

SW Hills Residential League

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, February 8, 7pm

[Zoom](#)

Chair: **Joyce del Rosario**
contact@swhrl.org

With slightly over 200 years of experience with Portland Heights between the three panelists focusing on the history of the area, the Southwest Hills Residential League (SWHRL) hosted its winter membership meeting at St. Thomas More Parish Hall.

SWHRL Board Secretary **Richard Horswell** moderated the program that included **Matthew Bassist**, **Mary Perlman** and **Patty Reed**.

In his introductions, Horswell joked that he momentarily thought about naming the program "Nothing Happened Here" in response to information he received from phone interviews and panelist invitations he had sent.

While notable "kids of the neighborhood" such as former SWHRL President **Harris Matarazzo**, **Bill Lake** and **Jeff Miller** sent regrets due to other commitments, a common theme



resounded in terms of a quiet lifestyle that often accompanied existence in Portland Heights over the past 80 years.

A 'Togetherness' Neighborhood

Perlman, whose parents were a well-known allergist and a connected art collector, looks back on her experiences with great nostalgia.

"When you grow up in an environment where you are basically with the same kids from

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Upper photo: SWHRL President Joyce del Rosario and panel moderator, Richard Horswell, SWHRL Secretary. Lower left photo: Panelists for the event were Patty Reed, Mary Perlman and Matthew Bassist. Right photo: Winter Membership Meeting attendees included a delegation from a neighborhood street and officers from the Portland Police Bureau.

SWHRL —

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grades K-8 and then go to high school together, that tends to develop lasting friendships,” she noted. “My grandson is now a third-generation Lincoln student, and with that comes a sense of commitment and responsibility to the neighborhood.”

As a descendant from a family that founded both Willamette

University and the City of Lebanon, Reed remains connected to the neighborhood and reflects of the work of her father and grandfather in landscape architecture and working on the Rose Garden.

“The familiarity kept us together and keeps me interested,” she said. “Everyone was always outside and at each other’s houses. That was a sense of community and a feeling of belonging.”

Heavy on civic involvement and still remaining active with neighbors in the same house he grew up in, Bassist lived in all parts of the city before returning to Portland Heights. His parents originally located in the neighborhood because of proximity to their well-known education business in downtown.

While he admits the “rhythm of life is much different from the past,” he explains, “neighbors make an effort to get to know each other through barbecues and other activities which promotes a sense of security and connection.”

Common Themes

What all three panelists had in common was the deep connection that was fostered by what they described as “narrow streets, intentional camaraderie, and forced togetherness due to geography.”

Memories touched on “park lady” who would appear at Portland

Heights Park to teach art lessons each Saturday, the absence leash laws for dogs where it was assumed they would return nightly to a home without calling, and the joy of walking kids to school creating the opportunity to get to know other parents.

While the demographics of Portland Heights have evolved to become more diverse and inclusive, the panel’s overwhelming opinion of the safety of the neighborhood due to its relational history and the sense of community remains strong.

In closing, each panelist held out the hope that new generations would be able to experience similar qualities that they held dear to them.

Richard Horswell
SWHRL Board Secretary

Join With Us!

SWHRL President **Joyce del Rosario** encourages community members to participate in the neighborhood association and remind folks that the league’s voting membership is free to adult residents, property owners, or business representatives in our service area.

“All regular meetings are open to the public, and everyone is welcome,” she says.

“SWHRL meetings, among its other league activities, offer learning opportunities to better safeguard your household, neighborhood and local business through trainings, relevant-dialogue and socially-support camaraderie in times of need.”

SWHRL Treasurer **Kim Silverman** encourages meeting attendance as well but also recommends volunteering for one of the many leadership roles, “Just holding an office is rewarding use of time and helps one feel better connected to community,” she says.

SWHRL Transportation News

Navigating Transportation Issues

Land Use and Transportation Chair, **Craig Koon**, feels that “Transpo and land go hand in hand.” Land use procedures are usually how Southwest Portland gets new transportation infrastructure, especially pedestrian and bike safety.

While Highway 26 and Interstate 405 sliced and diced the West Hills, providing high speed roads for commuters, the main thoroughfares within hillside neighborhoods lack critical infrastructure. Southwest Portland is parklike, yet not walkable.

Getting Involved

Former SWHRL Communications Director and current member of the Transportation Committee, **Lisa Caballero**, wrote many helpful articles for BikePortland (<https://bikeportland.org/>) related to developments and pedestrian standards.

Caballero continues to be a source of knowledge for SW community members about the traffic improvements and other mobility needs across the Metro area.

Sharing the Road

Shattuck Road connects SW Hills, Bridlemile and Hayhurst neighborhoods. With the new development planned for old Alpenrose Dairy, the three neighborhood groups have joined up to host Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) for a Community Strategy Session “Saving Lives along Shattuck Road”.

The session will be held online at 7pm, Wednesday, February 12th. [Click here](#) for access.