



# History On The Hill

The Newsletter of the South Hill Historical Society  
South Hill, Pierce County, Washington

Volume 15 Issue 4 Fall 2017

## Japanese Bombs Fall on South Hill During World War II...

by Jerry Bates

**Y**ES, in March of 1945 two Japanese “balloon” bombs drifted down from the skies and landed on the sparsely populated Hill—with, thankfully, no casualties, no explosion and no fire. There were two locations where landings were witnessed or balloon remains found. During this time, few were aware of what happened the bombings were all top secret and no one read about it in the daily papers.

We were lucky—but not so fortunate were people in Bly, Oregon, where six were killed, five of them children, when they disturbed an unexploded balloon bomb during a picnic outing.

The October meeting featured a partial viewing of the documentary CD *On Paper Wings*. This is an award-winning production of the Japanese balloon bomb program focusing mainly on interviews and memories of survivors of the Bly, Oregon event. Most interesting, in addition to the American family members and those involved, filmmaker/researcher Ilana Sol has included interviews with surviving Japanese women that actually made the fabric used for the balloons. Dur-



**This rendering visualizes two Japanese balloon bombs heading our way in March of 1945. The event was shrouded in secrecy.**

ing the war hundreds of young schoolgirls were recruited for the job. In 1996, John Takeshita brought these two groups together in Bly, Oregon, at the memorial site on Gearhart Mountain, in memory of the tragic explosion. At the time of the explosion, (now) Professor John Takeshita was held in a Japanese internment camp nearby. It's a moving presentation showing how time heals the animosities of that turbulent era. As a tribute to the families of those killed in Bly, the visiting Japanese women folded a thousand origami paper cranes for the occasion.

### Balloon Bombs On South Hill

Most of our members are familiar with the story of the balloon landings on South Hill, a topic we have visited often. Member Carl Vest has written several stories of the event for the *Puyallup Herald*, and *The Tacoma News Tribune* has covered the topic. Books have been published on the Japanese program. The Parks family, current members of our Society, was living on the Hill at that time. They remember, as children, the landing and the military units sweeping the area close to their home. One of our past members, Arthur Massie, brought a fragment of balloon bomb fabric to a Society meeting. His father took souvenirs from bomb remains tangled in a tree in their farm's apple orchard. Member Paul Hackett continues to research the bomb story.

### The FuGo program

It was one of the best-kept secrets of WWII, the first strategic bombing from one continent to another. Bombs drifted on the not well-known jet stream from Japan to America. 9,000 launches of balloon bombs would take place. Of that, 900 are believed to have landed in the northwestern United States, Washington, Oregon, Montana, Idaho and California, some being found from Alaska to Mexico and as far east as Michigan. They were loaded with anti-personnel and incendiary bombs. The idea was to cause mass panic in the United States by starting forest fires and causing deaths—to undermine the American war effort. Fortunately nothing on that scale occurred, thanks to the bombs being launched during the rainy season and landing in largely unpopulated areas.

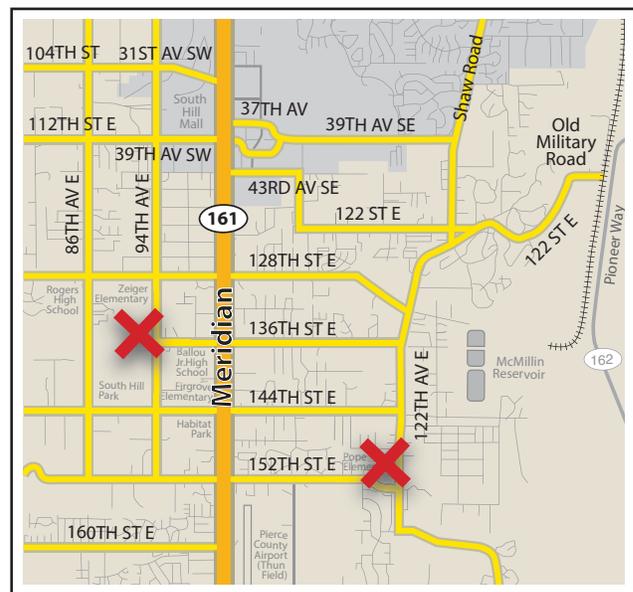
The delivery technology was totally dependent on exploiting the jet stream of air over the Pacific. The balloons could reach very high speed—making the crossing in three to six days. In Japan, it was a massive operation of manufacture. Due to war shortages of both manpower and material, hundreds of schoolgirls were used to produce balloon fabric. They made inexpensive mulberry paper and fashioned it into balloons 33 feet in diameter. Launches began on November 3, 1944. About 1,000 landed somewhere on the American continent. By May of 1945, 100 were recovered in the northwestern states but the general public knew nothing. This was all kept secret as government officials feared greater damage would have been done to American morale rather than any material damage.

The bombs were designed to explode and not leave any trace—but many malfunctioned. There was strict censorship—radio and newspapers were asked not to carry any news of bomb findings or incidents.

All in all, the entire project failed. The massive forest fires and public panic and demoralization did not happen. American bombing destroyed the Japanese hydrogen producing sites used to fill the balloons. Japan was rapidly losing the war in the spring of 1945 and in the following five months, 60 cities were burned. The first-ever atomic bombs fell in August.

Carl Vest has more information on this subject. His published articles are available on our website [www.southhillhistory.com](http://www.southhillhistory.com), under the “History” link on the home page. Our archives also contain more research—including a large study recently donated. Contact our archivist Wes Perkinson at [mail@southhillhistory.com](mailto:mail@southhillhistory.com). The CD *On Paper Wings* is available for borrowing—contact Bob Ballou [mail@southhillhistory.com](mailto:mail@southhillhistory.com). The CD can be purchased on the website [www.onpaperwingsthemovie.com](http://www.onpaperwingsthemovie.com).

## Balloon Bomb Landings Reported On South Hill



# The Old Reise Farm Becomes *Four Elements Farm*



**This beautiful setting is now the Four Elements Farm, at the foot of hectic South Hill's eastern ridge. It is forever protected from development—preserved for agriculture only, no housing projects or warehouses—formerly known to most South Hill old-timers as the Reise Farm, the acreage purchased by Ludwig Reise in 1903.**

**A**PPROACHING the end of our Historic Corridor (Old Military Road and State Route 162) you pass the old Reise farm—where it has been for over a century. Farmed by the Reise (Rice-ee) family since 1903, the picturesque site is now owned and protected from development (forever) by the PCC Farmland Trust\*. After the death of its last Reise occupant, Wilmer Reise, the family sold the farm to the PCC Farmland Trust. Since 2014 the 123-acre farm has been leased to Amy Moreno-Sills and Agustin Moreno and now has a new name and new beginning maintaining its historic role. The couple named their farm the Four Elements Farm. Amy, our September guest speaker said, “My husband created the name after the four elements of nature—fire, air, earth and water and we are a family of four.”

The Morenos are fulfilling their dream, said Amy. “Farming is part of who we are and what we have to do to be happy—and we’re happy to be on this property with such a huge history!” Amy’s husband has been involved in agriculture his whole life growing up in Mexico. Amy’s love of farming began in 2000 when she took the Practice of Sustainable Agriculture course at the Evergreen State College in Olympia. She participated in an intern program at a farm in Carnation, followed by greenhouse management for a 200-acre or-

ganic vegetable farm in Snoqualmie Valley, where she met Agustin. Their first child was born in 2008—the same year they moved to Pierce County to work a farm in Orting. In 2014, they started the Four Elements Farm.

Prior to Amy and Austin’s presence, the Reise acreage was used by Allen Scholz who grew pumpkins and corn. “Allen was an incredible resource for us,” said Amy, “informing us about the secrets of the property—where drainage goes, location of dry spots, fertile spots—he’s been an amazing neighbor.”

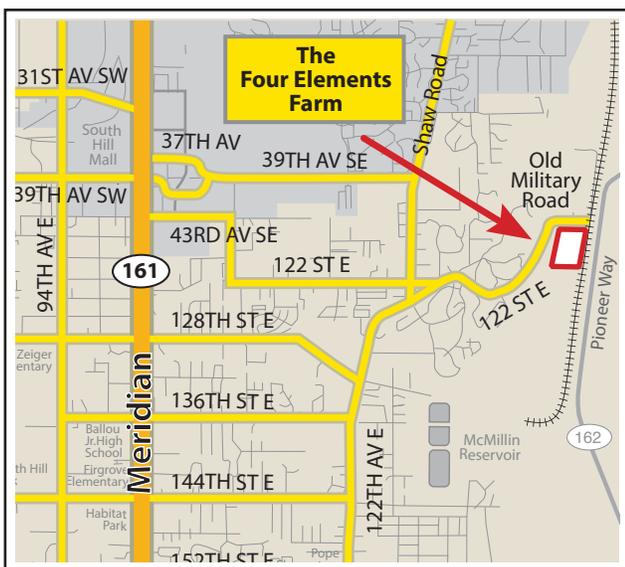
They’re in the process of changing the soil for organic crops, with a goal to produce 20-30 acres of vegetables while keeping some fields fallow so we switch fields year-to-year to sustain fertility. They grow mostly for the wholesale market now. Although semi-trucks come to the farm to pick up the produce, they do some deliveries themselves to small-time operations and farmers’ markets. Their volume isn’t large enough to do business with stores like Safeway and Fred Meyer, etc. “We want to open it more to the public, make it more welcoming, have it where people want to hang out and understand where their food comes from, how to store it, spend time,” says Amy. The future is promising for the Moreno’s, as Amy related

in her newsletter, “We’re toying with the idea of expanding the store to be able to offer more of our products as well as items from other local farms and artisans. We’re thinking coffee, baked goods, honey, and anything else we see that’s produced close to home with sustainability in mind.” This summer they launched a Community-Supported Agriculture (CSA) Program where people can buy shares in the farm in exchange for fresh, organic vegetables every week. They prepare boxes with the best picks of the harvest—cabbage, lettuce, cucumbers, bell peppers, tomatoes, carrots, kale, onions and radishes. A small share is \$25 per week; a large share \$35 per week.

The farm also has six acres of blueberry bushes planted in the early 1940s, a very popular crop, at \$2.50 per pound. It’s open to the public, U-pick through August. They have flowers, too and they plan on growing corn.

Amy concluded, “It’s a huge honor to farm the property. We sincerely believe in our motto—delicious produce grown with integrity.” See their website, [fourelementsfarm.com](http://fourelementsfarm.com).

\* **PCC Farmland Trust** is a nonprofit land trust working to secure, preserve, and steward threatened farmland in Washington, ensuring that generations of local farmers productively farm using sustainable and organic growing methods.



## The Two Amy's



For the September general meeting, Four Elements Farm presenter, Amy Moreno (left) brought along her co-occupant of the old Reise farmstead, Amy Johnson. Amy Johnson and her husband bought the old farm house built by Ludwig Reise, circa 1895 to 1903. The Four Elements Farm acreage farmed by Amy Moreno and her husband surrounds the house.

The Johnsons have restored the old house with extensive remodeling appreciating its historical significance. Amy had many stories and possesses historic photos relating to the house's history. She is eager to work with our Society in researching more historical information.

Amy Johnson said, "my background is in wedding and party planning, we've had two weddings on the property, and our goal is to create a wedding venue—working with the Morenos and the Four Elements Farm."

Our Society looks forward to hearing more from the Johnsons and supporting their effort to preserve their historic home.



[facebook.com/groups/SouthHillHistoricalSociety](https://facebook.com/groups/SouthHillHistoricalSociety)

# Hounds On The Hill

*Dogs & the South Hill Historical Society.* What's the connection you may ask?

Our society benefits from exposure to the people of South Hill. Many are pet owners and participate in the yearly *Hounds on the Hill* event. What better way to spend a beautiful August day than at Bradley Lake Park informing fellow South Hillians of our work! Many of the dog walkers spent time at our booth sharing stories of their lives on South Hill—some of them expressing an interest in joining the Society. Eight of our members volunteered their time to help spread the word and all enjoyed talking with passersby and sometimes their leashed companions.

The Puyallup South Hill Rotary and the Puyallup Parks and Recreation sponsor the event yearly.



The two-mile walk was lined with every imaginable pet related organization and service. Events were offered on stage—with musical entertainment, dog-related speakers, a dog costume contest and a police dog demonstration.

## 2017 Scholarship Winners

Every spring, our Treasurer, Ben Peters, represents the South Hill Historical Society during scholarship ceremonies held at South Hill's Rogers and Emerald Ridge High Schools. Our Scholarship Committee awards a \$500 scholarship for two college-bound seniors from many applications submitted. The grant comes from a fund set up by a generous South Hill Historical Society member who prefers to remain anonymous.

This year's recipients are Isaac McCoy from Rogers High School and Reganne Hoirup of Emerald Ridge. Both are extremely impressive young people.



**Isaac McCoy**

Isaac McCoy will work towards a master's degree in teaching at Western Washington University. His goal is to teach fifth and sixth grade science and math and return to teach in the Puyallup School District. He's commended on his school activities

and challenging course studies. Outside of school he is active in his church and plays the piano—"the epitome of a well-rounded student" said his CTE teacher, Kelly Schakel.

Reganne Hoirup is also heading to Western Washington University. She will major in business—"my career pathway since the ninth grade,"



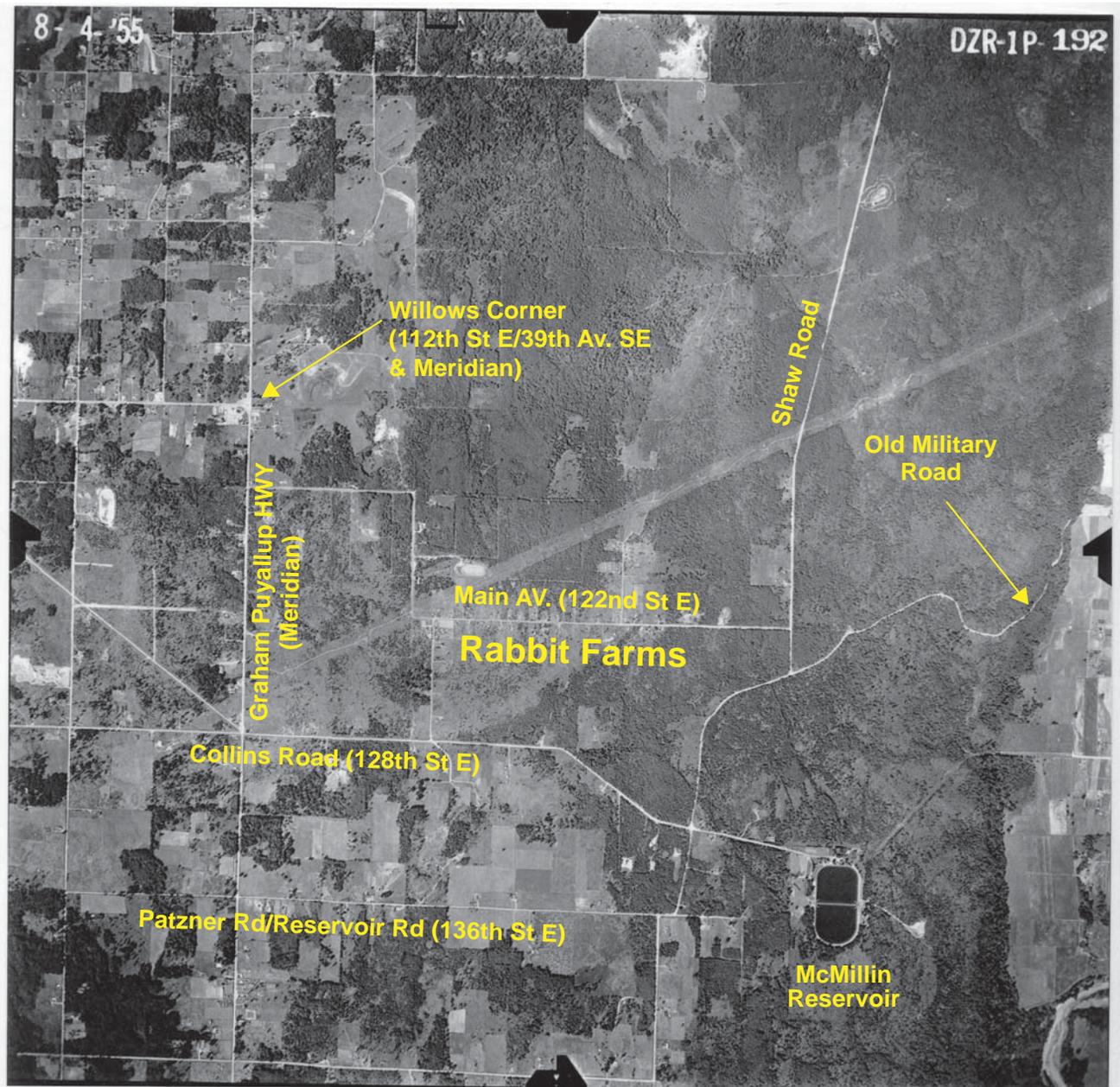
**Reganne Hoirup**

she said. Reganne enrolled in the challenging Running Start program, completing her Pierce College associate degree and high school diploma in tandem. While completing this challenging academic workload, she was also highly involved with extracurricular activities. "She is without a doubt one of the most sincere, authentic

and motivated people I have come to know," said her high school counselor, Lyndsey Hepworth.

# How It Was in 1955

## When South Hill was called the Rabbit Farms



*Call-outs added by editor*

## Earth Explorer

The image above is from the South Hill Historical Society archives. Similar historical aerial images are available from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) online. The website is <https://earth-explorer.usgs.gov/>. The home page includes the familiar Google worldview map. This can be used to focus down on the area of interest in either map or satellite view. The search criteria column seems rather complex with many choices (not all need be filled in.) After finding an image, you must estab-

lish an account to download it. The site requires a large amount of data about account holders; however, all information is secure and NOT given out to vendors, etc. The best part—the service and downloaded images are free with no copyright restrictions. The image file is large—approximately 30MB—and it's in TIFF format with suitable resolution/size to show good detail when printed or used in publishing applications.

# From the Treasurer

by Ben Peters

*Welcome to New Members*

**Gary Cressman  
&  
Dave Smarr**

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.

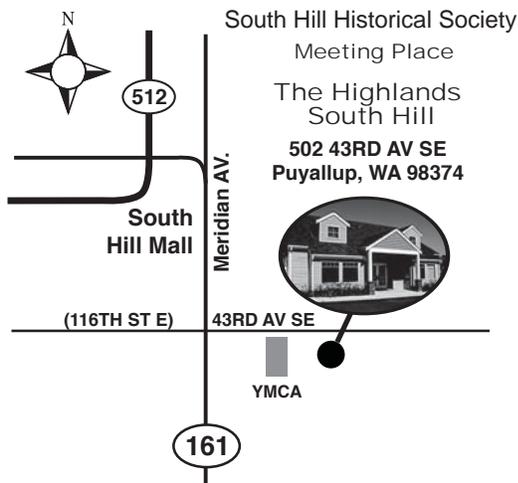
**Also, don't forget that we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Dues, donations, etc., are fully deductible from your income taxes if you are able to do so. If you need a receipt for tax purposes, contact Ben.**

## 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.**

The South Hill Historical Society meets regularly on the **THIRD TUESDAY** of the month, 10:45 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 Wes Perkinson at (253) 241-5397.



# Our Current Members

Andy G. Anderson	Carolyn Nelson
Andy & Ruth Anderson	Dorothy Nelson
Elizabeth Anema	Juanita Nordin
Marion Armstrong	Dorothy Norris
Bob Ballou	Ron Pearson
Jerry Bates	Wes & Suzy Perkinson
Susan Beals	Ben Peters
Katherine Bennett	Dr. Jerry Ramsey
Teresa Best	Robin Reich
Marilyn Burnett	Bill Riley
Debbie Burtnett	Gail Rinehart
Vernon Cox	Vern Rockstad
Gary Cressman	Helen Rohlman
Dave & Patti Curtiss	Earl Root
Robert & Lynn Daughtery	Stan Salmon
Karen Day	Dave Smarr
Pat Drake	Mark Starkel
Joan Ellis	Lori Stock
Arthur & Luverne Foxford	Marge (Crosson) Swain
Ira Gabrielson	Ralph & Yvonne Thorpe
Mary Glaser	Jade Trevere
Paul Hackett	Margo L. & Joe Tucci
Alberta Hagen	Lee Van Pevenage
Evelyn Swalander Hess	Carl Vest
Wilma Walsworth Hinshaw	Neil & Celia Vincent
Alan & Linda Hoenhous	Joan Vosler
Joe & Rhoda Hoenhous	Haily Walker
Maybelle Hoenhous	W. Louise Walsworth
Matt Holm	W. Lynn Williams
Myrna K. Kucklick	Lenore Nicolet Winton
Art & Lorraine Larson	Ed Zeiger
Gary Leicht	Hans Zeiger
Terry Maves	Allan S. & Ellen M. Zulauf
Laurienne Stewart Minnich	Beverley Zook
Bob Molke	

## South Hill Historical Society Officers

*President, Wes Perkinson*  
*Vice-President, Terry Maves*  
*Secretary, Susan Beals*  
*Research Coordinator, Carl Vest*  
*Treasurer, Ben Peters*  
*Archivist, Wes Perkinson*  
*Newsletter Editor, Webmaster, Jerry Bates*

**History On The Hill is published quarterly**  
**Editor Jerry Bates, Editor-at-Large Debbie Burtnett**  
*Copyright 2017*

# South Hill Historical Society Membership/Renewal Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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:

**South Hill Historical Society, Box 73582,  
South Hill, WA 98374**



HERITAGE CORRIDOR  
Box 73582  
South Hill, WA 98374

---

To: