



HERITAGE CORRIDOR

# History On The Hill

The Newsletter of the South Hill Historical Society

Volume 8 Issue 4 Fall 2010

## The curious-looking old McMillin Bridge

by Jerry Bates

Most of us have probably crossed the old, narrow, McMillin Bridge while heading to or from Ortling. The bridge is just south of 128th Street intersection on SR162 (Pioneer Way, or the Ortling Highway for us old-timers). This intersection was once the town of McMillin. Although the bridge and the



**The old McMillin bridge crossing the Puyallup River, its days may be numbered**

site of McMillin falls outside of South Hill historical boundaries, it's close-enough to the western ridge of The Hill to fudge a bit for this story.

The bridge has been in the news recently, and sad to say, it is destined for demolition. This piece of local history will be replaced by a new span across the Puyallup River, just east of the old bridge.

### **Odd-looking bridge**

You may have noticed while approaching the bridge how unusual it looks. Most old bridges in this area have arching steel trusses to support them. Newer more modern bridges are wide concrete spans that hardly differ from the highways they connect to — with no visible support structure.

In the evolution of bridge building, the McMillin bridge is one of a kind — a missing link, between the steel truss bridge and the wide pre-stressed trussless concrete spans of today.

The old McMillin Bridge is so unique

in American bridge building history that it's on the National Register of Historic places. When it was built in 1934-35, it was the longest concrete truss bridge in the United States.

### **The raging Puyallup**

A flood swept through the Puyallup Valley in the winter of 1933, washing out the old steel span formerly at the McMillin site. A new bridge was needed, but times were tough. The cost of a replacement bridge was an especially important issue back then, for this was during the Great Depression. A proposed concrete alternative structure was \$826 cheaper than the lowest bid for a steel bridge of a length necessary to prevent another washout. The lower cost alternative con-

*Story continues on page 3*

# 2010 at the Fair “Free Your Glee”



**South Hill Historical Society announced their Website at the Fair [www.southhillhistory](http://www.southhillhistory.com)**

Again this year, thanks to the hard work and display skills of our fair coordinator, Debbie Burtnett, our booth was better than ever! The display took on a new look with the addition of a two-foot by six-foot color banner, visible from a distance, announced “South Hill Historical Society” and our Website address. Debbie managed to get updated South Hill aerial shots, thanks to the generosity of the Abbey Road Land Development Group. Debbie’s contact at Abbey Road, Gil Hulsman, has offered to further embellish these maps with historical call-outs for next year’s display. Our volunteers were stretched a bit thin this year due to five straight days of manning the booth. Perhaps next year we will revert to our usual three-day run. Debbie arranged to get prime real estate in the Education Pavilion, just as last year, an end booth on the main aisle. The Society thanks Denny Nelson and Stan Cross of the Puyallup Fair administration for their help.

Many thanks also to the volunteers/docents and helpers including:  
Bob Ballou; Olive Parks McDonough; Roy and Sheila Rinker; Joan Parks Vosler; Jerry Bates for

set-up and take-down; Becky Stahl; Paul Hackett; Katie Bennett; Ed and Betty Zeiger; Marilyn G. Burnett; Diny Thun Robinson; Hans Zeiger, Sheila and Roy Rinker; Don and Mary Glaser; Ed and Debbie Burtnett; ‘Doc’ and Delores Huff; Lynn Williams; Bonnie Starkel; Lenore Winton; and Maybelle Hoenhaus. A special thanks to those who worked multiple shifts and/or multiple dates.



**Booth volunteers, Hans Zeiger and Becky Stahl talk with a display visitor during this year’s Fair.**

## McMillin Bridge Continued...

crete version was chosen.

The bridge was to be designed by Homer M. Hadley, one of Washington's most innovative and influential bridge designers. He was fascinated with concrete's potential for bridge building early in his career. In 1920, ahead of his time, he proposed a concrete floating bridge between Seattle and Mercer Island. However, the young designer couldn't convince local bankers or potential investors of such a radical concept. Such a bridge was eventually built, but by others.

### A cement bridge

The cement trusses that support the McMillin Bridge are of a concrete box design, hollow on the inside. Concrete was poured around hollow forms to make them. Steel reinforcements were used only where these pieces joined each other. The connected trusses formed two banks on each side of the bridge. Each side was so rigid there was no need to connect them from above. The cement truss structures on both sides were wide enough to enclose a walkway that passes through each side of the bridge.

The bridge has definitely stood the test of time, but not the flow and volume of modern traffic. Its narrow width makes for a tense experience when passing oncoming cars and trucks at fifty miles per hour.

### Can the old bridge be saved?

Since the McMillin Bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it may be spared from demolition; i.e., if members of the Pierce County Landmarks and Historic Preservation Commission can make a strong enough case to spare it to the Washington State Department of Transportation. Many historical arguments can be made to preserve it. A case is even being made for leaving it as an additional lahar route out of the area.

Let us hope the old structure stays in place. It is an interesting sight to behold. After the new bridge is finished, one might view an old steel truss bridge — the old railroad bridge next to the McMillin bridge — now part of the Foothill

Trail; the old concrete truss bridge (the McMillin bridge) and beside it a modern, wide, pre-stressed concrete span, all three crossing the Puyallup River alongside each other. An evolution of bridge building on display!

For more information on the bridge project or to get involved with consulting parties, call Roger Kiers at the Washington State Department of Transportation at 360-705-7000.

## The Naches Trail

*Editor's Note: the following is taken from a brochure produced this summer by Andy Anderson, Marley & Gary Shurtleff and yours truly, Jerry Bates, for the Naches Trail Coalition.*

**The Naches Trail** crosses the Cascade Range through Naches Pass, roughly from today's Bonney Lake in the west to Yakima in the east. Later the name was applied to the route from Walla Walla to Steilacoom as an extension of the Oregon Trail.

This route was used by Native American peoples to travel from one side of the mountains to the other for food and trade purposes. One of the earliest written accounts of the use of this trail tells of the travel of a Lt. Johnson of the United States Exploring Expedition (Wilkes Expedition), crossing on horseback, as the Expedition explored the Pacific Northwest in 1841. Theodore Winthrop described an 1853 trip over the trail in *The Canoe and The Saddle*.

In 1847, an article in the *Oregon Spectator* described a trip from Walla Walla to Fort Nisqually. Six years later, in 1853, a series of actions was initiated by the western communities to induce its use by pioneers coming west on the Oregon Trail. Citizens of the territory had collected funds and began work widening the trail over the mountains for use by wagons under the direction of Edward Jay Allen. Meanwhile the Longmire-Biles wagon party left Walla Walla, anticipating that the work would be sufficiently done for them to take their wagons over this route. *The Columbian* newspaper carried the story of a developing road, but the reality did not match the expectations of oncoming pioneers.

The tale of the crossing that Ezra Meeker recounts in his 1905 book, *Pioneer Reminiscences of Puget Sound* may overstate the hardships of the pioneer party, but not by much. It is clear that parties from the west bearing food were necessary to assist the oncoming party, whose joy, upon reaching the Puyallup River near Alderton and finding it choked with salmon (*Longmire, Told by the Pioneers*), must have been palpable.

In 1854 at least one party of pioneers used the trail (*Yantis, Ebey, Meeker accounts*), but after that its use isn't well documented. The trail was used by both sides in the Indian war of 1855/56.

Edward Huggins, a clerk at the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Nisqually, related two accounts of use of the trail in 1855 and 1860, one by the Company's Fur Brigade, bringing furs to the fort, and later when he drove a herd of horses over the pass.

In the early 1860s the road was promoted as a route to Wenatchee gold fields. A typical headline in the *Puget Sound Herald* read: "New Gold Discovery, Gold found on all the streams near Naches Pass: Miners earn from \$40 to \$60 per day." (*Puget Sound Herald, July 16, 1858, Steilacoom, Washington Territory.*)

Gustav Rosenthal, an Olympia merchant, reported in 1869 collecting a subscription of some four hundred dollars and hiring James Longmire to superintend construction of a wagon road through the pass. He reported that a Sam Coulter brought a band of cattle over the new road "which produced very choice beef." (*Blankenship, Early History of Thurston County.*)

James Longmire himself reported herding sheep over the trail in 1877, and related that several other parties were bringing cattle as well. ("*Rough trip across the Mountains,*" *The Tacoma Herald. October 27, 1877.*)

To celebrate the centennial of the first crossing, a group of jeepsters hacked and gouged a route over the pass in 1953, and since then the trail has been heavily used by motorbikes and off-road vehicles. (*McCune, Exploration Northwest, "Jeeping on the Meeker Trail" Video, 1961.*) A proposed road through the pass was added to the state highway system in 1943, and is still in state statutes as State Route 168 but has never been built.

The Naches Trail is being considered for designation as a National Historic Trail under the National Trails System Act.



# September General Meeting

By Debbie Burnett



**Shane Klingenstein of Edward Jones revisits the Society**

The first meeting after our summer break (July & August) featured speaker Shane Klingenstein of Edward Jones Investments. In his introduction of Shane, Paul Hackett noted that it had been five years since Shane Klingenstein, had addressed the Society. The Society's goal, said Paul, "is to make sure there is still a society in future years...."

Shane focused on personal financial planning as well as the Society's future security.

What do you do with your money over a lifetime as investors? Shane asked.

We go through three stages in our lives in terms of money. The first stage is to accumulate money--save, invest, buy property, etc. The second stage is the transfer of money--on what do we spend our money? And third is the preservation of our money. How can we have enough to live on and leave something of a legacy? Money provides a way for one "to think about your estate and your sphere of influence."

Commenting that this is the last year to die without paying estate taxes, Shane joked that one way to transfer that money is to "die this year." Joan Vosler said, "Yeah, leave things to your kids now; higher taxes are coming." Shane called these the "sunset rules." The new rules are to offset a \$13 trillion budget deficit. For example, a person or couple bringing home over a million dollars will be taxed at a rate of 55%. Most of us will fall into the 38% range. So, what can you do while still alive?

1) Look at trusts (there's a marriage penalty) and 2) Use financial advisors; e.g., people at banks which then benefit from using the trust.

Shane described his job as "educating a family," but he also noted that one can use an attorney but you must know what questions to ask. Shane distributed packets to help members educate themselves on what questions to ask. Shane also stated that he recalled the Society's goals of some five years ago and added that "with a little education, I believe that vision a number of you have can be fulfilled..."

As an advisor to the Renton Historical Society, Shane helped a gentleman who was a known history buff, single with no descendants and who collected historical items. The man donated his million-dollar estate, including a house, to be used as a museum. Then, that group teamed up with the city of Renton and focused on one thing--creating their museum.

Shane's overall advice was for us to focus [as individuals] on one thing--the use of the Individual Retirement Account (IRA). He suggested giving 5% directly to charity, otherwise, that money is taxed when one leaves an estate. In the meantime, that money is a tax deduction. Shane ended his talk with some practical observations. "The government has to tax us more because of all the entitlements out there."

He fielded a few questions from the members--a lot of them about life insurance. Shane said that Washington State millionaires and billionaires buy life insurance policies to pay estate taxes. He stated that "you can give \$13,000/yr. to any living human being and a piece to any

charity.”

Yvonne Thorpe asked Shane to explain the meaning of a trust. Is it taxed? she asked. Yes, answered our guest, who also “recommended a revocable trust which is user-friendly [as opposed to an irrevocable trust]. The grantor (you and your spouse) hire a trustee (such as a financial advisor) to give your estate to a beneficiary (say, to a child or children). A remainder trust is that which you leave upon your death and goes tax free to a charity. If you don’t have a will and no one claims your property, the state gets it.

As for wills, Shane advised in answer to a question that LegalZoom.com was OK and that he believed in its service. He also suggested the use of a Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA), which whether you are alive or dead, allows someone to sign legal documents for you--such as checks and the like. He said you can get a free health care directive form from Good Samaritan Hospital.

When asked about the costs of a will, Shane estimated \$500 using an attorney; or one can use Quicken Willmaker or Costco’s “will in a box” which is better than nothing. Write it yourself, and use a notary.

Shane closed with a reminder to the group that “[your] product is the history of this area” and how important that is to future residents and our descendants.

Among other topics discussed at the September meeting, Carl Vest, our Research Historian, reminded everyone of the significant date of October 8, the earliest arrival of the Longmire-Biles party over the Naches Pass Trail Road [also known as a cutoff and by other names]. Carl continued with a short history of the migration over the Naches Pass in 1853. *See page 3 in this issue for more information on the Naches Pass.*

### Special Notice!

Due to the Holidays, the December South Hill Historical Society General Meeting date has changed to **December 14th** at the regular time.

# October General Meeting

By Debbie Burtnett



**Bron Smith, artist, writer, speaker, television personality (creator of the 1980s South Hill business cartoon map)**

Vice-President Hans Zeiger introduced the guest speaker, cartoonist and historian Fun Map Cartographer, Bron Smith. Bron, a former television writer and personality known as Stormy the Sailor, thanked Ben and Hans for the opportunity to address the Society. Bron described his background as an actor and artist who participated in ensemble casts in Los Angeles, CA. When he was with Channel 13, he was a weathercaster and when his program as Captain SeaTac was cancelled, Bron “reinvented myself” by starting a mural business.

One of his first jobs was the mural in Rancho Romano, a restaurant. He called his company Murals and More. Then, one night in 1982 at exactly 10:30 PM, an idea came to him--an idea with which he had no experience except as an

“artist and cartoonist.” He decided to become a cartoonist who made maps. It took him five months of selling ads to produce the mock-up of Puyallup and South Hill.

Yet, Bron, who lived near Woodland School, was nervous. “Where do I start?” he asked himself as he drove south on Meridian and past 152nd Street. There, he stopped where he heard a small store’s tinkling bell--the Top 20 Sandwich Shop. “I gave Bob and Cathy McConnell my pitch and walked out 45 minutes later just overjoyed! I had sold my first ad for \$275!”

Bron’s idea grew and he eventually built a Website and “...now I do projects all over the world and rank on top in the Google listings...” Bron said he adjusted his idea over the years, took baby steps, and saw his idea grow. “Just this morning, Bron stated, “I accepted a job from a New York City organization, a world movement that encourages Jews to move to Israel.” His project will be to map an area south of Jerusalem in the Negev Desert which will draw American Jews there for settlement.

About four years ago, the FunMapsUSA.com Website got Bron off the road. He decided to become the world’s largest cartoon cartographer in the world...and it’s where I devote much of my time.”

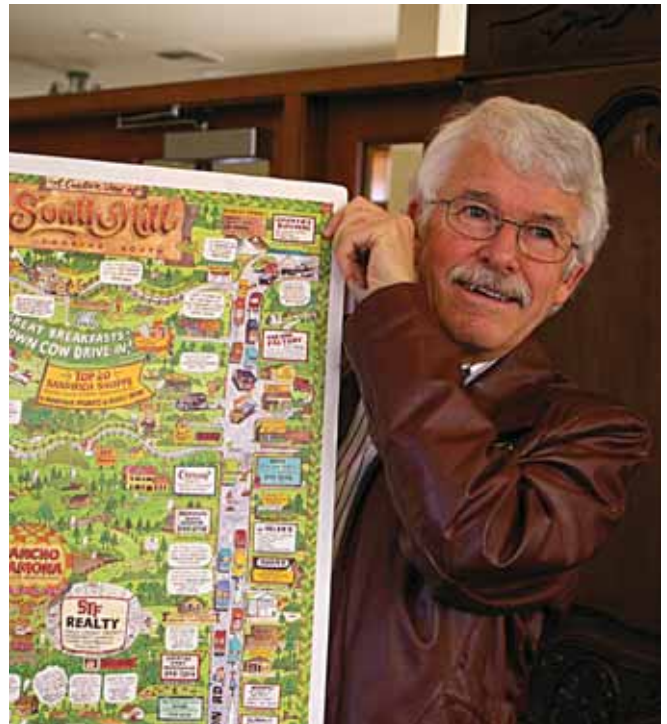
Bron’s decision to use a smaller (11x17) , placemat sized format “really took off. Laminate! Presto, a placemat.” He found the new size more effective and useful for customers.

Recalling fondly his first map of Puyallup-South Hill, he remembered people and places long gone including Gary of Brown Cow; Clyde’s Water Slide at 112th and Meridian; the South Hill Saloon; the Piggly-Wiggly; and the Exxon Station, but noted there was NO South Hill Mall. To this day, Bron reminisced, the South Hill map has been “the most successful.” The Society has approached Bron about updating the South Hill Fun Map.

In addition to maps, Bron addresses school children dressed in a jungle outfit with an Indiana Jones-style Fedora. He knew he wanted

to be a cartoonist from an early age, and sold his first cartoon during the 8th grade for \$3.50. His message to children and young people is to “practice, practice and encourage yourself as early as possible” to achieve success. He adds, “...follow your dreams.”

Bron’s original map is owned by the South Hill Historical Society, a bequest of a former president of Key Bank.



**Bron Smith described the process of making his Fun Maps. “During the 1980s, I used pencil, inked it, then applied wet paint.” Today, he uses Photoshop 2005 which has brightened the colors. All of his work begins on paper and Bron tends to hide in local area coffee shops to sketch his art. “It works well for me,” he noted.**

## In Memoriam

The South Hill Historical Society  
regrets the passing of charter member

### **Vivian Wepfer**

April 19, 1925 - November 6, 2010

# Naches Coalition November Meeting

The Naches Coalition was formed last April. Previous to the birth of the Coalition, a series of meetings was hosted by Dave Welch of the Oregon & California Trails Association. The purpose of these gatherings was to promote and map the Naches Pass Trail. These and meetings that followed, have been attended by members of the South Hill Historical Society along with representatives of other local historical groups that have an interest in promoting the Naches Trail.

## The Coalition has been busy

Over the summer, a brochure of the Naches Pass Trail was written, designed and professionally printed, (*see article page 3*). This brochure is available at our meetings for interested persons. The Coalition now has it own Website *www.nachestrail.org*. This site is loaded with trail information, including links to other resources relating to the Naches Trail.

The Coalition has organized two very successful trail tours. The first tour in August, explored the upper Naches trail, Government Meadow and the pass itself, about a mile-walk from the

meadow. The second tour occurred in October, to explore the lower trail, starting at the cliff and ending at Farmers Park on the Auburn & Enumclaw Highway. Both tours were conducted by Dennis Larson who is writing a book on the Naches Pass Trail.

November's meeting was held at the meeting room adjacent to the Meeker Mansion. Among many topics covered was the need for a more detailed trail map including driving directions and trail locations. Proposed was an 8 ½ X 11 inch size that could be downloaded from the Website, and/or inexpensively printed as an insert to the existing brochure. Such a detailed guide to the Pass is not currently available to the general public.

Also discussed was a possible future community event, a trail tour starting in Bonney Lake and perhaps linking the historical societies along the trail route to Steilacoom. The Bonney Lake group is currently putting together a trail tour from Bonney Lake to Van Ogles' farm.

The next meeting is scheduled for January — no firm date yet. The meeting will be a working session to develop the map idea described above.

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## South Hill Historical Society Membership/Renewal Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal, check here

**Annual Dues: Society membership \$25.00**

*Note: Please do not send cash.*

Make check or M.O. payable to South Hill Historical Society and mail with this application to:  
**SHHS Membership, 14602 106th Avenue Court E.  
South Hill, WA 98374-4905**



# From the Treasurer

by Ben Peters

A warm welcome to new members

## Karen Day & Joan Ellis

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. The Society thanks Paul Hackett for his recent generous donation.

### Updated Roster Available

A printed roster including members' home and e-mail addresses, plus phone numbers is available upon request (*restricted to members only*). Call me—Ben Peters—at 253-845-7028.

### Dues Reminder

I will attach a sticky note to the Society newsletter mailed closest to your renewal date.

## Where to Find Us

The South Hill Historical Society meets regularly on the **THIRD TUESDAY** of the month, 11:15 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**.



## Our Current Members

Andy G. Anderson	Art Larson
John & Ruth Anderson	Marvella Massie
Jim & Elizabeth Anema	Olive McDonough
Bob Ballou	Laurienne Stewart Minnich
Jerry Bates	Ronald Moe
Susan Beals	Carolyn Nelson
Katherine Bennett	Dorothy Nelson
Marilyn Burnett	Juanita Nordin
Debbie Burtnett	Mark & Dorothy Norris
Roger Bush	Christopher & Gloria O'Kelly
Vernon Cox	Ron & Lois Pearson
Dave & Patti Curtiss	Wes & Suzy Perkinson
Bob Crabb	Ben Peters
Karen Day	Robin Reich
James H. Dixon	Bill Riley
Pat Drake	Bernice Fisher Rinehart
Joan Ellis	Roy and Sheila Rinker
Linda Forsberg	Vern Rockstad
Arthur & Luverne Foxford	Helen Rohlman
Don & Mary Glaser	Earl Root
Hazel Whitford Miller Goheen	Stan & Margery Salmon
Calvin & Amy Goings	Nancy M. Scraggin
David Hackett	Bonnie Starkel
Paul Hackett	Lori Stock
James Hawley	Bill Stover
Philip R. & Shirley M. Healy	Marge (Crosson) Swain
Cecil & Doris Herbert	Ralph & Yvonne Thorpe
Evelyn Swalander Hess	Margo L & Joe Tucci
Charles & Maybelle Hoenhaus	Carl Vest
Matt Holm	Neil & Celia Vincent
Ernest Hopp	Joan Vosler
Dale Huff	W. Lynn Williams
Leslie & Velma Huff	Lenore Nicolet Winton
Jim Kastama	Ed Zeiger
John Knierim	Hans Zeiger

### South Hill Historical Society Officers

President, **Bob Ballou**  
Vice-President, **Hans Zeiger**  
Secretary, **Debbie Burtnett**  
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**To:**