



THE WEBFOOTER

The official publication of The Webfooters Post Card Club in Portland, Oregon

Volume 41 - Issue Number 7 - July 2007

"Every subject known to man can be found on a post card"

www.thewebfooters.com



Independence Day



Clapsaddle card from the Stuart and Linda Kammerman Collection

Next Meeting – July 21, 2007

At Russellville Grange - 12105 NE Prescott Street

10:00 am to 4:00 pm – Card sales to begin at 10:30



Lotus Isle



See Page 3 for Reflections of Historic Lotus Isle, Portland's Largest Amusement Park

See the full color version of this newsletter at www.thewebfooters.com

Board Meeting Minutes

The attendees at the June 13, 2007 Webfooters board meeting, held at Elmer's restaurant, were: Mark Moore (President), Dale Nix (Vice President), Phyllis Palmer (Member-at-Large), Jane Burton (Member-at-Large), David Sell (Membership Chair), and Dave Elston (Secretary). After a call to order at 6:42 PM the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as published.

Financial Report—Due to the absence of vacationing treasurer Arne Soland, a financial report was not available.

Report of Standing Committees

Membership—David Sell reported that there are 220 active members, and that two new members had been added to the roster in the past month.

Refreshments—The refreshment sign-up list for the 2007 monthly Club meetings is full. If you find that you cannot meet your obligation please give at least a two-week notice to the members so that a substitute can be found.

Auction/Show—After a successful show and auction, Board members stated that they had received very positive reports from participating dealers at the Show. It appears that the Auction did not negatively impact dealer sales at the Show. The board favors, based on the information available at this time, having an Auction to coincide with the 2008 Annual April Postcard Show. Mark indicated that he would provide a summary of Show and Auction income and expenses after all bills have been received. The board voted to keep table rents for the 2008 Show at the same level as the 2007 show (and to focus on filling *all* of the dealer's tables next year), but to raise the admission fee to \$2 per person.

Business Arising From Previous Meetings

Membership Cards and Roster—The Board unanimously approved the expenditure of \$200 for 2,000 (the minimum order available) 4-inch x 6-inch printed-image membership cards with blank backsides. The backside will have individual's membership information printed on them, utilizing a home computer, as the need arises. They should be appropriate for many years time as membership cards and for other uses.

New Business

Bull Run Tours—Portland General Electric has invited the Webfooters Post Card Club on a tour of the Powerhouse at Bull Run, the Little Sandy Dam and the Flume Speeder Carbarn which are slated for demolition in 2008. We are limited to 15 people over 12 years old. Reservations are required.

Picnic—Suggestions were offered for a possible picnic site to repeat last year's very enjoyable group event. Mt. Tabor, Larch Mountain, Promontory Point Park and Washington Park were all mentioned. Oaks Park was favored and the board is weighing all the options at this time.

Ads for Newsletter and Website—As a means of raising revenue for the Club, further discussion regarding accepting ads for the newsletter and the Club website was undertaken. Ads might be of either a classified ('lines of text') or display (e.g. a scanned business card) type. Running time (3 or 6 or 12 months?) and the type of ad would determine the price. The subject will be brought up for discussion at the next regular Club meeting.

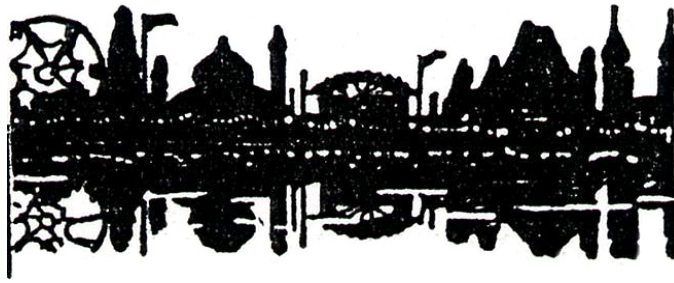
Nominating Committee—There were no volunteers from amongst the board members present to be on the next officer nominating committee. As several board members feel that they have nearly fulfilled their current commitment and usefulness to the club as board members, it would be incumbent on other club members to step up and volunteer their services as either nominating committee and/or future board members. The current board members will be wracking their brains in an attempt to come up with suggested personnel willing to fill their humble shoes. Free In-house training is available to anyone interested in doing their part for the Club. Just two of the benefits of board membership are: meeting regularly with a fine group of fellow collectors and having the opportunity to share in shaping the Club into what you envision that it might be.

Grange rent increase—With the monthly rent doubling (to \$80) for the Club's use of the Russellville Grange, the board considered the astronomical rents at comparative sites and favored continuing to meet at what (in the future) is hoped to be an appropriately remodeled and improved building. Members at the May regular business meeting also favored 'no change' in the monthly venue.

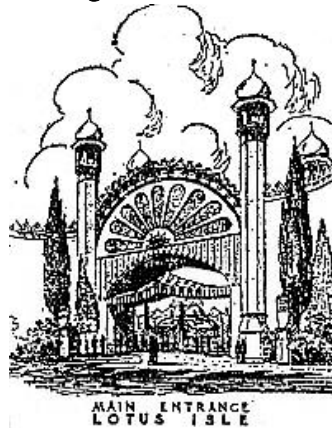
20-cent Club Cards—The Board unanimously approved spending \$300 for the purchase of new stocks of club cards, to be available for sale to all members and guests attending the Saturday meetings. The cards, to be acquired through a generous offering from a local dealer, are expected to be procured prior to the July 21st Club meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM. The next board meeting will be held on August 15th.

Respectfully submitted, David Elston, Secretary of The Webfooters Post Card Club



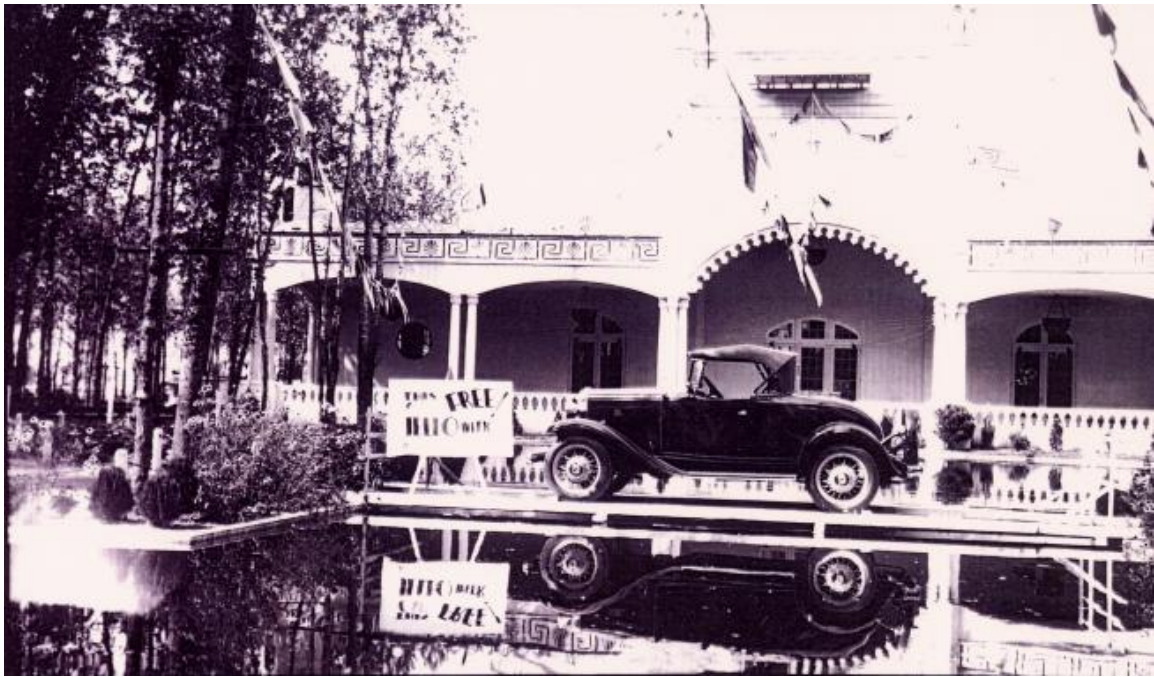
Reflections from Lotus Isle



Portland's largest amusement park was called Lotus Isle, the "*Million-Dollar Pleasure Paradise*". Lotus Isle spread out over 128 acres east of Jantzen Beach and it opened June 28, 1930 with the fanfare that included an official welcome from the Governor. It was known as the Wonderland of the Pacific Northwest and you could take in over 40 rides at the amusement park. The park's name was derived from the Lotus Water Lily, which was associated with euphoria and enlightenment in Oriental and Egyptian mythology.



Known for its Peacock Ballroom and Egyptian style buildings, Lotus Isle boasted a 3/4-mile long Alpine Roller Coaster running through mountain-top landscapes of Mt. Hood and St. Helens. (Frank Schlick Collection)



The Grand Ballroom, which cost \$60,000 to build, had a wide veranda overhanging the lake. The Ballroom was large enough to hold over 6000 people.



Couples would compete in Walkathons at the magnificent Peacock Ballroom, which was the site of many a Walk-a-thon and faux weddings

Evening dances held sway at the Peacock Ballroom from 9:00 pm to Midnight. You could dance to the orchestras of Herman Kenin and Archie Loveland and enjoy the stellar entertainer and banjost Monte Ballou." Couples at the walkathons would see how long they could dance continuously, sometimes for several days at a time, taking a 10 minute break every hour. A state certified nurse was required at all such events.



Master of Ceremonies for the famous Peacock Ballroom and its world-renowned Walkathons was Henry Shadder

AL. PAINTER
 Invites You to Be His Guest
 Absolutely Free of Cost at the
GRAND OPENING of
LOTUS ISLE
 Sat., May 16, and Sun., May 17

Regardless of whether you care to visit the exciting and exhilarating finish of the great Walkathon endurance contest now in its final hours in the Marathon Stadium on Lotus Isle — I repeat, regardless — I want you to visit this wonderful island resort on the shores of the majestic Columbia River.

Come out to enjoy the time of your life. There are too many added attractions, too many improvements, too many new features to describe in this space. Come and see for yourself.

I also want you to have a free dance in the mammoth new Buddha-Buddha Temple of the Dance. I named it and designed it and so I am kind of proud of this new ballroom. So have a dance as my guest free.

TUNE IN ON STATION KEX
 FOR THE CLOSING REPORTS BY EARL FAGEN
 ON THE GREATEST ATHLETIC CONTEST EVER
 HELD IN THE NORTHWEST.

The WALKATHON UNDER THE
 OF AL. PAINTER'S WALKATHON ORGANIZATION

Admission to Walkathon 50c, including admission to Lotus Isle. No other ticket required if you purchase Marathon ticket at entrance to Lotus Isle.

ADMIT ONE	THIS TICKET ADMITS BEARER FREE		ONE DANCE FREE
	Good Either Saturday, May 16, or Sunday, May 17	Free admission and one free dance in the New "Buddha-Buddha" Temple of Dance Saturday, May 16 and Sunday, May 17	

LOTUS ISLE



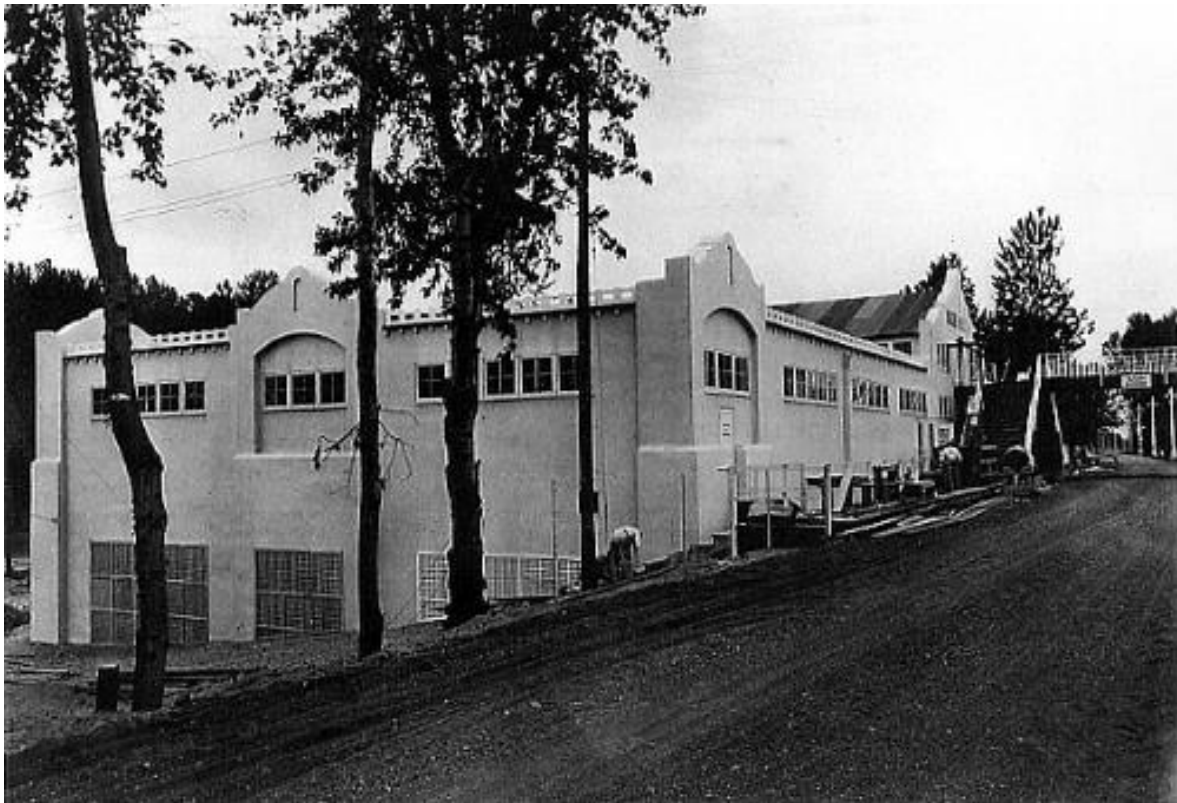
*Earl Fagen
 master of ceremonies
 Al Painter's Walkathon
 Organization, Lotus Isle*

In 1931, Al Painter's Walkathon Organization had live remote reports on KEX Radio with Announcer Earl Fagan

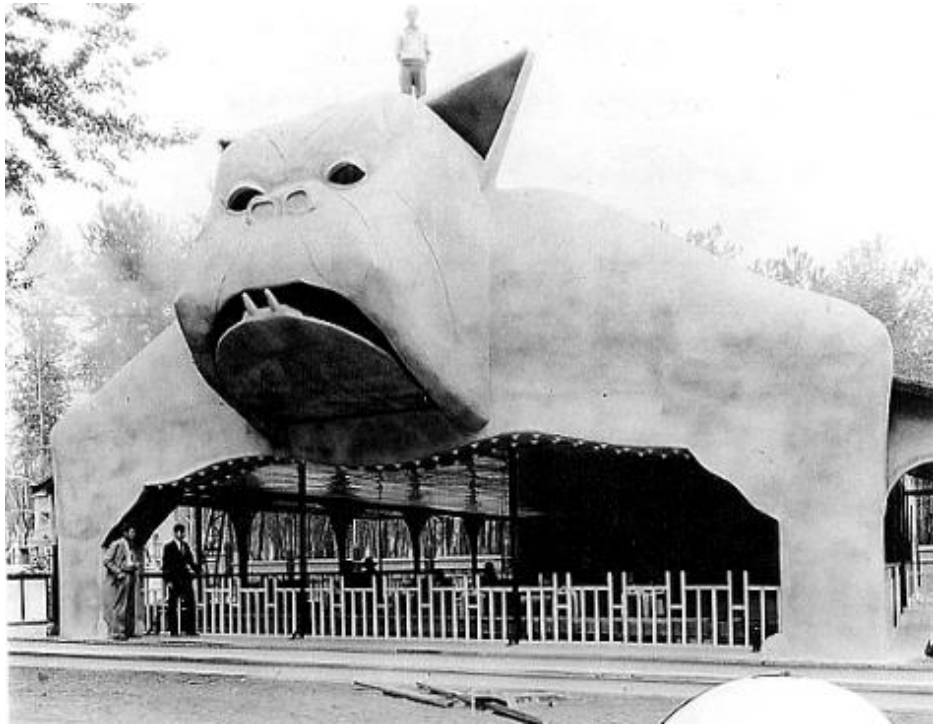


Brother & sister team Will & Helen Roysum

Another couple, Bebe Severson & Jack Robertson



The Bathhouse at Lotus Isle had facilities to hold several thousand people. Next to the beach were water slides, chutes and “water tops”.



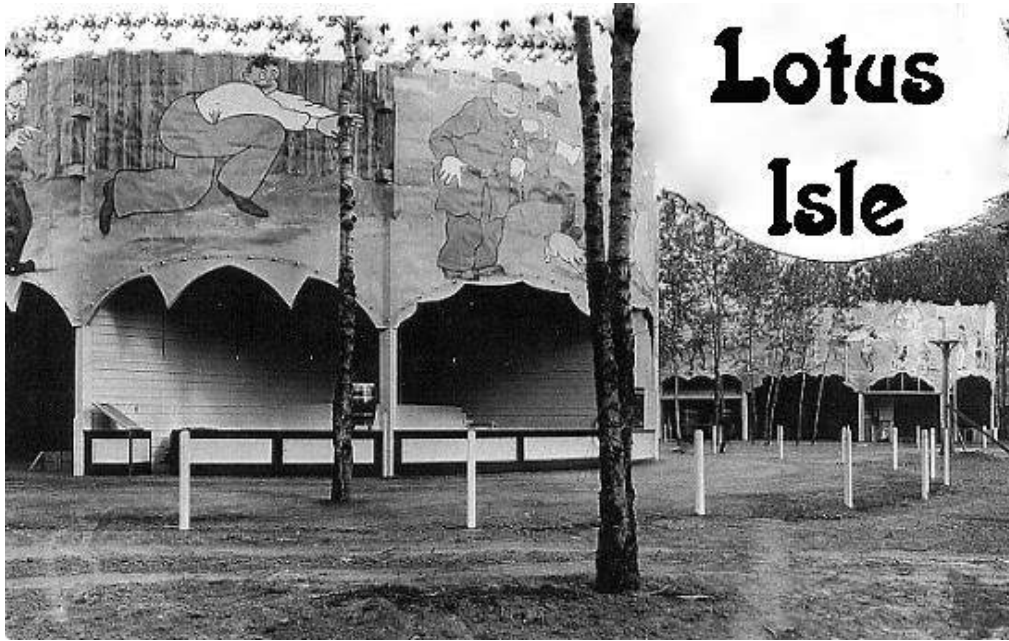
The Bulldog housed the bumper cars. If you look closely, you will see a maintenance man standing over the Bulldog's left ear.



Ten-ton, 12-foot Tusko the Elephant with his owner, Al Painter

Performing stunts in his low flying airplane, the Famed Stunt Pilot Tex Rankin scared the park's mascot, Tusko the Magnificent, a 12-foot, ten ton Elephant. Billed as *the meanest elephant*, Tusko lived up to his billing; he got loose and went on a rampage, destroying several buildings.

According to the script for a 1931 radio advertisement for Lotus Isle, you could "*ride the new \$40,000 Merry-Go-Round or the \$15,000 Ferris Wheel.*" "*Rides only cost a nickel!*" You could see the Zoo with "rare Asian animals", 15 acres of amusements, 27 acres of picnic grounds, English bowling greens, golf courses and horseshoe pitching areas. There was a new miniature train, a mile long, encircling the park.



Concession Stand at Lotus Isle

Saturday's the Day We'll All Start To Play!

A fiesta with scores of clowns presiding over a pageant of hilarity will officially open the News-Telegram Lotus Isle Mardi Gras next Saturday night in the beautiful Peacock ballroom at Lotus Isle.

Amateur and professional fun-makers, vying among themselves for valuable prizes, will usher in a gala nine day carnival, the like of which Portland has seldom seen.

Fun-seekers will find a haven of joy, and prizes will be awarded to man, woman, girl and boy.

You'll want to be there because it will be different . . . spectacular . . . colorful and thrilling.

Be there: Saturday . . . in the ballroom at the Mardi Gras.

9—Glorious Nights—9

AUGUST 15 TO 23 INC.
NEWS-TELEGRAM
LOTUS ISLE

MARDI GRAS

NOTE—Register for Clown Carnival at street 401 Washington Street.

The BALL ROOM
IS THE
MAIN TENT

MAIN ENTRANCE
MARDI GRAS



FREE SHOWS & "TUSKO"!

FREE SHOWS
At 3 and 8:30 P. M. TODAY and TOMORROW, you may enjoy 8 BIG ACTS FREE in our NEW covered, open-air—

"AL FRESCO"
Sunday will be a day to be remembered by every kiddie in Portland!

KIDDIES FREE!

Our New Giant Elephant
"TUSKO"
Every child, 13 and under, will be admitted to the park FREE all day Sunday to see "TUSKO."

ALL DAY SUNDAY

LOTUS ISLE

News-Telegram ad from August 11, 1931

News-Telegram ad from May 23, 1931

In the days before air conditioning, a dance hall or skating rink could get pretty warm on a hot summer night. I am told that the skating rink at Lotus Isle had "openings" (patrons didn't call them windows) with chicken wire across them for ventilation. Skaters learned in a hurry not to touch the wire as they would get a shock.

Had history taken a different path, Lotus Isle may not have been built. Its developers were just greedy and wanted to get Jantzen Beach to buy them out before they built the park. Their scheme backfired and Jantzen welcomed the competition and Lotus Isle was built on a shoe-string budget.

Red ink had plagued the builders, the Columbia Beach Development Corporation, from the beginning. One of the investors, Edwin Platt, had invested a sizable amount in the development. When the Development Corporation was ready to dump the idea, Edwin Platt offered to take the yet-to-be-built park off their hands.

The Peacock Ballroom, which could hold 6,600 people, burned to the ground in 1931 and legend has it that the heat from the burning dance floor could be felt across the river in Vancouver. According to the newspaper, there was a second ballroom that was actually a skating rink. It was said the floor would have to be rebuilt to accommodate dancing. Dances were held the final season on the Blue Swan, a barge which was docked on the Columbia River.

Lotus Isle was the birthplace of the Dance Marathon circuit in the Northwest. Some of the organizers who got their start at Lotus Isle went on to fame and fortune in larger cities back east including Walter Tebbetts, who owned several Portland theatres including The Oriental; and Leo Seltzer, who went on to start Roller Derby in later years. There are the newspaper accounts of Al Painter's Walkathon Organization leaving a trail of unpaid debts from Arkansas to Louisiana and Pennsylvania.

One of the park's owners was said to have had gangland connections and a number of unfortunate happenings led to the park's early downfall. An 11-year old boy drowned just before the opening season ended in 1930 and the next day, the President of Lotus Isle, Edwin F. Platt, committed suicide.

The Oregonian Newspaper from March 23, 1931 reported a plane crash at Lotus Isle when the pilot of a low-flying airplane that was experiencing turbulence crashed into the artificial mountain of the Scenic Railway at Lotus Isle. Three men escaped with minor bruises and lacerations. Buck Ambulance took the two passengers to St. Vincent's Hospital. The pilot, Clarence Murray of Vancouver, Washington owned the biplane, and he crawled out from the wreckage with a scratch or two. After Tusko's rampage, the buildings he destroyed were never rebuilt.

Lotus Isle never recovered and it closed after the 1932 season, its assets were sold in bankruptcy early the following year. A bonfire was set when the park closed to virtually destroy all memory of the park.

The 4-Row Herschell Spellman Carousel, which was made in 1914, is still operating at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. The Spirit of the Alpine Coaster lives in the Playland Giant Dipper in Vancouver BC. The 75 hp motor, the switch panel, and much of the machinery, including the chain came from the Alpine Coaster that was built in the late twenties at Lotus Isle here in Portland.



Editor's note: I want to offer a word of thanks to Frank Schlick and Steve Kenney for contributing photos and information for this article.



Club Officers

President/Editor.....	Mark Moore
Vice President.....	Dale Nix
Secretary.....	Dave Elston
Treasurer.....	Arne Soland
Membership Chairman.....	David Sell
Member-at-Large.....	Jane Burton
Member-at-Large.....	Phyllis Palmer
Historian.....	Joe Macdonald
Librarian.....	Steve Kuryk



Calendar

- July 21 – Webfooters Post Card Club Meeting at Russellville Grange
12105 NE Prescott St near 122nd & Sandy Blvd – 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
- August 15 – Webfooters Board Meeting at Elmer’s Restaurant (no host)
10001 NE Sandy Blvd – 6:30 pm (Board Meetings held every other month)
- August 18 – Webfooters Post Card Club Meeting at Russellville Grange
12105 NE Prescott St near 122nd & Sandy Blvd – 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

For the latest news, visit our website:



www.thewebfooters.com



WEBFOOTERS POST CARD CLUB

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