

Plenty of Honks

by Pat Drake

WE have had two beautiful August days to wave “SAVE OUR SCHOOL”, “SAVE OUR HISTORY”, “SAVE FIRGROVE” signs. And, all the honking cars (I counted 47 honks in an hour) made it fun. Do all these people making a friendly noise show support for saving the 1935 building? I hope so, but some may be just rewarding the enthusiasm of the sign wavers.

Susan Beals set up two sign waving events in front of the historic building. The first one was on Saturday, July 25th and the last one was on Tuesday, August 4th.

Susan also established a Facebook page “Save Firgrove School”. Membership for this Facebook group is now 273 people. Photos and memories of Firgrove are being shared on this site.

For 10 years a group of us from South Hill Historical Society have been working to save the four-room brick building located at the south end of the Firgrove Elementary School campus. Why? Because it is the oldest public build-



ing on South Hill. Because it represents the dedication of J.J. Patzner to the children of the South Hill Community.

Patzner was instrumental in the

building of the first Firgrove School in 1895 and then 40 years later, as Firgrove School Board Chair, he was instrumental in securing a Public Works Administration grant. This paid for half the price of the new school. The rest of the money came from the South Hill Community.



Clockwise from top, Jerry & Pamela Glaser, Deanna May, Susan Beals also in next image with Dave Lebert.



In the midst of the Great Depression—when there was 25 percent unemployment rate—this nation, this community, put children first. Patzner

did his best to help build a school that the local paper stated would be a model for other Pierce County schools.

Before the 2015 bond levy passed, Puyallup School District officials gave us the impression

the historic building would be saved and used for preschool and daycare.

After the levy passed, we were informed we could buy the building in place for two million dollars, or move it. We were busy trying to raise the money when we were told to move the school because there would be a road put through where it is now located.

Susan and I had a ZOOM meeting with the new Superintendent Dr. John Polm and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Vince Pecchia.

In another meeting we were told the historic building would be destroyed in the fall. We applied for grants but when the school district is not cooperating, it is hard to obtain grants. So we march and encourage community members to write letters/emails/make phone calls.

Editor's note: Also picketing but not pictured were Pat Drake, Diana Whitley and Virginia Wodtli.



Lorna was my best friend!

by Helen Heil Rohlman

The Woodland area lost one of its true pioneers with the passing of Lorna Mae Beitz Shaw. May 13, 1933 – June 4, 2020.

She transferred from Central Avenue School to Woodland School about 1945. We just seemed to click! She was always energetic and loved horses and dogs. Her Dad, Rudy and Mom, Vivian, were members of the Pierce County Posse and her parents would ride their horses in the Daffodil Parade. Very exciting! It was not uncommon to see Lorna in the barn currying the horses after school. I, however, took the other side of horsemanship and was scared to death of them. We did all the things teenagers do now. We rode our bikes and hung out at Allen's Grocery store, went

swimming at Surprise Lake, played softball for the Woodland School girls' team, and went roller skating at the old Puyallup Rink located above Wilen's Auto. Our Moms encouraged us and made us short, white, pleated, skating skirts and fancy, dancey under panties. It was fashionable to wear a colorful, finely knit, Jantzen sweater, plus a string of white pearls. Whew—we were flashy. Lorna took to the floor like a tornado and was not afraid to try anything. She skated circles around me and even backwards! Forward at a steady pace was for me!

Our Halloweens were a hoot! We met at her house, grabbed a bag and flashlight and down Woodland Road we went. In those days, the houses were sparse and the dogs were many. To add to that we had no streetlights on a skinny, lonely road, with no shoulders and it was generally rainy, windy, and cold.

We yelled, yipped and yapped and ran around like we were demented just to get some penny candy.

After high school, we learned to ski and that in itself was a hoot. Two fellas we knew took us to the small ski area they had at Mt. Rainer. The boys put on their skis and took off and Lorna and I were on our own. We wrestled with the skis and finally got them on only to fall on an icy spot. Up-down, up-down, we were more down than up when two boys about ten years old came flying down the hill and knocked us both on our keesters. That did it! Lorna and I both had it! You could see the blue smoke circling our heads. It was a wonder we didn't break any bones.

It was not uncommon to see Lorna and me in Dad's 1935 Chevy going to the dances in the area. To name a few: Fruitland Grange, The Old Mill, Spanaway Lake and on and on and on. She loved to dance, fox trot, square dance and jitterbug. You name it, she did it. Both of us could cut the rug in those days.

Lorna was always meticulous and organized, her house and clothing were impeccable. She would do anything she could for you. She was straightforward, and you always knew where she stood.

I will miss Lorna as we had a lot of laughs together as our friendship grew. It wouldn't surprise me a bit if she wasn't standing by St. Peter, taking

names and numbers to keep Heaven organized.

With that in mind, I'll say "goodbye" to you "old friend" UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN.

Editor's note: Helen Heil Rohlman, lives in Alaska and has been a longtime SHHS member, she submitted the above remembrance to include in our archives. It's been a while since we last heard from Helen. Read memories of her childhood on South Hill during WWII, plus memories of the South Hill Home Craft Club. See the September 2005 newsletter (it's on our website).

From the Treasurer

by Ben Peters

Please call, e-mail or write any change of address to me, Ben Peters, 253-845-7028, poppa-ben2002@yahoo.com, South Hill Historical Society, Box 73582, 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.**

In Memoriam

The South Hill Historical Society
regrets the passings of

Irene Bradley



[facebook.com/groups/
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All society meetings will be canceled until further notice due to the coronavirus pandemic.

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