

June 2000 Newsletter

Just a year ago, 22 people gathered at the Redmond Library for the first meeting of the Redmond Historical Society. While we were all convinced Redmond needed such a group, and we were optimistic about its future, we couldn't imagine the tremendous community interest our Mission would generate. Those founding members were: Wendy Conover, John Couch, Susan L. DuBois, Jeffrey Hardy, Naomi Hardy, Ruthanne Hayes Haight, Rosemarie Ives, Charlene Johnston Sugden, Mark Johnston, Virginia Kuhn, Glenn Lampaert, Roy Lampaert, Miguel Llanos, Daryl Martin, Brandon Miller, Tamara Moen, Charles Payton, Holly Plackett, Mark Rovetta, Alan Stein, Nancy Way, and Margaret Evers Wiese. Our first fiscal year was only 6 months long, but by its end in December, we had 72 paid members, and we were off and running! Join us for birthday cake at our June 10th meeting.



1950, the year Lake Sammamish froze solid from shore to shore.

SAMMAMISH: RIVER OR SLOUGH?

Both sentiments and technical arguments continue to accumulate, and it seems most of us would like to say of our town, "A river runs through it." During his decades as owner and editor of the Sammamish Valley News, Bob Bailie recalls, "The first thing every new reporter was told was never use the word slough." He would not print the word, and says it can not be found in his paper. In establishing his initial policy to create consistency, Bob had consulted a dictionary.

As did Roy Buckley who writes: "I have always hated to hear it called the Sammamish Slough. According to Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 1939 edition, a slough is (a) a place of deep mud or mire; (b) a swamp; (c) an inlet from a river; (d) a tide flat or bottomland creek. So unless the definitions have changed in the last 60 years, it is the Sammamish River. Unfortunately, when they held the boat races on the river, they called them "The Sammamish Slough Races," and the name stuck. When I was a child some 70 years ago, when we couldn't get out to Lake Sammamish, we would swim in the river. The annual boat races were a gala event. People would line the banks of the river on both sides to watch the races. Many picnic lunches were eaten during the course of the day. Lots of thrills and spills. Those truly were the good old days."

City Planner Dianna Broadie asked Phil Cohen's opinion. Phil, a hydraulic engineer, concludes that it's now a river, but was once "a river with sloughs."

In the late 1800s, the heyday of local ferry boats, our water in question was called the Squak River Slough, a telling indicator that this was a topic for debate even among our first settlers. Twisting that historic name to please today's majority, we suggest a satisfying compromise while we continue our research: the Sammamish Slough River. (Or, the Sammamish Sliver, as newsletter critic, Jeff Hardy suggests.)

We Have Three Lifetime Members: Anonymous, Margy Rockenbeck, Don Watts

Our Fundraising Chair Margy Rockenbeck's enthusiasm and dedication to our Mission has inspired an Anonymous Benefactor who has pledged \$10,000 per year for the next two years, which will help us move from homeless to a home base. All of us in the Society extend our sincere thanks to this extremely generous party for supporting our work. We are also grateful to Margy and Vice President Don Watts for their handsome financial donations to the Society.

Lifetime Members donate \$1,000 or more.

WELCOME TO REDMOND

Jan Foreman knew he'd eventually find just the right home for it: a blue and white "Welcome to Redmond" sign posted at the City Limits in 1966. We're grateful Jan had such foresight, and he only had to hang onto it for 3 decades - until our Society was formed. The sign gives Redmond's 1950 population as 573, and to appreciate such a small town, reading the Sammamish Valley News of that period, we can enjoy the details of daily life, like who bought a new car, and who had out-of-town visitors. An example from the December 15, 1947 issue: "The Patty twins, Dona and Diane, celebrated their 12th birthdays last week with a party. Twelve of their friends attended and they received many nice gifts." When one of those twins was a little older, she married Jan, the sign's custodian, and became Diane Patty Foreman.

From that same newspaper is a column by Eileen McCoskrie about Lena Schaller Jensen whose interesting life at various times encompassed operating a general store and gas station with her husband Leo Schaller, selling and collecting antique furniture and glassware, and raising chickens. Bob Bailie remembers feeding those animals during Lena's occasional absences when he first moved to Redmond and rented a house next to her roadside storefront home on East Lake Sammamish Parkway.

Leo Schaller was a logger who built a dock on his eastern lakeshore property. The dock started at the nearby train tracks, and extended out into the water 100 feet. Logs were rolled from trains, and then skidded down the dock into the water, where they were gathered into booms and floated to the numerous mills on the lake. The pilings of this early pier can still be seen protruding from the lake which sits about 7 feet lower today, puzzling newcomers with the seemingly mismatched mating of dock and tracks. Just above this scenic spot still stands a little train depot on the Schaller property, now for sale and within the City of Sammamish.

Leo and Lena's daughter, Rhea Schaller Bark, was a talented painter, sculptor and poet who died in 1997. She was a life-long Redmond resident, and a dedicated volunteer. Among her many community services, she spent time recording oral histories of Eileen McCoskrie and other local residents, then donated the tapes to Marymoor Museum. Rhea's son and daughter, David and Diane Bark, have donated two of Rhea's scrapbooks to the Society, books created during her Redmond High School days, the early war years of 1940-42. They've also given us a scrapbook of recipes that their grandmother Lena Schaller Jensen created.

Thank you, David and Diane!

For some interesting statistics, visit the [City's web site](#), maintained by Web Administrator Marta Hurwitz. A sampling of the stats:

Number of Traffic Signals: 63
Annual Mean temperature: 52.8F
Number of Police Officers: 75
Number of Fire Stations: 6
Number of Parks: 13
Number of Schools in City Limits: 9
Miles of Paved Road: 129

Lists We have so many great lists under construction, we now have a Book of Lists. One that's growing quickly is "Redmond Clubs, Groups and Organizations", for which we are seeking founding dates and disbanded dates where applicable. This list indexes groups of every kind: social, business, service, fraternal, church, school, sports. Besides the obvious groups like Scouting, Elks, and the Redmond Saturday

Market (founded 1976 by Georgia B. Erskine), we are acquiring some groups whose history might be lost in 50 years if not documented. For example:

The Ladies' Aid Society (1910-1928)
Spinners and Darners Club
U.S.O. at Nike Site
Redmond Gun Club
C.A.R.E (to save Redmond Golf Links)
Happy Valley Band
Friendly Circle Red Cross (WWII)
Ladies of the Lake

What a lovely name: Ladies of the Lake. This last group was "purely social", as Evelyn King Gilbert explained to Margaret Wiese who recorded some members: Joyce Woodin, Lillian Isaacson, Margaret Breedman, Joanna Jepson, Della Tracy, Evelyn Gilbert, Evelyn's mother, Mrs. King, Mary Ramsey, Gay Rodway, Gay Rodway's mother, Blanche McAuliffe, Luella Dahl, Eleanor Engelbrie, The group existed for about 25 years [late 1940s to c.1975], and was comprised of ladies who lived on or near Lake Sammamish, meeting monthly just for fun, as most already belonged to active service groups.

While most of our lists are in progress as we accumulate information, many of our complete City lists are thanks to the ever-efficient Sandy Marion, Deputy City Clerk. One valuable such list is of City Ordinances. In its 88 years as a city, Redmond has passed 2,061 ordinances, approximately 23 per year. In the early days, many ordinances concerned alcohol and water, saloon revenue and a waterworks being the two primary motivations for incorporating in the first place. And other early ordinances reflect concerns one might expect of small town of 300 initially organizing. Here are a few early ones:

#07 Dog regulating
#08 Horses and mules
#09 Offenses-vagrancy
#10 Motor vehicles, bicycles
#13 Assessing, collecting taxes
#32 Poolrooms
#33 Domestic animals at large
#34 Vicious dogs
#36 Sidewalk constructions
#37 Explosives
#43 Peddlers license
#54 Earwigs

Ummm, #54 is enough to make anyone curious about its substance, this being only a list of Ordinance Titles without content. It seems our new city was quickly bringing

its public nuisances to heel and making the streets safe from mules, vagrants, vicious dogs, peddlers, pool players and earwigs? As earwigs are seldom especially vicious or verifiably vagrant, it's unlikely they were banned from public places, but they surely mean a story, perhaps as good as the caterpillar invasion that stopped trains in their tracks in 1928.

Roy and Glenn Lampaert remember those caterpillars, and they're not the only folks who do, so we would like to add more accounts to the colorful one recorded in the Lampaert's oral history. Let's talk historic tent caterpillars!

And we also solicit your memories of the year Lake Sammamish froze solid from shore to shore-1950 - a record cold winter when the temperature stayed below freezing for 30+ days. [see Frozen Lake photo above.]

Doris Schaible collected a great story when she asked Norma Tosh Schmidt if Norma knew anything to add to the continuing investigation of the first Redmond school bell believed to be in the possession of the City Parks Department. Norma told her that her father, Art Tosh, graduated from Redmond High School about 1921, and was a hell-raiser, but well liked. Norma said, "One summer, my dad and his friends took apart a Motel-T and reassembled it on the roof of the new Redmond Elementary School that was then under construction. Another time, they took a cow and left it upstairs in the school. My dad was mad at the school district because it didn't let him graduate with the rest of his class because of his antics, so - he took the bell." Art Tosh was full of life, and lived to be 90, but as he's unfortunately no longer with us, what he may have done with the old school bell remains a mystery. Was it returned to the school, or another bell substituted for it? Doris would love to hear more. And the next time you're in our New Community Center, imagine coaxing a cow up the stairs to the second floor.

New Group

An Eastside chapter of the Daughters of the American Colonists is being formed, and is looking for a name either related to a local place or an individual, possibly one of our early settlers who had Colonial American ties. Call Ruthanne Hayes Haight with any suggestions at (425)-861-1898. Ruthanne also belongs to the D.A.R., Descendants of Colonial Governors, Magna Charta Dames and Barons, Mayflower Society, and Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War. All these groups welcome new members, and Ruthanne has their information.

Contacts

Here's who to call with ideas and questions:

Fire Department History Boyd and Irene Kinney (425)-222-3677
Selwyn "Bud" Young Biography Doris Schaible

Lake Washington Saddle Club's Galloping Gerties Norma Tosh Schmidt
Novelty Hill/Union Hill Names? Ann Lamb
Redmond High School Year Books, Charlie Lentz, Betty Anderson.
Derby Days Royalty Search, Mary Clare Johnson
Redmond High School Cheerleaders History Kay Brulé (425)-885-1948
Douglass Drugs Photos, Memorabilia Dusty Watts Blair
Redmond School Bells Doris Schaible

Redmonds Reads

Copies of two popular books, Redmond Remembers Its Old Brick Schoolhouse and A Hidden Past, continue to sell at our meetings. See Jo Ann Potter.

Seattle Times reporter and columnist, Sherry Grindeland, is writing a history of the Bellevue Arts and Crafts Fair.

Copies of the Society's first White Paper are now available. Written by Margaret Evers Wiese from her extensive research, the subject is Margaret's grandfather, Robert Cotterill, for whom the Old Schoolhouse auditorium is named. And new in our scanned archives is a photo sure to be a future treasure: Margaret's niece Carrie Hallgarth with the portrait of her great-grandfather Robert, taken by the auditorium doors. Carrie's parents are Monte and Chris Evers Hallgarth.

Save all your old copies of the Sammamish Valley News! We need them!

Thank You! To Some Special Volunteers: Phil Roe, Larry Hoger, Margaret Doman, and Veronica Smirnov.

QUOTES WITH NOTES

"Everyone has something to offer." Vice President Don Watts, appreciating our Society's diverse membership.

"Museums and heritage organizations throughout King County help to foster a sense of community identity and pride and to bridge the generations." King County Executive Ron Sims, on the number of new and expanding local heritage groups in the last ten years.

"Single-family housing may be priced right out of the market for most people before long. This year, it's estimated the average cost of a new home in Redmond is \$50,000." Julian Sayers, Redmond Planning Director, 1975.

"You know all the answers but nobody asks you the questions." From Bob Sollitto's list of evidence proving you're getting older, and Bob knows something about

evidence, having been Redmond's Police Chief from 1963 to 1980. Other signs of aging from Bob's list: Everything hurts. And what doesn't hurt, doesn't work. Your children begin to look middle aged, and you need your glasses to find your glasses.

June 10th is our last meeting until fall. We meet at the Redmond Library at 10:30am! We do not meet in July or August.

Fall Meetings: September 9th October 14th November 11th

See you at the next meeting June 10th

Naomi Hardy