



YOU ARE INVITED!

Magnolia Historical Society Annual Event and Meeting

THEN & NOW “Magnolia Boulevard: The Secret and Not So Secret History Revealed”

Thursday, February 13, 2014
7:00 – 9:00 pm
Magnolia Lutheran Church
Fireside Room
2414 – 31st Ave W



Writer Claudia Isquith and local historian Mimi Sheridan present more than 100 years of history and development of the Magnolia Boulevard.

The presentation will include historic information and archival photos of the street and homes.

The MHS 2014-2015 Board will be elected.
Refreshments will be provided.

JOIN US!

MHS HAPPENINGS

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Don't Miss Our
FREE
MEMOIR WRITING WORKSHOP
on
Saturday, March 22nd
See page 2 for details

**FREE
MEMOIR WRITING WORKSHOP
WILL INSPIRE YOU!**

by Monica Wooton



**Saturday, March 22nd
12:30-4:00pm
Magnolia Branch Public Library
2801 34th Avenue West**

Maybe you have always wanted to write down the “good ole days” and teach these tech-savvy young’uns’ a thing or two, explore your crazy Aunt Ida’s penchant for smoking cigars, or re-purpose rumpled and food-stained recipes into a cohesive family history. Maybe you do not even know where to begin or how to start such a thing but it sounds interesting. This free, popular and fun memoir writing workshop is for you!

Participants this past fall used prompts, discussion and advice to write about their childhood and adolescent years. Being sent to an all-girls high school and handling a date became a humorous anecdote. One participant told of her first encounter with a stranger she met at a dance and how the first dance foretold her fate to marry him. Another of fears visiting the basement as a child with its musty smells and old oil furnace that had octopus arms that could “get ya”. We heard of the oatmeal raisin cookies that one mother made that were never good enough to get her child a much-wanted Twinkie trade in the 1960s cafeteria scene. One writer poignantly told of being a foreigner in a land that could not understand her and the ways it affected her early years.

Teachers and students found themselves immersed in a four-hour afternoon session of creative drafting, revising, and critiquing. They tackled fun topics and serious themes. With guidance and gentle feedback provided by Society Co-President Monica Wooton and Board Members Dale Forbus Hogle and Joely Johnson Mork published authors, all present were able to plumb memories and explore personal histories with an eye to revision on through publication.



Participants share their writing with MHS Teacher Dale Forbus Hogle and enjoy the outcomes.

Seemingly simple writing prompts generated colorful and moving tales, and a receptive group helped each other improve writing skills.

You are invited to sign up now. The workshop is FREE. No writing experience necessary. We provide prompts, inspiration and a booklet to write in.

JOIN US!

Call (206) 284-2430 to RSVP, Space is limited. The class fills up quickly.

THEN AND NOW Magnolia Boulevard: The Secret and Not So Secret History Revealed

by Monica Wooton, Co-President

Then...

The Magnolia Boulevard, the street and the homes that reside along the exceptional strip of 12.1 acres of view property on Magnolia's west edge have had a rich and long local history attached to them. In 1903, three years after it became part of the City's 25-Mile Bike Path, the Olmsted's suggested it be one of the prominent boulevards in their City of Seattle Park Plan. The promenade has had lengthy negotiations between developers, residents and the city. Many twist and turns of local politics gave us the road we see today and the homes that stand beside it. The Olmstead's did not in the end design the Boulevard, that task was done by Samuel C. Lancaster, the engineer behind the Columbia River Gorge scenic drive. (See The Magnolia News, Snapshot in Time, 3/28/2012.)



Home built by Mrs. Margaret P. Wilson on Magnolia Boulevard West between West Barrett Street and West Dravus Street. The house was constructed to resemble the family home in New York.

Washington State Archives, Puget Sound Regional Branch, Bellevue. 1940.

The view property has been a tussle between City and residents as to proper and appropriate maintenance of view corridors and especially care or removal of the Madrona which have long been an icon of the Boulevard. Street racing on the Boulevard in the 40s and 60s was serious business for the young males of Seattle. The (passion) "Pits" – an informal place to watch the "submarine races" and favorite make-out spot for teens has turned into the formal Magnolia Boulevard Viewpoints. Tour companies visit it on a regular basis to get a good view of Mt Rainier, West Seattle, Washington State Ferries, the islands across the sound, and the City skyline. The road remains unlit at night because residents did not want the glare disturbing evening and night views.

In *Magnolia: Making More Memories*, Claudia Isquith laid out the history of the street and its houses:



Dr. Cecil L. Tenny's home under construction in the 1900 block of Magnolia Boulevard West in the early 1930s.

*Photo by Webster & Stevens.
Courtesy of Julie Lent Sanders.*

"Magnolia Boulevard's homes consist of an interesting array of architectural styles, sizes, and exterior finishes. There are houses featuring English Country, Tudor, Colonial, Spanish, Mediterranean, Dutch Colonial, Federal, and contemporary styles. They are built with brick, stucco, wood and stone, and their look exhibits the varied tastes of the original owners. Very few of these houses were built prior to 1920. The late 1920s and 1930s saw a flurry of construction, and many of those homes were designed by prestigious architects for well known Seattle business people..."

"As early as 1903, the Olmsted Brothers proposed a boulevard...The boulevard referred to in the 1903 report was to be placed 125 to 130 feet above the low water mark and would then gradually descend 20 or 30 feet, winding around the area of land above and north of the Cove and forming the far end of Magnolia Bluff.

(continued on page 4)

Magnolia Boulevard (continued from page 3)

“Magnolia Boulevard was to be created through a condemnation ordinance, acquiring the land from property owners. In October 1909, prior to this ordinance, the Seattle Park Department offered James W. Clise \$50,000 for a strip of land from Wolfe (Wolf) Creek ravine upland for a boulevard right of way. Clise turned down the offer and that was the beginning for Clise of years of dealing with the City and the Park Department over this land.” And, from such beginnings the long and winding road we now know as Magnolia Boulevard came to be.

Now...

Many long-standing houses are undergoing massive renovations and remodels. The once most-recognized and iconic white California Spanish Style Stucco on the upper curve of the road has been refashioned into a large Modern Bungalow. Stories have been added to homes, and views have been in contention in recent years.

Today Madronas are succumbing to blight due to viruses/fungus and the loss of forest around them and the groves of trees that once dotted that drive. After some neglect and long discussions and battles over view-rights and Madrona tree health, Magnolia Boulevard is being revived as a prominent and well-landscaped promenade with more grass, neatened up swaths of controlled weeds and brush with more park benches and view corridors.



Road work widening Magnolia Boulevard West.
*Seattle Municipal Archives, Engineering Department
Photographic Negatives, #44547.
October 7, 1953.*

The majestic Madrona trees are failing and how long they will be a part of the landscape is unknown; City Arborist Mark Mead says their days are most likely numbered. To long-time Magnolians the loss of the Madronas is heartbreaking; to others, it becomes an opportunity to maximize views and property values. (See, *The Magnolia News*: [City, Community work to save Magnolia Blvd. Landscape, 12/3/2013](#)).

Sources: Seattle Parks and Recreation Website; The Magnolia News, “Street Racing Glory Days of Street Racing on the Boulevard”, 10/4/2012; Magnolia: Making More Memories, “Magnolia Boulevard West”, Claudia Isquith, pp 33-43; Magnolia Vegetation Management Plan, May 1998, Janis Snoey, Project Manager; Interview with Seattle City Arborist Mark Mead, Fall 2013.



MHS Accomplishments for 2013

- ◆ Newsletter, up-to-date website, and growing Facebook audience
- ◆ Memoir Writing Workshops
- ◆ Partnered with Blaine PTA—Bike the Bluff book sales
- ◆ Farmer’s Market—“donate what you can” book sales
- ◆ Historical research and program on Magnolia Boulevard street and homes
- ◆ Archived all documents to UW/MHS archives
- ◆ “Then and Now” project with Discovery Park—photos
- ◆ Served as active member of Magnolia/Queen Anne District Council

MHS Board for 2014-2015

Election of Board Members
will take place at our
Annual Meeting on Thursday, February 13th



Jeff Cunningham, born and raised in Magnolia, attended Our Lady of Fatima grade school and O'Dea High School. At Western Washington University, he earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in none other than History. His primary focus was ancient history, but when he moved back he became interested in local history and spent a few years as a volunteer tour guide at the Museum of History and Industry at the Montlake location. After 2 years as a Board Member, he is stepping up to lead the Society.



Monica Wooton has served on the MHS Board since it began in 2002. She is a founding member. She was also the Project Manager, Editor, Writer and Photographer for the award-winning Magnolia History Books: *Magnolia: Memories & Milestones*, *Magnolia: Making More Memories*. She will serve as an at-large member and continue leading the free Memoir Writing Workshops.



Dale Forbus Hogle, Magnolia resident for over 80 years, holds a wealth of historical information about Magnolia. She is the daughter of well-known, long-time Magnolian, Lady Willie Forbus, the first woman State Legislator from Magnolia. Dale, her sister Alvara, and mother were the subjects of a chapter in the first Magnolia book. Dale took on the challenge of writing a detailed and informative chapter about the 1990 archeological dig at West Point Beach for the second Magnolia book. She has served MHS for many years, first as Newsletter Editor, now a Board Member at-large. She serves also as a co-teacher of the MHS Memoir Writing Workshops.



Meaghan Fox became interested in Magnolia history when she and her husband began research on the home they bought in Magnolia. She has served on the Board helping with book sales and will continue in that capacity.



Jennifer Ryan has been a Board Member for almost a decade. Introduced to MHS while doing local research on Ft. Lawton Trolley, she then went on to write a MHS Grant to fund the printing of *Magnolia: Making More Memories*. She is now looking for other grant opportunities for collecting oral stories in Magnolia. For a day job, she is a Consultant on the final design of Sound Transit's east link tunnel through Bellevue.



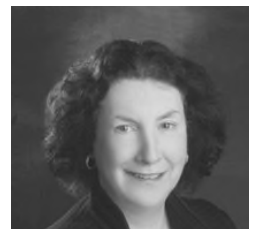
Joely Johnson Mork is a recent Magnolia transplant from the East Coast. An editor, writer and yoga instructor, she became active in the Society after attending a Memoir Writing Workshop. She will write blogs and columns and serve on the Board assisting at Memoir Writing Workshops and taking on the Local History in Schools Program. She will serve at-large.



Jim Clark hails from Maryland but has called Magnolia home since 1996. After participating in a free MHS Memoir Writing Workshop, he began serving on the Board and has been an at-large member for 2 years. He is a community activist and local photographer. He will be working with Discovery Park on a Then and Now photography project. Jim will serve as one of our Reps to the Magnolia/Queen Anne District Council.



Dee St. George joined MHS as the Grant Bookkeeper for *Magnolia: Making More Memories* in 2006. Since then she has served as Treasurer, Book Sales Coordinator, working on the MHS Newsletter, events and publicity. She will continue in these roles.

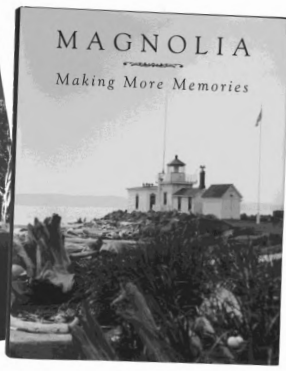
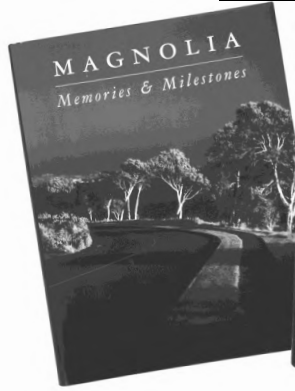
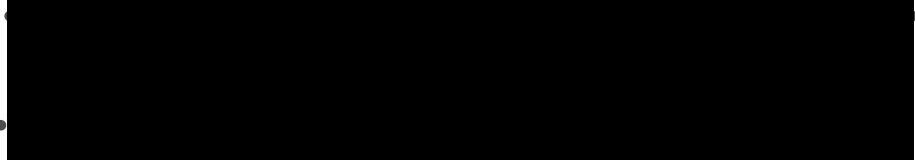


Mimi Sheridan is a Magnolian and local historian. She has a degree in history and political science from the University of California, Santa Barbara and a Master's degree in urban planning with a certificate in historic preservation from the University of Washington. Historic preservation is her specialty. Serving on the Board for 2 years, she brings a wealth of knowledge to our projects. She will serve at-large.

Patty Church, a long-time Magnolian, came to us through the Memoir Writing Workshop. She brings enthusiasm and Magnolia history to her work as a Board member at-large. No photo available at the time of publication.

Bruce Jones retired from IBM and has served as our Webmaster since the beginning of our web presence. The website has been called impressive by many visitors. His work and the work of MHS, events, blogs, archival pictures and chapters of the books can be seen at www.magnoliahistoricalsociety.org





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&
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Seattle, WA 98199-1624



FREE WRITING WORKSHOP!
Saturday, March 22, 12:30-4:00PM

See page 2 for details