



VICTOR LYGDMAN

THEN: The recently deceased artist Victor Lygdman recorded this "meeting" while exploring the construction site for Century 21 in 1961.

A Skyline Star Rises

MY FIRST impression on viewing Victor Lygdman's dramatic meeting of a boy and his alien was, "we come in peace." It is the name we gave this subject in "Repeat Photography," the Museum of History & Industry exhibit of many "Now and Then" features that appeared first here in this magazine over the past nearly 30 years. (The Seattle Times is one of the exhibit's sponsors.)

Often we hear that it is "icon this and icon that." There is presently an icon hysteria. We, however, will avoid calling the Space Needle such, although for a devoted Seattle it quickly became our steel-and-concrete analogy for an Eastern Orthodox Madonna painted on wood. The boy we don't know or, rather, the photographer Lygdman has left no name for him. Perhaps he is still in Seattle, sometimes still facing the Space Needle and this morning reading the Sunday Times.

Through the brief history of this city it has had only, it seems to me, three graven images: the Smith Tower (1914), the Kalakala (1935) "world's first streamlined ferry," and, since 1962, this friendly usurper that was raised as the centerpiece for the city's second world's fair: Century 21.

When viewed from Pioneer Square, the Smith Tower, with its gleaming terra-cotta tile skin, continues to stand out favorably with the taller towers that followed. In 1967, the Kalakala was sold into an Alaskan exile of pro-



JEAN SHERRARD

NOW: Jean Sherrard wants to thank the family on the left for taking the place of the unknown youth standing in the "then."

cessing crab and canning. Then in 1998 it was heroically rescued, towed and returned to a Seattle that had, however, grown inured to its Art Deco charms and unforgiving of its dents. It was thumbs down for the ferry, which was towed away — ultimately to Tacoma.

The pampered and polished Space Needle, however, is now being prepared for next year's golden anniversary. (1)

Check out Paul Dorpat and Jean Sherrard's blog at www.pauldorpat.com.