded the spade at the brief, informal ceremony on December 1st. Background music was provided by a busy backhoe and a beeping automatic level as workmen cleared the footprint of

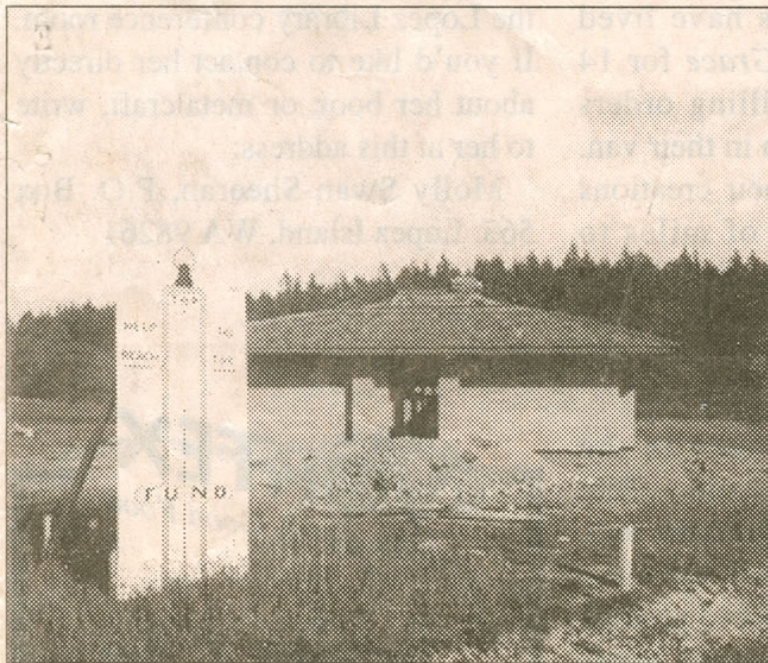
the new addition.

The latest expansion will add 3360 square feet to the current 2457, bringing the facility to a total of 5817 square feet.

The original Catherine Washburn Memorial Clinic was a very modest 900 square feet, built in 1973. Even that was a far cry from the tiny office and the back of a Cadillac hearse that served as a base for resident nurses and doctors to treat islanders. The first and only addition was built 19 years ago.

George Dengler, M.D., who moved his practice to Lopez to occupy the original clinic when it was new, said he doesn't believe the Lopez population will grow in the next 20 years as much as it did in the previous 20. He hopes the expansion will take care of islanders' medical needs for many years to come.

The new improved Clinic will include desperately needed space and facilities for offices, examining rooms, emergency treatment and storage. Plans are currently on view at



The first Clinic, built for about \$30,000



clockwise: Don Poole (contractor), Jerry Eads (original property owner), John Ottenheimer (architect) and Charlie Washburn break ground for the original Lopez Clinic in 1973. It was named after Washburn's wife Catherine.

the Clinic waiting room and the Post Office.

Lopez Islanders have come forward with donations for their Clinic as they did for the new

Community Center—almost unanimously, with whatever amounts they could afford.

Funds collected for the new clinic back in 1973 were marked on



Mireille Paulson breaks ground for the new expansion on December 1, 1999.

a plywood “thermometer” with a \$30,000 goal. The top of the new thermometer, still standing outside the Clinic as construction gets underway, reads \$750,000. Reaching the target amount so promptly will enable the expansion to be completed and outfitted in one fell swoop rather than piecemeal.

Dick Schoenman, Director of Building, Equipment and Grounds for the CWMA, will represent the Board as troubleshooter on the project. Builder is Jay-Brant General Contractors of Homer, Alaska, who recently did the work on the Friday Harbor High School and Middle School. Architects are

Botesch, Nash and Hall of Everett.

The projected date of completion of the Clinic is June 1st, assuming that this winter’s weather isn’t any worse than usual. Islanders will enjoy watching the progress as they go about their daily errands in the Village.

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