

## PEACEFUL VALLEY

The little vale in silence sleeps,  
Its stillness only marred by sound  
Of bubbling brook or falling leaf—  
More peaceful place could not be found.

The tiny wisps of pale grey smoke  
Encircle trees of red and gold  
And seem to tell them autumn's here,  
Their leaves they can no longer hold.

The brown and yellow grasses sway  
Blown gently by the breeze of fall.  
The incense of the pine is sweet—  
It rises to the God of all.

Nancy Dobson



## *It's a Privilege to Live on Spencer Butte Loop*



**"Rustic Living  
within a Stone's Throw  
of the City"**

SPENCER BUTTE area has appealed to many during the past few years as "just what the doctor ordered" in the way of getting out in the hills 'midst the towering evergreens, away from the hustle and bustle of city life. It is a comparatively new area for home-building. Fox Hollow Road and South Willamette were for years mainly roads to ranches south of the Butte, but in the mid 40s folks with a flair for getting out in the hills became apparent and gradually they began picking out home sites off the beaten trails.

It was rather primitive living in those "early days." Yet those "pioneers" of the 40s could see possibilities. They knew that it wouldn't be long until progress had caught up with them and the many conveniences which they had known in the city way of life would again be theirs. Telephone and power lines were extended and service improved, as well as satisfactory daily mail service.

In 1953 the Spencer Butte Improvement Association was formed. A number of problems have been under

consideration and gradually the fruits of their endeavors are making themselves known. Through its efforts mail service has been improved, school bus service extended, road conditions corrected with a large section to be oiled next spring, better control on Christmas tree cutting, and a proposed fire district. The Association membership is open to everyone in the Spencer Butte area, and a helping hand is always welcome in assisting on projects and activities which will improve our community.

The Association plans to build a club house on its own property near the Spencer Butte Park. This project will take lots of work and money before the job is completed. The building will be used for community activities, a recreation for young and old alike, and is truly an undertaking that is worthy of everyone's support and consideration. You are invited to join the Association and attend the meetings. You'll become better acquainted with your neighbors and you'll find a lot of that old-fashioned friendliness is still around.

SPENCER BUTTE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION  
1954-1984

Orpha Roberts volunteered in 1974 to work on a history of SBIA, then twenty years old. She wasn't able to finish the job before moving to Junction City. She turned her preliminary draft and the old records over to Lois Barton at that time.

INTRODUCTION

The Spencer Butte Improvement Association is a neighborhood club incorporated in 1954 to take title to ten acres of land offered as a community park by lumberman George Owens.

To properly appreciate the early history of the SBIA, as it is familiarly called, one should know that it was preceded by an earlier club of a somewhat similar nature. That earlier club was organized in June, 1921, when fifty neighborhood people assembled in the Louis Murdock home for a potluck meal and social occasion, the first of many such gatherings.

Elsie Sutton's father, Charles Swaggart, later gave the Spencer Butte Community Club an acre of ground from a corner of his property. Club members built a club house thereon in which Sunday School, community dances and other social affairs were regularly held over a period of several years. The building was located above the present Fox Hollow road between where Hasselmans and Browns live in 1984. During WWII the club became inactive and the building was eventually dismantled.

In the early 1950s the area around Spencer Butte was open range land where cattle and other livestock wandered with few restrictions. Fences were built to keep livestock out of yards and gardens rather than to keep them confined to the owner's property.

Roads were unimproved, telephone service consisted of ten-party lines, there was no mail delivery on South Willamette beyond the dump road, no school buses past Christensen road. Children went to rural schools outside the Eugene district or paid tuition to attend in town.

Florence Murdock, who had been a prime mover in the original club, again took an active roll in calling together a group of neighbors in 1954 to consider George Owens' offer. The gift of land would provide him with a tax write-off. The acreage just southwest of the city park on Spencer Butte was centrally located and eminently suitable for a neighborhood club house.

On February 28, 1954 about thirty-five residents of the Spencer Butte area gathered at Kreklau's skating rink to consider needs for general improvement of the area and to address the proposed gift of land from Owens. Florence Murdock was asked to be temporary chairman and Dave Davidson, Mildred Pruett, Bennett Stephenson, Chet Williams, Robert Stevenson, Lloyd Kreklau, Merlin Myers and Mrs. Murdock volunteered to draw up a constitution and bylaws.

At a second meeting held March 9, 1954 at the skating rink the prepared constitution and bylaws were accepted, the area boundaries were defined to include those people who lived on Fox Hollow Road from 40th Ave., south to the Fox Hollow-Willamette intersection, and north on Willamette to 40th and within a mile radius from this loop.

If you are familiar with the area today you will realize those boundaries included the present Edgewood development as well as several multiple housing units on land which was at that time cut-over timber land and farm pastures with very few dwellings.

At the March 9th meeting membership qualifications were spelled out and the purposes of the organization listed as set forth in this quote from the articles of incorporation. "...to acquire, hold and dispose of land and buildings and other facilities and property; to develop and manage said property for community purposes, including but not limited to recreation, home extension activity, 4H clubs, boy and girl scouts, family picnics and socials, religious activities and similar and related purposes..."

The bylaws provided for electing a seven-member board of directors, the first of which met the very next week to appoint committee chairmen and consider ways to tackle a formidable list of problems. Those suggested to the board as appropriate for their attention included road improvements, publicity for the area, road signs, general cleanup, vandalism, stray cattle, indiscriminate



shooting, telephone service, REA power outages, a club house, recreation, development of park and trails, pollution, fire hazards, and club membership cards.

One of the early actions of the Association was to establish a non-profit status with the state corporation commissioner which would exempt it from paying property taxes. This was achieved at the state level the first year, but for some reason the necessary annual report of tax exemption had not always been filed in Lane County and the county continued to assess annual taxes.

Members were perturbed to learn May 13, 1960 that the county was holding records of delinquent taxes for several years and could start proceedings to foreclose in a few months if steps were not taken. At the May 14th, 1962 meeting a motion was passed to pay taxes for any delinquent years since 1956, a total of \$25.96 including interest. Meanwhile the State Commissioner was appealed to and with help from attorneys Johnson and Harrang the park site was removed from the county tax list.

From its inception SBIA was actively involved in several areas of local concern. Road improvement, pollution control, fire protection and development of the park were some of the major continuing interests.

#### POLLUTION AND THE WILLAMETTE DUMP

The chief problem of pollution stemmed from a Lane County dump located west of Willamette at the end of what was known as the dump road. Here garbage trucks dumped all kinds of refuse, the flammable parts of which were burned to reduce the bulk. Septic tank contents were emptied from pumper trucks into a pool established for that purpose. The dump harbored rats, and smoke from the smoldering fire besmirched an extensive area. In rainy weather the pool sometimes overflowed into Spencer Creek carrying fecal matter along with other pollutants down stream as far as Twin Oaks school and Spencer Creek Grange on Lorane Highway.

As early as April, 1954 a committee of SBIA called members attention to health and pollution problems created by the dump. By the June meeting they reported the possibility of moving the

county dump to some other location. In August a letter was sent to state air pollution authorities.

As the months passed agitation continued for removal of the dump. A state ordinance prohibiting burning of refuse within six miles of a city of 45,000 population was a useful tool for putting pressure on officials. By January 1, 1960 a new state-wide smoke ordinance became applicable, but burning at the dump continued. The commissioners had enacted an extension to April, and later to July for burning on the site. In May a letter went to the state air pollution authority advising him of the commissioners failure to comply with the new regulation. That fall Mrs. Murdock prepared a speech at the request of the League of Women Voters on the political issue of the dump. The speech was taped and aired over local radio station KORE. She also appeared on KVAL-TV to discuss the issue. In April, 1961 the SBIA chairman sent a letter to the Register Guard about the dump.

After the extensions to July, 1960 the dump was apparently officially closed although the county records show that it was officially in operation from 1938 through 1959 only. In 1961 a rumor circulated that it would be reopened and SBIA enlisted the support of the Neighborhood and Community Affairs organization to protest such action. June 20th of that year Dr. Osterud of the county health department assured representatives that the dump definitely would not be reopened, but in September members were still wondering what to do about the dump.

Folks who lived on South Willamette those days had flat tires almost weekly caused by nails, broken glass and the like which was dribbled from trucks hauling all kinds of refuse up the hill.

Ruth Ellison, who lived near the turn-off to the dump was gate keeper after the dump was closed. A September 26th minute reads, "Dubious activity at the dump site is still a very real problem. However, the alertness and eagle eye of gatekeeper Ruth Ellison with the sincere cooperation of sheriff's deputies has kept it from getting out of hand..."

Signs directing people to the new county dump on Bloomberg

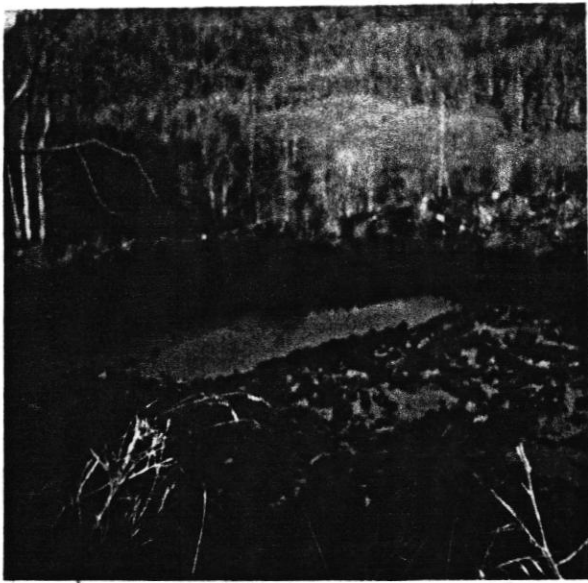
Road were suggested as one way of educating the public to the closure. The commissioners were asked to demolish the shacks at the dump, destroy the oil pit, reposition the gate to a more effective location, gravel the road to the Bloomberg Road dump and post signs around town so people could find it.

By September of 1962 the county had carried out most of the recommended cleanup procedures. Then after the October storm the dump was opened temporarily for emergency burning of brush and soon closed again. But in December the Bloomberg Road dump was closed and a Register Guard story stated that only burnable refuse was to be taken to the re-opened Willamette Street site. A letter written by Orpha Roberts to Mr. Hatchard, State Sanitary Authority, reports that "The gate is open to the public, unguarded, twenty-four hours a day. There is no restriction on refuse being taken there. Burning is continuous, day and night... Saturday and Sunday fires were unattended all day... Glass, metal, household garbage, old plaster and bricks and much more that cannot be burned is in evidence... The County commissioners promised to have an attendant at the gate... and to have it locked at night and when unattended. This is not being done..."

SBIA members took pictures of the refuse and of unauthorized vehicles discharging their cargoes and appealed again to authorities. The support of Spencer Creek Grange members was enlisted.

A meeting was scheduled by the SBIA board at Harris Hall January 28, 1963 with county commissioners, health officials and Mr. Merriman of the state air pollution office, as well as a representative of the building wreckers who had special permission to use the dump. After a lengthy discussion another meeting for arbitration of the issue was scheduled February 25. Representatives of concerned organizations attended but no commissioners, health officials or other authorities.

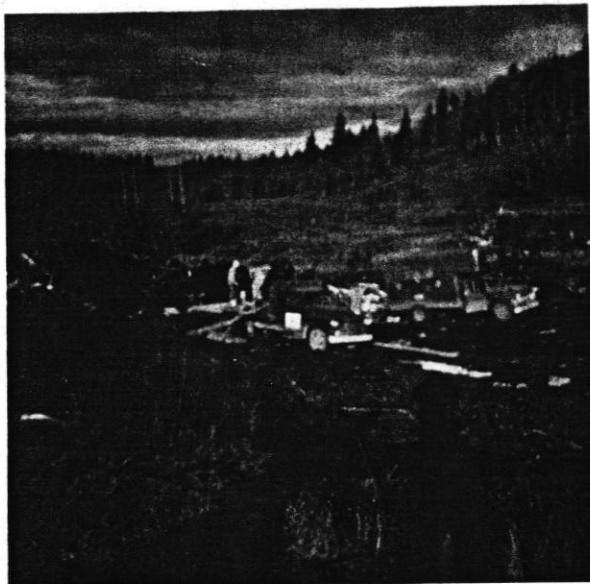
Following this meeting state authorities inspected the dump site March 8th and found conditions extremely bad. By April 15th an attendant was on duty twenty-four hours a day, having a trailer there and staying full time. The dump was "in better shape than it had ever been."



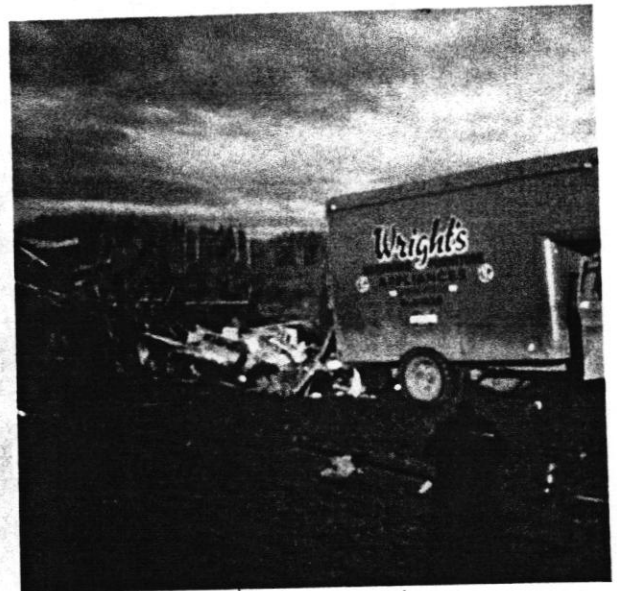
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There is no further reference in the minutes to problems at the dump. The new county refuse disposal sight at Day Island was opened in 1962.

This detailed account gives a good picture of one major improvement and watchdog effort carried out by SBIA members in the early years of the organization.

#### THE PARK DEVELOPMENT BEGINNINGS.

Florence Murdock, the Suttons, Alice Kindt and the Pruetts were some of the residents of the area before WWII when the former club was active. They had all experienced the benefits of a community building and immediately began to promote another club house in the SBIA park. Ways to raise money for the new building were sought.

Plans were made in July that first year for a fund raising booth at the county fair and \$60.60 was earned in that first booth. By the mid-'60s as much as \$1500 was realized from each fair booth. Local residents made potato salad in great quantities to serve with barbecued chicken and other goodies. Orpha Roberts spoke more than once about the work involved in making a dishpan full of potato salad.

In February, 1955 a separate savings account was opened with a deposit of just over \$16., the money to be used for park development and the building. It was referred to over the years as the "building fund". A rummage sale was planned to start off the fund and such sales were held at least once a year for several years. A booth was rented at the public market and SBIA members made and sold swags before the holidays for a year or two.

To get the building underway Lewis Rankin and others contacted local business firms and secured donations of cement blocks, gravel, gasoline for hauling, and lumber. Money was taken from the savings account to drill a well. A storage shed, bathroom fixtures and plumbing supplies were donated.

By 1961 John Steinmuller was drafting plans for a club house with a built-in apartment for a caretaker. Members felt the problem of vandalism would be reduced by having someone live on the premises. Vandals had already burned some of the donated lumber in a camp fire.



Meanwhile Christmas parties and anniversary parties on or near March 9th were held the first several years. Mr. and Mrs. Fred Allen did the honors as Santa and helper at the early Christmas parties which were held wherever space could be arranged. Some of the early parties took place at the fairgrounds, at the new YMCA building, in the Skinner Butte pavilion, at the Hospital School gym.

Other groups were invited to participate in the development of the park and community club house, among them the Plum Dandies Square Dance Club who negotiated a contract of support in 1958 to help with the building, but then withdrew in 1960.

Ed Smith of the Eugene Parks department offered advice and encouragement. There was talk of the City Parks department using the site for day camps. There is among the records a proposal for merging of SBIA and the city parks department.

In 1961 a building permit was secured. The "building fund" had \$1579. in it. By January, '62 that total had reached nearly \$2000.

Meanwhile Mrs. Murdock's house on what is now Christmas Tree Land burned to the ground in March, 1961, and some of the SBIA records were lost in the fire. Left without a home, Mrs. Murdock aspired to become caretaker in the park where she would occupy the apartment to be included in the clubhouse. With this in mind she continued to be a strong advocate for "getting on with the building". Some question about whether a dwelling could be allowed under the terms of the deed was raised and investigated.

In April, 1961 a minute was adopted which read as follows: "To have a contract and legal agreement drawn up by lawyer Harold Johnson. Ruth Ellison was elected to represent SBIA at the drawing up of the contract. Mrs. Murdock would be present at this meeting as the occupant of the caretaker's quarters of the future community club house."

Mrs. Murdock's annual report in September of that year noted that "from a crushing personal and mutual loss has come a blessed expression of neighborly love and compassion in the desire to re-activate plans to build the community club house that I may be allowed to remain with you..."

Later the board learned the property would be liable for annual taxes if an apartment were included in the clubhouse and in July, 1964 discarded the plan for an apartment. Members were eager to get on with the basic structure. With this in mind a septic tank was installed and ready for hook-up by April, 1965. Then in July a pump was installed on the well after the water was tested for arsenic and found to be potable. There was talk of hooking up a house trailer as residence for the caretaker.

By September, 1965 the savings account balance was \$59.56. Jenny Luck was treasurer at that time and consequently in possession of the bank records and check book for the year to come.

Florence Murdock had been publicity chairman for the club as well as president of the board from 1954 through 1962 except for '57 and '58. She was also registered with the state as agent for the corporation until her house burned, then Virgil Roberts assumed that role. Dick McAtee was president in 1963, then Virgil Roberts for the next two years.

A September, 1965 entry in the minutes reads as follows: "The publicity chairman read a tirade of hate and abuse of the chairman until interrupted by a motion to discontinue the report as of now. Report ended." There is no further explanation of the minute, nor a copy of the report included in the records. One can imagine Mrs. Murdock's disappointment and frustration about having the caretaker's quarters scratched from building plans after feeling so pleased and supported in the fall of 1961 when the neighborhood was prepared to replace her home by space in the community building.

To settle a dispute regarding building plans a survey questionnaire was circulated in October, 1965, to determine in part whether members were ready to proceed at once with building. Fourteen respondents voted yes, sixteen voted no and two voted maybe.

The building committee then recommended that "since we're not particularly in good shape to build at this time, that we keep these suggestions (recommended details for the building from the questionnaire) on hand and tabled until a more suitable time." The recommendation was approved.

## FAIR BOOTH SQUABBLE

The fair booth continued to be a big factor in growth of the savings account, but it was a lot of work. An experienced manager was important to the success of the undertaking. The group had begun to pay \$100 to \$200 each year to such a manager. By midsummer, 1966, the board had not found any experienced person ready to take on the job so they agreed to return the contract for the space unsigned. This decision was reached on a vote of four to one with three abstentions.

According to recollections of Ella Smith Alice Kindt and Florence Murdock talked this decision over after the meeting and decided to volunteer. They called the president to tell him they would do it and were told they could not because a decision had already been reached and could not be changed. Florence was unwilling to take no for an answer and signed the contract for the space that had been reserved for SBIA. She and Alice Kindt and George and Jenny Luck ran the booth on the usual pattern with volunteer help from community people.

Their action became known to the board when a story in the Register Guard featured fund-raising food booths at the fair, including the Spencer Butte Improvement Association which was reported to be raising money for a community club house.

Ella Smith, who was a member of the board at the time, says there was a rumor that once SBIA cancelled their contract their space would no longer be available for a food booth since fair authorities felt it was too close to the barns. She tried to explain this to board members and point up Florence's concern that the space not be lost, but people had taken sides and couldn't accept the information.

After the story in the paper someone checked the storage shed in the park and found that the SBIA fair booth equipment and supplies had been taken from there without any "by your leave" from anyone. Members were outraged that their majority decision had been disregarded. Without naming names several people have mentioned personality conflicts which existed. Members challenged Alice Kindt and Jenny



Luck at the next meeting held August 17, demanding to know who took the supplies and equipment and what was to be done with the profits. A stormy meeting resulted in no information about who signed for the booth, who was to get the money or whether SBIA could collect rent for use of the equipment if it was not put back. George Luck questioned why he should need authorization to use equipment he originally donated.

Phone calls later confirmed that Florence Murdock had signed for the booth. At the September membership meeting the four members, Murdock, Kind and two Lucks were voted out of the organization.

Neil Brown was asked to act as SBIA legal advisor to get back the treasurer's records and check book which belonged to the organization but were in Jenny Luck's possession.

Members had agreed in August that they would not accept any money earned by the booth. The Register Guard story stated that SBIA had been running a booth for twelve years. In response the board put a notice in the classified section of the Guard August 26 and 27 disclaiming responsibility for this booth since they were not carrying the required insurance. The board minutes of Sept. 27 state "We can accept the money only as a personal gift from these individuals for the same reason. (i.e.--no insurance)"

Repeated requests to Jenny Luck to turn the books over to the auditing committee for annual review were ignored. Eventually the board was informed that Thelma Fowler, attorney, had possession of them.

The four people who had run the booth refused to accept expulsion from the association. Their annual dues were sent to the new treasurer by registered letter from Attorney Fowler after notice of the decision to exclude them had been received. Subsequently a minute authorizing the appointment of a sergeant at arms for each meeting was recorded.

After some negotiation the board was able to secure copies of SBIA records from the bank, so that by February, 1967 the treasurer was able to report \$6071.86 in the savings account and about \$100 in the checking. Attorney Brown was requested April 5th to proceed with a court order for release of corporation books, including the

pass book. Mrs. Murdock was billed for rental of equipment and for the pie case and aprons not returned with equipment after the fair.

By May 2nd, 1967 Dave Hunter had replace Neil Brown as legal advisor. Dave reported his opinion that expulsion of the four members was probably not valid because they had not received written notice of intent to expell them beforehand.

Although efforts were made by the board to locate help for the fair booth in 1967, apparently it was again run by Florence Murdock. In September Mr. Hunter reported that he had been in contact with the bank officials and they were informing Mrs. Fowler that the Association bank account would be released in seven days unless she filed a restraining order. There had also been a meeting between the two attorneys, the four dissident members and Harry Wolcott, current SBIA treasurer. These people were working on an eight-point agreement to resolve differences. Fred Attneave, a new member, urged arbitration and settlement of differences.

Florence Murdock urged the association to accept the fair booth proceeds for the last two years (rumored to be about \$3000 net).

One point of contention throughout had been the insistence by the Murdock group that the savings account was set aside exclusively for a building fund. This claim is not substantiated by association records, although the early minutes refer in some places to the "building fund".

One of the eight points up for negotiation specified amending the bylaws to require a three-fourths vote of members, after thirty days notice, to allocate money from the savings account.

A restraining order was filed on the bank account which kept the records in Fowler's hands, and board members were served with papers regarding membership for the Murdock group.

John Ball, president in September, 1967, commented in his annual report, "I feel at present, as I did at the beginning of my appointment, that as recipients of what might be termed 'an income tax monster' the club was victimized rather than benefitted. Any attempt to provide a community service under the existing article and bylaws (except to obtain outright donations for a cause that has no charitable objective) by funds raised by sales or services appears... to be illegal."

The attorney was asked to prepare a revision of the bylaws which would conform more nearly to nonprofit organization regulations on fund raising. Another important objective of revision was redefinition of membership boundaries to include only territory outside Eugene city limits.

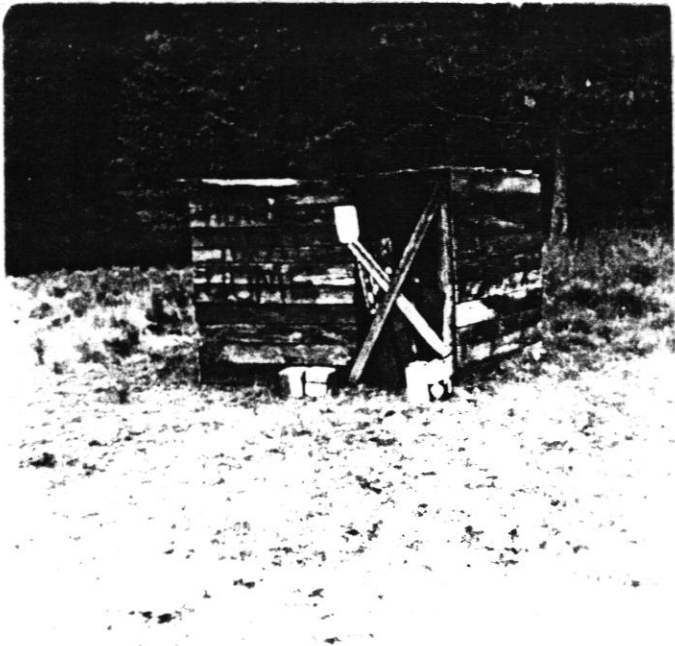
At the October, 1967 meeting Attorney Hunter reported that the injunction restraining the bank funds had been vacated because the plaintiffs failed to post bond and that the account had been released.

At the February, 1968 membership meeting, the Murdock group and their attorney being present, a motion was approved that the savings account funds be dedicated to improving the park site and that this dedication should supercede any prior dedication of the funds.

In November, 1968 Mr. Hunter reported that the original complaint enjoining the association not to use funds for other than building a clubhouse had been stricken by the court, but an amended complaint had been filed. The Association had by this time initiated two suits, one against Mrs. Luck to recover the treasurer's books and one against the Murdock group asking general and punitive damages for obtaining the original injunction.

On July 1, 1969 Mrs. Day, then president, announced that the judge had found in favor of the Association in the case of Florence Murdock and others against the Association. At the October 7, 1969 meeting the SBIA attorney was authorized to drop all litigation and work out final release from anything that has happened in the past. Then on December 12, 1969 a final meeting was held which effected an agreement, signed by all parties concerned. All the Association's books and records were returned and the affair was closed. A total of \$2042.90 had been expended in legal fees. All claim to the fair booth space was relinquished by the Association and that chapter of SBIA history concluded.

Apparently Florence Murdock again operated a fair booth in 1968 and possibly 1969. No mention is made in the legal papers of the disposition of those earnings, from 1966 on, but treasurer's reports in early 1970 do not include any notable amounts of new money in the savings account. According to Ella Smith the money went to the Maude Kerns art center where Florence Murdock was employed at the time.



In April, 1966, the SBIA board received a letter from George Owens, original donor of the park property. He called attention to the changes in society that affected such a community as SBIA represented. He questioned whether, with improved roads and two cars in every family garage, the time might be past for a community club house so close to a city with all the resources available in Eugene. He recommended that our "building funds" be donated to the New Life Youth Camp near Dorena, a group to which he had also given twenty-five acres of land. The board acknowledged his letter but claimed other plans for the use of their money.

#### FIRE PROTECTION

Fire protection and security were major concerns of the SBIA members from the beginning. A committee to pursue these goals was appointed the first month. The first "fire demonstration" was held at the Sill residence above the Christensen valley within a couple of weeks of appointment of the committee. There was talk of purchasing a fire engine and of discounts on group purchase of fire extinguishers. Rex Holcomb volunteered to provide parking at his place near Owl Road and to drive the truck if the group got a fire truck.

A few weeks later a different group of people in the Fox Hollow area did buy a truck and park it at Rex's place. By the middle of August three neighborhood grass fires had been successfully dealt with by neighborhood people whose exemplary action was commended by Eugene firemen.

SBIA members approved the establishment of a fire district that fall and the Eugene fire chief was invited to meet with them to discuss its formation. On September 28 a Mr. Gilson came to explain procedures. He left copies of the law covering the matter and said it took time to work out the arrangements.

Little did they know how much time it would take. The committee continued to pursue leads, define a boundary, explore the possibility of being annexed into Rural Fire District No. 1 through the next several years. Still other fire control demonstrations were held in a number of places including Spencer Butte Junior High School, the Hunter and Day residences.



A speaker from Western Lane Fire Protective Association was invited to the January, 1960 membership meeting. Three years later the Western Lane representative again met with the group. It was explained that their equipment was effective for timberland fires, but not for residence fires. They would protect forest threatened by, but could not respond directly to, residence fires.

As the number of more expensive homes in the area multiplied the need for fire protection increased. An additional factor was the cost of fire insurance where no protection was available.

May 7, 1968 a new committee was appointed to explore the possibility of a contract with Eugene. Mrs. Day and Margaret Bennett reported a very discouraging interview with fire officials. The distance was too great for their help to be of much use. Trucks loaded with water couldn't climb the Willamette hill very fast, etc.

Meanwhile local residents began to prepare a fire map. Jim Maxson agreed to put it together. A phone tree was initiated. Mrs. Melvin Cohen checked with people to make sure they were willing for their residences to be identified on the map. Forty people turned out for a fire demonstration in the summer of 1968. People considered using an answering service to alert neighbors when a fire occurred, but eventually rejected the proposal as impractical. There was more talk of buying a fire truck. Where could it be stored in a heated building? Who would be available at all times to drive it? Neighborhood ponds were identified and mapped and permission secured to use them for refill purposes, but they were not always accessible, particularly during the rainy season.

There had been a house fire at Straughans (later Wolcott) in November, 1954. The Loomis barn burned in 1959, Mrs. Murdock's house in March, 1961, the Loomis house in 1968 and Maxson's house in 1974. There were several grass fires during this period. Trash fires at Bennett Stephensons twice got away from him and threatened the city park on the Butte. The second time, a place with fire retardant was called in when trees in the park caught fire. At that fire pumper trucks from Western Lane and the City were able to refill from Stephenson's ponds.

No provision for fire protection was available for the early fires. The Loomises were not at home when their house caught fire. Barton children on their way home from school heard an explosion and saw the smoke. By the time Maxson's house ignited the Association had a contract with Eugene. The trucks took about 20 minutes to get up the hill and then ran out of water before the fire was controlled and it became apparent that a neighborhood water supply to refill trucks was crucial.

Al Gemmell was appointed as chairman of the fire committee May 5, 1970. He arranged a meeting with the Eugene Fire Chief. By July annexation to Rural District No. 1 was nearly assured. Al had prepared a legal description and maps for use by the boundary commission. The probable tax millage rate to cover this contract was said to be \$1.60 per \$1000 assessed value of buildings on the home site.

The annexation was carried out and the contract became effective by July 1, 1971. Two city tanker trucks of 2000 gallon capacity were at the disposal of the Association. Al was elected to the board of the Fire District for four years. Every one was encouraged to contact their insurance company for reduction of fire insurance premiums, now that coverage was available.

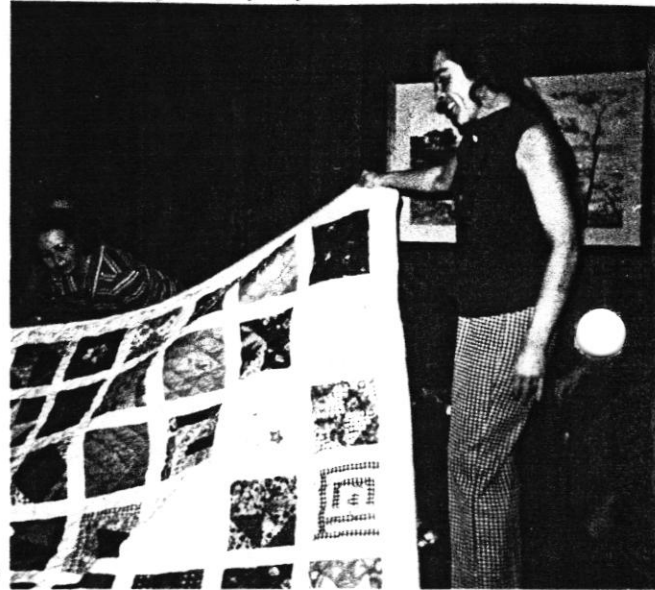
After the Maxson fire SBIA members decided to develop a water supply in their park for refilling tanker trucks. They first considered a pressure tank on the well, but a twenty-four hour test demonstrated only one and one-half gallons per minute flow, which was entirely inadequate for emergency volume. Plans were then completed for a large storage tank with a fireplug outlet at the roadside. The 5000 gallon tank was installed at a cost of \$2510 and the city supplied the fireplug, all of which was in place by late March of 1978. The minutes give no indication that the Association considered the motion adopted in 1967, confining use of the savings fund to park development, when they were planning for installation of the tank. However, the next rural fire district budget, which was passed by the voters included \$2500 to be paid to SBIA for a ten

year contract for access to water in the storage tank. This money replaced what had been spent for tank installation so the original dedication of funds was not violated after all.

The only time the system has been tested since was at the Halberg barn fire. When hoses were attached to the plug no water ran. It was not clear at the time whether it was a syphon problem or some stoppage in the line.

After the Halberg failure the fire department opened the line by back-pumping water, and the system is checked regularly by SBIA members to keep it in working order.

One of the most regrettable losses in the Maxson fire, Sandra said, was some quilts that had belonged to her grandmother. To express their sympathy neighbors cooperated to piece a new quilt for her. Each contributor chose the pattern for the block she created, but made it to a specified size. There were 63 blocks, some made by school children. The center one was a stylized applique of Spencer Butte, according to a December, 1974 minute.



Sandra with the quilt

#### ROAD IMPROVEMENT

When the Association was organized both Fox Hollow and South Willamette were unpaved from about 40th Street on out.

A road committee was set up in the first month, with Bennett Stephenson named as the first chairman. Fox Hollow Road as far as Christensen Road was a state road, but plans were underway to trade the county for another similar segment in Springfield.

The state and the county were individually responsible for gravel and grading to keep their particular segments passable.

The road committee was soon in touch with officials seeking improvements such as widening of certain areas, clearing brush for better visibility, posting signs and reflectors to warn travelers of hazards.



By early '55 the commissioners were promising to pave Fox Hollow as far as what is now Owl Road. Association members instituted traffic counts to help convince road supervisors of the need for improvements. They designed a brochure to hand out to people who were stopped. Attractive wooden signs shaped like a silhouette of the Butte were posted at the boundaries of the area on both Fox Hollow and South Willamette. The signs bore the inscription "You are entering the Spencer Butte Loop area." They were repeatedly vandalized and eventually taken away.

By 1956 the school bus supervisor and the mail carrier were asked to add their influence in favor of better upkeep, straightening and widening curves on both roads for greater safety.

Local residents repeatedly prepared and presented petitions for road improvement. In October, 1958 the commissioners were asked to provide in writing information on their long range plans for surfacing all the way around the butte. Members suggested a short stretch be done yearly till it was entirely paved. In October 1959 another road count was proposed. SBIA was told in the fall of that South Willamette could not be widened till the telephone poles were moved.

In 1960 and '61 petitions for having both roads black topped were presented. The records do not specifically state when sections had been freshly graveled or oiled, but now and then a copy of a letter of appreciation for improvements completed was filed with the minutes.

A new road committee was appointed every year or two. In the fall of 1961 Dale Smith prepared a comprehensive list of improvements needed, including ditching, brush clearance, a longer culvert where South Willamette and Fox Hollow met, gravelling both roads. The list was submitted to Commissioner Nielson. By mid-'62 the commissioners responded that these road problems were the responsibility of the maintenance department.

By mid-'63 residents were protesting roadside spraying for weed control. They invited a speaker on the subject in March of '64.

Lotte Streisinger collected 85 signatures on a petition to end roadside spraying in the area and was told "no spray" signs would be respected if local residents would tend those roadside areas where signs were posted.

In late '64 area wide floods damaged roads everywhere in the county and money which had been allotted for Fox Hollow improvement was spent elsewhere.

By August, '66 commissioners advised that acquisition of rights of way was holding up paving of Fox Hollow. Commissioner Elliott came to the October meeting that year. Among other things he stated that the county would not build temporary roads as it was an improvident use of taxpayers' money. This was in response to urging by some Association members to "keep it rural and low speed, but with an adequate surface and sufficient visibility for safety." He said the count on South Willamette at the Dump Road was 217 cars a day while more than 2000 passed 40th and Willamette. Then SBIA members complained that the county wasn't getting a record of week-end traffic to Spencer Butte Park.

In 1970 when plans were finalized to widen and pave Fox Hollow the Association urged that roadside trees and shrubs be spared as much as possible. In '72 another petition was circulated to prevent development of Fox Hollow as a major roadway. Steven King sent an impassioned letter to the county and a copy to the Association asking its support for keeping it rural. Members were assured that, even though they had requested a 22-foot roadway and it was to be built to 30 feet instead, every effort would be made to retain the rural atmosphere with clearing limited to the actual roadway.

After repeated delays and rescheduling the work was again on the agenda to be completed in '78-'79. Commissioner Nancy Hayward told someone the delays were partly a result of differing opinions in the neighborhood about what was wanted.

By the fall of 1978 a contractor was at work on Fox Hollow. His men cut every tree on the right of way, including a three hundred year old maple below the road which would not have hampered construction or visibility. Residents were shocked and outraged and asked

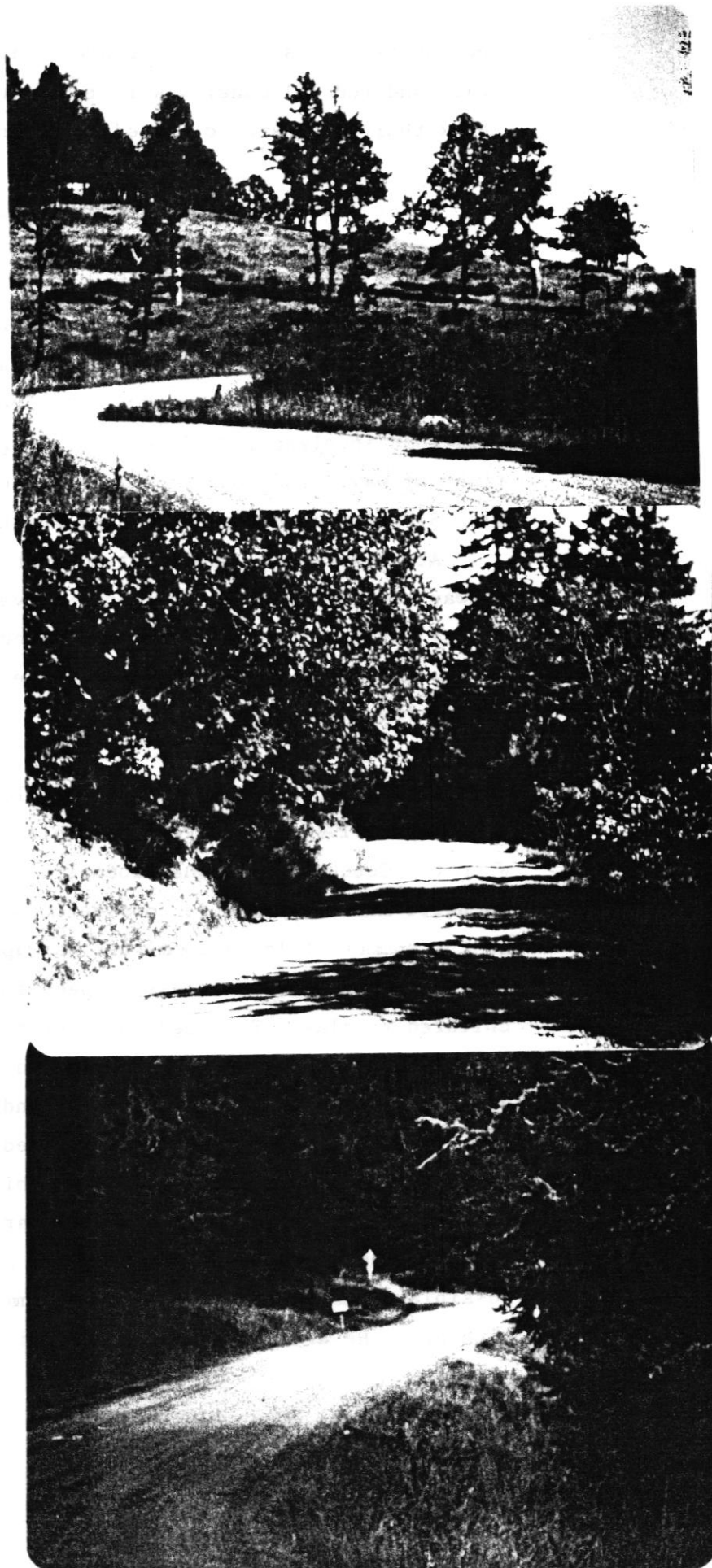
This was Fox Hollow in 1977

the commissioners to come see how their agreement had been abrogated. State and federal money was included in funds for the job and some think their standards dictated the manner in which the job was carried out.

After looking the situation over the commissioners made plans for landscaping but have been plagued with slides on the steep banks and were obliged to rip rap some of them.

In 1984 similar plans are in place and work on South Willamette relocation has begun, some five years after the work was first scheduled according to the SBIA records.

The relocation and improvement of S. Willamette will take .03 acres along the Association park frontage. The county paid SBIA \$200 for the right of way and \$100 for a big fir tree which must be cut.



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In 1984 similar plans are in place and work on South Willamette relocation had begun, some five years after the work was first scheduled according to SBIA records. The relocation and improvement of this road involved .03 of an acre along the SBIA park frontage for right of way. The county paid the Association \$200 for this strip plus \$100 for once large fir tree which must be cut.

At an April 15, 1985 meeting members learned that some right-of-way acquisitions are still unresolved along Willamette and the county may have to resort to legal procedures to complete the process. In any case they expect the work to be completed in 1985, weather permitting.

#### CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF THE ASSOCIATION PARK

Before 1966 park development plans centered around the clubhouse. When the October, 1965 questionnaire resulted in tabling of plans to build members began to consider other ways to improve the property. In the summer of '66 a committee was appointed to plan for a picnic area. They decided to clear a space for picnics and a place for children to play. The need for rest rooms seemed urgent.

Several questions were considered by the committee. Should the Boy Scouts be offered use of the ground in exchange for clearing brush? What kind of insurance was needed? Should they gravel the driveway now? What about a sandbox, hiking trails?

In 1969 a merger with the city parks department was proposed. Ed Smith was invited to a meeting and spent some time working on possible plans for development. A committee was appointed to work with him. He arranged to have the poison oak sprayed a time or two

in the picnic area.

Dave Hunter donated a pit toilet in '69 which was apparently never installed.

In early '70 volunteers gathered to transplant some of the small trees from the central clearing and members were invited to take away any others they could use. Portable toilets were rented for a season or two but cost \$50 for the season and were deemed to expensive. A committee appointed for the purpose could not decide on a suitable location for toilets until other developments were completed, so nothing was done about that need.

The cement foundation was removed and \$200 spent on picnic tables in 1970. In '72 the local 4H club offered to build an outdoor fireplace if SBIA would provide the materials. This project was OKd and a committee appointed to supervise, but was never carried out.

The minute for August, 1974 notes the Association has three swing sets and needs something to attach them to. They were never installed. One member recalled that the swings were lost in the Maxson fire.

The picnic area was seeded to grass, fertilized and mowed several seasons by neighborhood volunteers. Several summer picnics were held in 1976-77. A second study questionnaire was circulated in 1978 with inconclusive results. There was talk of building a tennis court. Steve Wheatley worked up cost figures on this proposal. Some thought we should build a swimming pool, a covered picnic shelter, possibly with a fireplace at one end.

A park development committee was appointed after the '78 questionnaire and submitted a report in February, 1979. The Association seemed to have several options.

1. If further improvements were added we would have continuing problems of maintenance, insurance electric bills and vandalism.
2. We could continue to mow the picnic area, use it occasionally in the summer time and leave the park as is.
3. We could give the property to the Boy Scouts and be free of any continuing responsibility, or similarly, give it to the city parks department.

The decision at that time was to leave it "as is" for the present.

Since that time the park has been used several times for an Easter egg hunt for neighborhood children and for an occasional fire demonstration and a few organized summer picnics.

#### OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Bennett Stephenson who was appointed to the first board of directors of SBIA in 1954, introduced in June of that year a motion to require all board members to sign a loyalty oath before they could take office. The motion was defeated by a vote of four to two and Mr. Stephenson resigned.

This was at a time when loyalty oath requirements were pervasive in American society. A group of WWII conscientious objectors had purchased a tract of land south of the Butte and established a cooperative housing community. Merlin Myers, a member of that possibly suspect group, was elected to the SBIA board. This probably was what prompted Mr. Stephenson to make his move. He wanted to avoid "guilt by association" with a possible Communist.

Roger Liljeberg made the signs which are used to locate the meetings these days. Joy Collins was leader in organizing a recycling program in 1970-71. John Paseman volunteered to haul materials collected at her home from Association members, taking the recycle things to BRING recycling center monthly. Mail service on South Willamette was initiated largely through the efforts of Mildred Pruett and Elaine Rankin who called on the postmaster several times, and finally were given an application for a rural route when the commissioners promised the road would be maintained. Spencer Butte Junior High School was apparently given a name which had been proposed by the SBIA board in 1959

The ribbon trail idea, a hiking or bridle path from Judkins Point around the south hills to Blanton Heights and beyond was under consideration for many years. The Obsidians were one of the sponsoring groups. In July, 1969 SBIA recorded a minute of support for the idea, and some of the Association members met regularly with other interested parties. The Association took out a membership in the Lane County Parks Association at that time to further commit themselves to the proposal.



When the South Willamette dump was closed SBIA urged the county to turn that eighty acres into park land to be tied in with the trail. Over the years the city obtained a right of way and in the early '80s portions of the trail were completed and ready for public use.

In May, 1973 the commissioners received a petition with 500 signatures requesting that the old dump be turned into a motorcycle recreation area. The request was denied as being unsuitable to the neighborhood.

One of the 1978 meetings was devoted to learning about tansy ragwort, a noxious weed poisonous to cows and horses. A speaker from the county extension office brought applications for members who would like to participate in an experimental control program. Later several bags of cinnabar moth larvae were delivered to the area and a continuing process of control is underway.

Discussions about zoning the area began in 1955-56. Mr. Buford attended an SBIA meeting in February, 1964 to explain zoning procedures. By June, 1973 AGT 5 classification had been approved except for some larger holdings classified FF 20. Meanwhile statewide land use planning was underway and the final provisions and control are still undetermined.

Several fund-raising projects have been entered into since demise of the fair booth. In 1970 there was a Christmas bazaar at the Oakway Mall, a food booth at the Old Oregon Country Fair and at the Christmas Confab at the fairgrounds. Another possible project agreed on but not carried out as far as the records indicate was a plan to cut and sell firewood.

#### MAZAMA ROAD

In 1979 Forest Solomon of Mazama Timber Company petitioned Lane County to accept for dedication as a public right of way a private logging road through 1000 acres of forested hillside at the south end of Murdock Road.

Murdock Road residents recognized many problems inherent in

this proposed "gift" to the county, among them the greatly increased traffic potential if the acreage should be subdivided, and the setting of a precedent for the county to assume maintenance of logging or other unplanned roads as tax write-offs favoring individuals.

SBIA was asked to contribute to a legal fund to oppose dedication of the "Mazama Road" as it was known.

A minute from the April 2, 1980 meeting reads as follows: "Carrying over from last months meeting, a motion was reintroduced that the Association assist the Murdock Road residents for up to 40% of their legal fees, but not to exceed \$1000. After considerable discussion the motion passed with six votes in opposition." It seems likely that the majority of active SBIA members had no knowledge of the "park development only" strings attached to their savings account by the resolution adopted at the time of the fair booth squabble.

As the years passed members abandoned the annual anniversary observance formerly held on or near March 9. Christmas parties continue to be planned every year and since 1981 a fall season round robin or progressive dinner has been held yearly. This event involves many neighborhood people who seldom participate in any other SBIA activity. It was designed specifically to encourage rapport in the smaller neighborhoods within SBIA's total perimeters.

This report obviously does not include every event of SBIA history over the last thirty years. It has been prepared from the records available. A few years' minutes were not very complete, and furthermore things which stand out sharply in some memories are of little importance in others. It has been most rewarding for me to compile this summary. It is heartening to have had a hand in this demonstration of community spirit in operation. I hope the urbanization process will not become overpowering in our area for many years to come, and that we can continue to value and support one another effectively on into the future.

Lois Barton April 29, 1985



## APPENDIX I

Year & Mo. appt'd.	President	Secretary
Mar. 1954	Florence Murdock	Merlin Myers
Sept. 1954	Florence Murdock	John Steinmuller
Sept. 1955	Florence Murdock	Chet Williams
Sept. 1956	Florence Murdock	Orpha Roberts
Oct. 1957	Chet Williams	Ken McEwen
Oct. 1958	Chet Williams	Mrs. Murdock
Oct. 1959	Florence Murdock	Virgie Macias
Sept. 1960	Florence Murdock	Virgie Macias
Sept. 1961	Florence Murdock	Orpha Roberts
Sept. 1962	Dick McAtee	Orpha Roberts
Sept. 1963	Virgil Roberts	Orpha Roberts
Sept. 1964	Virgil Roberts	Orpha Robwrts
Sept. 1965	Virgil Roberts	Elaine Rankin
Sept. 1966	John Ball	Phyllis Schrader
Sept. 1967	Virgil Roberts	Phillis Schrader
Sept. 1968	Trudy Day	Margaret Bennett
Oct. 1969	Sandra Maxson	Henriette Gemmell
Sept. 1970	Bev. Andrews	Joy Collins
Oct. 1971	Charles Dallas	Sandra Maxson
Oct. 1972	Carles Dallas	Carol Petit
Oct. 1973	Charles Dallas	Sandra Maxson
Oct. 1974	Anne Woeste	Mary Rodman
Oct. 1975	Anne Woeste	Mary Rodman
Oct. 1975	Margie Ferguson	Mary Rodman
Oct. 1976	Jerry Woeste	Audrey Kuschke
Oct. 1977	Lois Barton	Ruth LeFevre
Oct. 1978	Al Kuschke	Barbara Hill
Oct. 1979	Ken Gaske	Barbara Hill
Oct. 1980	Chet Williams	Margaret Bennett
Oct. 1981	Chet Williams	Margaret Bennett
Oct. 1982	Henriette Gemmell	Bev. Andrews
Oct. 1983	Henriette Gemmell	John Halpern



ANNIVERSARY EDITION

# SPENCER BUTTE NEWS

THE WEATHER HERALD

Spencer Butte Improvement Association Publication

1

March, 1955

**RESIDENTS NOW FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS.** A year ago we learned names. Names were a good start because that led to homes. Mutual interests followed and results from community effort have exceeded the expectations of the most optimistic in this first year.

**REVIEW OF ORIGINAL AIMS** and purposes of Spencer Butte Improvement Ass'n shows considerable progress on several projects and a good start on other

**OUTSTANDING SERVICE IMPROVEMENT** was the extension of Rural Route No 4 to include two and half miles on S Willamette. The new mailboxes, in good order are a challenge to those needing cleaning and straightening. A distinctive mailbox marking would raise the standard of appearance in the neighborhood.

**YOUR INVITATION**

.... TO ....

**ANNIVERSARY PARTY No 1**

.... AT ....

**SKINNER BUTTE PARK BUILDING**

**MARCH 23rd**

**Wednesday night**

**6:30PM**

**POT-LUCK**

**TURKEY DINNER OFFERED IN THE BEGINNING.** One year ago our good member, Mr Sher Khan, said he would furnish turkey, so, our celebration is that **TURKEY DINNER.** Coffee will be furnished but 'pot-luck' the rest. Sher Khan will get first choice, to be sure.

**A GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING** but the main business will be eating, fun and good fellowship. The year's business will be on display.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED YOU WILL BE THERE**

**COME!**

**IF YOU ARE CURIOUS**

**COME!**

**IF YOU ARE SKEPTICAL**

**COME!**

**IF YOU WERE ONLY TO THE FIRST MEETING**

**COME!**

**IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN TO ANY MEETING**

**COME!**

**IF YOU ARE NEW HERE, WE WANT TO KNOW YOU**

**COME!**

So, bring scalloped potatoes, vegetable, salad, desert or whatever to finish out a good old 'turkey-feed'. Bring the whole family, too. The children are a delight. At the Christmas Party they were so cute, so pretty, and, so many!



THE AREA SIGNS ON BOTH SIDES of the Butte are a credit to the community and everyone is justly proud of the work of Bob Stephensen, Merlin Myers, Lewis Rankin and Emery Pruett.

#### CITY PARK BUREAU FIRST TO COOPERATE.

Mr Matsler, superintendent of parks and recreation of Eugene, responded first to requests for improvement and erected directional signs to the City Park on the Butte which partly relieves the confusion about its location. Fox Hollow needs the same signs.

COUNTY ROADS CREWS IN HIGH GEAR. For the first time, the maintenance of our roads has been stepped up to a monthly grading with some brush cutting and ditching. The improvement on the chuckholes is noticeable and appreciated. A South Willamette sign was placed at the junction but the road still cannot be found. The cut-off a little farther North is improved and will have signs. The attitude of the County Commission is good and though no commitments are made, the views on various developments are encouraging.

DUMPING OF GARBAGE ALONG THE ROADS seems to have reduced since we have become a community.

IN THE OLD DAYS SOUTH WILLAMETTE WAS CALLED MARTIN HILL and in the area beyond 42nd Street was a tannery.

ANNEXATION TO FIRE DISTRICT No 1 has some very interested people who will be getting at the big job.

STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION STILL DELAYS The Q Street survey still holds up any commitment of improvement on the Fox Hollow road. There is no logical connection. Just that in the years long past, the fox Hollow section, being considered unimportant, was put up as a pawn on possible trades between the County and the State and, so far, that stalemate has not been broken. There are favorable signs but no assurance as yet. Summer and fall are coming and all residents should rally closer on the problem.

ASSOCIATION TRAFFIC COUNT AND SURVEY TO BE MADE ON WEEK\*ENDS when the pleasure driving is heavy, is for the purpose of convincing all powers-that-be that the travel on our roads warrants budgeting and building. The plan is to set up stands, probably at the junction where the travel is both ways, to count cars and to give to those who will stop, an attractive brochure on the area, which Bart Dobson is making and a native plant which Doug Cline is procuring. At the same time, in tactful conversation obtain some information about the purpose of the drive etc. The stands are to be bright beach umbrellas and chairs if there are some in the community that could be borrowed. Much help is needed on this project, so if you would help be sure to let someone know. Umbrellas and chairs, sign making, man-hours - all are needed.

ENTERPRISING HOME BUILDER REPORTS PROGRESS. Harry Taylor has utility-house completed.

USE OF NEW TELEPHONE CABLE IS AWAITED.

ZONING OF AREA IS RIGHT DIRECTION Residents of Dillard Road area and West of Fox Hollow beyond 40th Street about one mile, have been farsighted enough to zone suburban-residential in order to protect themselves and the appearance of their neighborhood, which is in line with the aims and purposes of Spencer Butte Improvement Association. It was done by petition with only two dissenters. A Rural zoning is in the making for the rest of the area and information on it from the County Planning Commission will be available.

BETTER NEWS. EDITION AND CIRCULATION from the Register-Guard has been the subject of preliminary discussion with the news-men. Neither the mail, "country-cousin" edition nor just the city news is satisfactory. One edition with all features would be. A good news-service would solve the circulation problems.

MISCELLANY not mentioned elsewhere. Nine general meetings include skate party, picnic and election. Sixteen board meetings. Moves from area are regretted. Leech Davidson, Stephensen - all had new babies but more are expected for replacements. New names are on mail boxes - Davis, Jones and who else? Weddings have been centered - two Mentions and one Lucas. Serious operations and blood donation Bad burns and broken arms Forest fires and house fires Snow in March

Spencer Butte News March 1955 page 3

MR GEORGE OWEN'S GIFT HIGHLIGHT OF YEAR The ten-acre tract of land was donated to the Association by a man who has a great understanding of people and of community needs and the Association was most fortunate that Mr Owen was just such a property owner on Spencer Butte.

CLEARING FOR ROAD ENTRANCE TO PARK HAS BEEN STARTED by the planning and development committee, Lewis Rankin, Emery Pruett John Steinmuller and Chet Williams. Their work plan is that groups of three or four who live close will work as units. The entrance and some picnic area are the first objectives.

NEED FOR COMMUNITY CENTER BECOMES MORE URGENT at each meeting. The City is not the place for rural family gatherings even though it is a great help while getting started. Organization gets things that individuals want but organization also means many people who must have a place to get together in order to work together.

BUILDING FUND IN SAVING ACCOUNT separate from general fund. Successful moneymakers have been Fair Booth and Gift Auction.

RUMMAGE SALE AT RUMMAGE CENTER ON APRIL 4 is next moneymaker. SAVE ALL RUMMAGE Mildred Pruett is in charge and will pick it up. Rummage is anything - old dishes, appliances, tools, gadgets, shoes, hats, clothing for Spring and Easter. Look carefully. It may have become so useless to you that you don't see it. APRIL 4th

COME TO THE PARTY REMEMBER THE RUMMAGE