



TOWN OF YARROW POINT

Friends & Neighbors

Anniversary Newsletter



A BEAUTIFUL PLACE IN TIME

Myra McEwan Shares Memories of Her Home

Walking down 95th Avenue in Yarrow Point with Myra McEwan (Moberg) feels like trespassing on a place that's hers. Her spirited eyes can see not only what is there now, but 72 years into the past. She hardly needs to look where she is going.

Yarrow Point seems to know her as well as she knows it. Within a few minutes, she waves to two people who drive by.

Myra takes me to the house she used to own with her former husband Alan McEwan. This is the home her parents purchased in 1938 to raise their children in, and where Myra and Al raised their children, Kirk and Tracy, until 1999.

Myra remembers when the sprawling house was a small cabin in a heavily wooded, sparsely populated countryside. Most people came to Yarrow Point for a summer vacation when school was out in Seattle.

"Heaven knows why they wanted to live clear

over here," Myra said of her parents' decision to live in Yarrow Point. "My father took the little passenger ferry, the Ariel, which is down where the beach is now, to work every day."

She explains that the ferry went from Yarrow Point to the foot of Madison in Seattle, and her father then took a trolley car to his job as a civil engineer. When she and her sister took the Ariel to Seattle, it was a treat for them.

Yarrow Point seemed much bigger in the 1940s, Myra says. She remembers that for Christmas the family would hike to the top of the Point, near where the SR520 intersection is now located, to cut a tree, which she thought was a long way.

"It was just all open. I don't know if anyone owned it or not. I suspect it was private property, but there was zero development and we would wander through these woods and find our Christmas tree," Myra says.



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Later a school called the Bay School would be located at the intersection. Children would go to the Medina school for grades 1-3, and then the Bay School for grades 4-6, Myra says. When Myra was in 7th grade, the Bay School was destroyed by fire.

The Point was a forested world for young children to explore. Myra remembers some neighbor boys used to explore a little too enthusiastically, and people in the neighborhood often would have to search for them. During the summer, many children went swimming, she says. Adult residents would gather at Colonel Hamilton's house on 92nd Avenue for meetings of the Yarrow Point Community Club.

One year her parents won the annual Community Club raffle. The prize was a case of whiskey. Myra says afterwards her parents hosted a party that they would talk about for many years.

During these early days, people built homes from whatever they could find and in whatever way they could, Myra recalls. Her neighbor, Mr. Yarno, cranked a house boat up the hill with a hand wench, on logs. Every weekend he would crank the house up 10 to 20 feet, she says. It took many weekends before his house was in place.

Surges in development in Yarrow Point have always corresponded with the construction of bridges across Lake Washington.

"Nothing really changed here until the Mercer Island bridge went in. So, that made it possible for people to come to the eastside without driving clear around the lake one way or the other, or else take the ferry," Myra says.

Development didn't really pick up until 1963 when the SR520 bridge was completed, Myra remembers. Myra and her new husband bought her childhood home from her mother a few years before the bridge was finished. Development surged on the west side of the Point, she says.

"It was 1963 when 520 opened. That really affected Yarrow Point. Property values soared. Taxes were going up. Everything was getting way bigger," Myra remembers.

Myra became involved with the Town when the

Mayor at the time, Dick Sandaas, asked her to be the chair of a committee charged with writing the Town's first Shoreline Management Master Plan. Dick was a childhood friend of hers.

Myra then went on to serve on the Town's Planning Commission. In those days, the commission's primary objective was to keep things the way they had always been, Myra says.

"When I was on the planning commission, it was a pretty cohesive group that liked the status quo, so that is what we were basically addressing and trying to maintain," Myra says.

She also served on the Yarrow Point Town Council. For about a year, she attended all the Town meetings as the Town Clerk. Myra says she often saw the wheel being reinvented time and time again.

"Through all that time you see different groups and different people come in. You end up addressing the same problems, then you go through the whole thing all over again. Sometimes you come to a decision, but sometimes it just sort of sits there and it waits for the money or whatever it takes, or a consensus," Myra says.

Myra has seen Yarrow Point change from a rural vacation spot, to a place where residents enjoy an elegant, sophisticated and amazing lifestyle. Within a short period of time, Yarrow Point changed completely, mirroring events happening throughout the country.

"What I feel the most is this. I lived here at the very best possible time. It was such an interesting and changing time. The electronic age is amazing, and I know that it changes really fast, but that's sort of meaningless to me, but the fact that we went from really nothing, primitive sort of stuff, to a very sophisticated lifestyle all within this period of time that I lived here, and that I watched it all is just amazing to me," Myra says.

When Myra is in the neighborhood, there are fewer and fewer people she recognizes, but she still comes in to Town for the Fourth of July celebration or to visit friends. She now lives just south of Bellevue in Greenwich Crest.