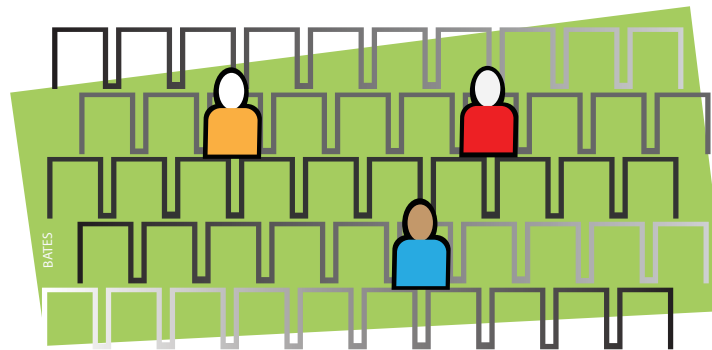


Where Are The Joiners?

by Jerry Bates

Many clubs, societies and organizations on South Hill struggle with attracting and building membership. It's especially difficult to interest younger people. There is nothing unusual about our community on the Hill, it's the result of a generational shift national in scope.

America has seen a steady decline in joiners and meeting goers. Beginning in the 1960s and '70s and accelerating into the '80s and '90s, the fabric of community life began to unravel. Membership was on a downhill slide in PTAs, Unions and organizations such as the Elks, Moose, Lions, PTA, 4-H, Rotary, Grange, and the League of Women Voters. This is not only a problem for national organizations because local community groups are also on the same downward path. Not only membership numbers are decreasing across the board, but "active" involvement and participation. Between 1973 and 1994, the number of men



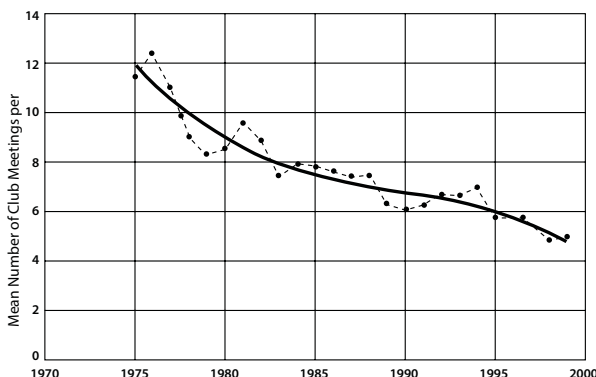
and women who took any leadership role in local organizations decreased 50%. Active involvement in local clubs and organizations of all sorts fell by more than half in the last several decades of the twentieth century and the trend is increasing. Many

Americans claim to be "members" of various national and local groups, but spend little time working in an organization. They have stopped doing committee work, serving as officers and going to meetings. If the current rate of decline continues, clubs and societies will become extinct within the next twenty years.

This all sounds pretty grim! The above data is from thousands of interviews, surveys, and studies from different organizations and universities compiled in the book *Bowling Alone* by Robert D. Putnam. This 2001 sociological work covers a wide range of social and civic trends since World War II — from picnicking to voting to churchgoing. With many charts and data, *Bowling Alone* shows a dramatic decline in Americans' willingness to participate in social or civic activities. This writer cannot adequately review a book of this scope (544 pages) with a brief article in our small newsletter. However, what follows are a few selected topics that touch on trends affecting community groups such as our Society. Also included a bit of history and a look to the future.

The Age Factor

A person's age is one of the strongest predictors of social engagement. Successive generations fol-



Club meeting Attendance Dwindles, 1975—1999

From *Bowling Alone* Robert D. Putnam

lowing the WWII generation, the Boomers (born between 1946 & 1964) and the Gen X'ers (born between 1965 & 1980) have shown an accelerating downward trend in joining, trusting, voting, church attending and volunteering. Members of the generation born in 1920s belonged to almost twice as many civic associations as do members of the generation of their grandchildren born in the late 1960s. The Boomers and X'ers tripled from one out of every four adults to three out of four in the early 1970s. While the seniors' numbers remained relatively steady in the 1990s their attendance at club meetings went from 24% to 38% as fewer younger people were joining. The older generation is holding up more than its share of civic burden.

History

Large spurts in American civic and voluntary involvement followed major wars. After the Civil War, five of the largest associations of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries were created—the Knights of Pythias, the Grange, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, the Ancient Order of United Workmen, and the Grand Army of the Republic. A similar spurt followed World War I. More relevant, however, is the extraordinary burst of civic activity after the Second World War with new organizations such as the PTA, Lions Club, and the Boy Scouts to name a few in a long list. There was also a burst in local social activities following WW II from league bowling and card playing to churchgoing and United Way giving. The war caused intense patriotism and local civic activism. Eighty percent of men born in 1920s served in the armed forces during WW II — forming the core of the 'greatest' generation. Every facet of society was actively involved in the war effort from movie stars to Red Cross workers to high school kids in scrap metal drives. Such activities in a common cause generated comradeship and well-being, which enhanced and created a future civic-minded generation. Then things changed dramatically in sixties, seventies and eighties.

Why?

Something happened over the last third of the twentieth century. Why did community life in America unravel? What changed that would account for the dramatic drop-off? The book's

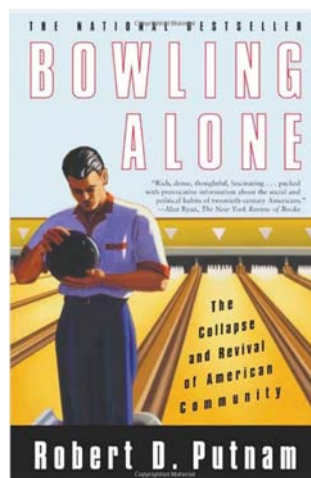
author, Robert D. Putnam, doesn't suggest the lack of major wars as a reason or a solution to this puzzle. There is no single issue that solves the mystery. He covered many reasons put forth by many authors and scholars over the years but narrowed them down to four major influences.

- First, pressures of time and money, two-career families, and a hectic life style affording less time for community activity.
- Second, suburbanization requiring more commuting with occupations and daily errands spread across many, sometimes distant, locations diluting a sense of community.
- Third, electronic entertainment and communication, TV especially, keeps people home along with Internet-based social media negating face-to-face contact and narrowing diversity of friends.
- Fourth, and most important, is generational changes in values — the civic generation is being replaced by less involved children and grandchildren.

According to Putnam, these four trends in modern American life count for perhaps 80% of the problem.

Hope

Mr. Putnam lets history come to the rescue with a possible solution. He compares the transition from the Gilded Age to the Progressive Era (1890s-1920s) as similar to our own time. Then technological, economic, and social changes transformed American life. That period— like ours — held great promise of technological advance with unparalleled prosperity alongside deep poverty. There was a widening gap between rich and poor with floods of immigrants changing the complexion of America. Yet, this period with all its problems would sprout the most powerful era of reform in American history. The Progressives pushed for change and adaptation, revitalized civic life, and launched a boom in association building. A club movement started such as Boys & Girls Clubs, fraternities and sororities— all preparing the young for a future of civic engagement. Countless adult organizations emerged such as the Rotary, Kiwanis, Lions Club, American Legion, Masons, Sierra Club, Jay-



cees, and labor movement groups. Women's clubs mushroomed. Political organizations rivaling the New Deal were created, addressing consumer protection and the eight-hour day. Putman advocates that we innovate today as the Progressives did creating a new set of institutions and channels to reinvigorate civic life. He includes suggestions for the workplace, the schools and the community. He takes ideas from the modern megachurches and suggests ways to adapt the Internet and electronic mass media technology to encourage face-to-face social networks.

Perhaps such revitalization is ahead of us. Hopefully, we may see such a renewal start to build—a general willingness of people in all age groups to get more involved. In the years since the book was published, the Millennials—those reaching adulthood after 2000—are showing an increase in community involvement compared to their parents, in part encouraged by school curricula requiring community based volunteer work. Let's hope a trend is building. History cycles. Maybe the people of suburbia (South Hill) will equal their parents, grandparents and great-grandparents as joiners and meeting goers.

How it looked in the 1920s



Our April Speaker, member Art Foxford, shared some oldies from the family album—pictures taken before he was born. These photos were mostly of the Foxford and Gabrielson families on their South Hill farms during the early 1920s. The slide on the wall behind Art shows his father, Ole' and his father's brother, William.

Art's family came west from Illinois in the sum-

mer of 1920. His mother's friend, who lived in Sumner, coaxed them to Washington writing, "You've got to come out here; it's God's country." After his father lost his job, said Art, they "got on a train for Washington...with my infant older sister in a dresser drawer." They arrived in Sumner and set up temporary shelter on their friend's farm, located on today's Sumner High School athletic field. The Foxfords later bought property and built a cabin on South Hill. Their property was next to the Gabrielson farm where the two families became very close. As Art's pictures show, the Hill residents during these times were mostly living in humble cabins on a landscape of stumps, quite different from today's environment. Timber remains from the logged off Hill in the form of leftover trees, and many huge stumps were put to good use for heating, cooking and building.

Officers Change

During our June general meeting we hold our annual Officer election. Our Election Committee Chairperson is Beverly Zook, who working with committee member Joan Vosler prepared the 2015-16 slate of SHHS candidates.



Beverly Zook

Announcements

President Bob Ballou informed us this would be his last term as society president. Paul Hackett is resigning as Public Relations Coordinator.

Most standing officers volunteered their services for another year and were re-elected. Beverly Zook offered her self-nomination to fill Paul Hackett's office of Public Relations Coordinator. Her nomination was seconded and all 2015-16 officers were approved by those in attendance.

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Public Relations Coordinator
Research Coordinator
Treasurer
Newsletter Editor, Webmaster

Bob Ballou
Terry Maves
Pat Drake
Beverly Zook
Carl Vest
Ben Peters
Jerry Bates

Collector of 'lore'

May's speaker, Dale Wirsing, has quite a resumé. Author (of *Builders, Brewers, and Burghers* and co-author with wife Marlene of *Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Tacoma*), Dale is a former college teacher, writer and reporter for various newspapers including *The Tacoma News Tribune*. He holds degrees from University of Puget Sound and Stanford University, earning his PhD from Washington State University. Dale is currently president of the Tacoma Historical Society.



Dale Wirsing

Dale gives many presentations on a variety of subjects regarding Pierce County history. For our group, he chose “The Mountain Highway: The History We Drive Past.”

The mountain highway has always been part of Dale's life. As a child, he remembers his parents taking him on Sunday drives to the mountain. “One of the things that always intrigued me was the little church in Elbe with the German lettering (Kirche) — I knew my ancestry was German,” said Dale.

He told us that before Highway 7, there was a road to the mountain. “The Indian Henry Trail went from Commencement Bay through Fern Hill on up to the slopes of the Mountain. Fern Hill (S. 84th & Thompson St.) has about ten different monuments because it's the intersection of the Indian Henry Trail and the Byrd-Mill Road from Puyallup to the Byrd gristmill in Steilacoom.”

Dale stated, “Indian Henry was a fascinating fellow... he saw the arrival of the white people as a business opportunity and understood their ways, got along well with them, [and] he named his son Wickersham after a Tacoma attorney he did business with.”

When white people began appearing in the Puget Sound area, starting with the earliest—Captain Vancouver in 1792—they have been fascinated with Mount Rainier (Mt. Tacoma to later Tacoma). Dale had an image on his computer of a painting of the mountain by the famous American Artist Albert Bierstadt of the Hudson River School of artists.

Dale told us of many interesting characters such as August Valentine Kautz. He arrived in America with his parents from Germany as a one-year-old. Later in life he was an officer at Fort Steilacoom. Kautz led an early attempt to climb the mountain. He thought he had summited but historians have since discovered he actually was on Point Success. Columbia Crest is the highest point. He served in the Civil War and the Indian War in New Mexico. Today, his descendants are in the Nisqually Tribe. Dale told us that like many officers stationed here “at the edge of the world,” he had a Native wife.

Another of Dale's favorite characters is Beecher Van Trump who, along with Hazard Stevens (son of Isaac Stevens, first territorial governor), made the first documented climb of the mountain in 1870. Van Trump was the first advocate for making the mountain a National Park. Dale's stories continued highlighting several colorful characters and history associated with the mountain highway, such as the town of Elbe—“nostalgia junction”—and its church; Elk Plain and the Hudson's Bay Company; James Longmire; Bob Wickersham; Henry Lutkins; and Christine Falls.

Dale concluded by telling us he doesn't see himself as an historian but a “collector of lore” — much to our benefit! We hope Dale will visit us again and share more of his collected lore.

Watch all of Dale's talk, it's available on DVD, contact Bob Ballou at mail@southhillhistory.com.

Dave Hackett Loved His School Years on South Hill

After an introduction by his father, member Paul Hackett, Dave Hackett thanked his parents for making his childhood so “rich and wonderful.” He began his story with the family moving to South Hill in 1968 after spending two years in Saudi Arabia.

As a Firgrove student in 5th and 6th grades, Dave told many stories of Saudi Arabia and his family’s travels—earning him the nickname among his classmates “Da-vaad the Arab.” Outside of school, he quickly became part of his new surroundings, picking valley berries in the summers, becoming a paperboy, and joining the “free-range” children of that generation — “gone all day home at sundown.”

David became socially conscious thanks to his Dad. Paul Hackett had started a church “The Shepherd of the Hill” with meetings at the Fruitland Grange where David said he had a “wonderful” junior high youth group. Through his father he became aware of migrant workers who picked berries and lived in appalling conditions. Paul Hackett authored the first Landlord Tenant Act, a statute that helped to regulate or provide better housing conditions for them. “Way to go, Dad!” said Dave.

He found himself in a “high school” right out of “grade school.” Ballou Junior High was still under construction so seventh graders were sent to the new Rogers High School. At that time, the high school had no senior class. Dave said, “There was a huge age difference between 7th grade boys and 11th grade boys.” After construction on Ballou was completed, his class returned and became the first graduating class from Ballou to enter Rogers High School.

Dave said his high school experience had a very strong influence on him, “especially the music department, English class, Journalism and student government.”

In his junior year, he became Editor of the Rogers High School paper, *The Commoner* — and fortunately for us — Dave has donated those papers to our Society, a real time capsule of the 1970s. The students wrote articles on the resignation of Vice President Spiro Agnew; Nixon’s selection of Gerald Ford; Nixon’s [near] impeachment; the

energy crisis; long gas lines; and such burning issues as how long Rogers’ boys could let their hair grow—nothing like the radical Beatles! Dave remarked on how the times have changed, citing the papers were “overtly Christian with Christian messages even denigrating other religions.”



Dave Hackett

Dave enumerated some of his many experiences during his high school years. He served in student government and was elected student body president. He played trombone in concert, stage and prep band. The band was named the best pep band in Washington state. His voice made him a regular leading the national anthem at football and basketball games and a member

of the all-Northwest choir. He was chosen one of two outstanding juniors. We heard other stories including scuba diving for a stolen safe; his introduction to the airwaves on Channel 13; a jury duty summons while still in high school; preservation of Class 1 soils; and visiting his missionary aunt and uncle in South Korea.

After high school, he graduated from the University of Washington with a degree in Economics and taught in South Korea. On his return, he married his wife, Sandra. They have three daughters—the youngest currently a junior at the University of Washington.

He earned his Master of Divinity at Fuller Seminary in Oxford, England, and currently works for an organization that helps link churches, ministries and agencies to a mission someplace around the world. He makes ten to twelve trips a year to

the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and across the US. This is his 30th year as an ordained Presbyterian clergy. Sandy is also a pastor in Seattle at the Lake City Presbyterian Church.

Dave summed up his talk saying he really treasured growing up on South Hill, “a great place to grow up, excellent education at Firgrove, Ballou and Rogers High School ... I was fortunate to live here and enjoy the environment of South Hill.”

Dave’s complete presentation is available on DVD, contact Bob Ballou at mail@southhillhistory.com.

Marsupial Visit

By Debbie Burtnett

While living on South Hill, we had many visitors to our backyard located on a greenbelt near the gravel pit. One night, a common sight from the South startled me—an opossum family took up residence near our yard, inspiring research into what were ‘possums doing in the Pacific Northwest?

I learned that *Didelphis virginianus* was indigenous to the Americas, first populating Central and South America 65 million years ago. They nearly died out in North America, but 20 million years ago the creatures rebounded and spread northward and westward about the turn of the 20th century. John Smith in 1608 wrote in his Map of Virginia the first description of the North American critter: “An opossum hath an head like a Swine, and a taile like a Rat, and is of the bignes of a Cat. Under her belly she hath a bagge, wherein she lodgeth, carrieth, and sucketh her young.”

The opossum was introduced to California from South Carolina either as a freed pet or “in an attempt to raise opossums as fur-bearers”—because its fur was soft and a cheaper alternative to other more expensive furs. At the same time, the Virginia opossum was introduced to Oregon and WA state in 1910-20 and has spread to British Columbia, Canada. It was also intentionally introduced to the West during the Great Depression as a source of food. In fact, a recipe in *The Epi-*

Continued on page 8

2015 Scholarship Award



Sierra White

Every spring, our Treasurer Ben Peters represents the South Hill Historical Society during scholarship ceremonies at either Rogers or Emerald Ridge High Schools. Our Society awards a \$500 scholarship from a fund set up by an anonymous member to a deserving senior heading off to college. This year’s recipient was Sierra White of Emerald Ridge High School. Sierra plans to major in History and Secondary Education at Boise State or Portland State University.

A Message from Olivia Inglin, last year's SHHS scholarship recipient

I just wanted to reach out to the Puyallup Historical Society and give an update of how my first year of schooling at Western Washington University went. All the courses I took over my three quarters were incredibly interesting, and have encouraged my enjoyment of the study of both history and political science. Likewise, both my writing skills and my ability to read for purpose have increased significantly. By far my favorite course was the History of Religion in early America. It opened my eyes to a lot of new information, and was always interesting to learn about. Overall, this year has been great, and has allowed me to decide that I want to make American History a focus for my studies as well as future career. Once again, I want to thank you for your contribution to my schooling,



Olivia Inglin

without it, this year would not have been nearly as successful for me. Have a wonderful summer! I look forward to keeping in touch and hearing about what the society is doing in the Puyallup area.

*Sincerely,
Olivia Inglin*

From the Treasurer

by Ben Peters

Welcome to New Members

**Susan Beals
&
Dan Ingram**

Please call, e-mail or write any change of address to me, Ben Peters, 253-845-7028, poppa-ben2002@yahoo.com, 14602 106th Avenue Court E., South Hill, WA 98374.

Also, don't forget that we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Dues, donations, etc., are fully deductible from your income taxes if you are able to do so. If you need a receipt for tax purposes, contact Ben.

Dues Reminder

I will attach a sticky note to the Society newsletter mailed closest to your renewal date. **No need to fill out the membership form unless there is a change of some kind.**

The South Hill Historical Society meets regularly on the THIRD TUESDAY of the month, 11:00 AM, (no meetings July and August) at The Highlands in the Community Center. This complex is located at 502 43rd Ave. SE, adjacent to and east of the Mel Korum YMCA.

We welcome you to our monthly meetings. For more information, contact Paul Hackett at (253) 845-7691.

In Memoriam

The South Hill Historical Society
regrets the passing of

Bernice Fisher Rinehart

Our Current Members

Andy G. Anderson	Mike Kupfer
Andy & Ruth Anderson	Art & Lorraine Larson
Elizabeth Anema	Gary Leicht
Marion Armstrong	Terry Maves
Bob Ballou	Laurienne Stewart Minnich
Jerry Bates	Kaye Murrell
Susan Beals	Carolyn Nelson
Katherine Bennett	Dorothy Nelson
Teresa Best	Juanita & John Nordin
Marilyn Burnett	Mark & Dorothy Norris
Debbie Burtnett	Wes & Suzy Perkinson
Vernon Cox	Ben Peters
Dave & Patti Curtiss	Bill Riley
Robert & Lynn Daughtery	Sheila Rinker
Karen Day	Vern Rockstad
James H. Dixon	Helen Rohlman
Pat Drake	Earl Root
Joan Ellis	Stan Salmon
Arthur & Luverne Foxford	Lori Stock
Ira Gabrielson	Marge (Crosson) Swain
Mary Glaser	Ralph & Yvonne Thorpe
Paul Hackett	Jade Trevere
Alberta Hagen	Margo L. & Joe Tucci
Cecil & Doris Herbert	Lee Van Pevenage
Evelyn Swalander Hess	Carl Vest
Wilma Walsworth Hinshaw	Neil & Celia Vincent
Alan & Linda Hoenhaus	Joan Vosler
Joe & Rhoda Hoenhaus	W. Louise Walsworth
Maybelle Hoenhaus	W. Lynn Williams
Matt Holm	Lenore Nicolet Winton
Leslie Huff	Ed Zeiger
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John Knierim	Allan S. & Ellen M. Zulauf
Myrna K. Kucklick	Beverly Zook

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Marsupial Visit *Continued from page 6*

curean, circa 1962, describes how to prepare the opossum for cooking—‘trap it, feed it a certain diet for ten days, kill it; clean but do not skin. Treat as for pig...Parboil...one hour. Roast as for pork...Serve with: Turnip greens.’ The recipe was rated NV—not for vegetarians! Holy Beverly Hillbillies! While Elly May was treating opossums as pets, Granny was planning a meal!

This marsupial easily adapted to many habitats, explaining its ability to survive since the time of dinosaurs. In 2009, University of Florida scientists found evidence that North America was the center of origin for all living marsupials. Various Web sites exist hailing the native American that is the opossum. William J. Krause and Winifred A. Krause (from the University of Missouri) published *The Opossum: Its Amazing Story* in 2006, a book to teach children--full of interesting data including their strange ability to resist snake venom, poisons, and rabies. Other Web sites are devoted to opossums — *opossumsocietyus.org* fea-

tures Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and the National Opossum Society can be accessed via *www.opossum.org*. *Living with Wildlife* describes opossums and facts about WA state opossums, noting that their lifespan is normally 2.5 years, but often do not survive two years in the wild due to their taste for “road-killed animals, including other opossums...[so] they become road kill themselves.”



Visitor in the night

Photo by Debbie Burtnett



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To: