

# Old cemetery was a lure to schoolboys

*Editor's note: Ken Shoop was a longtime Warrenton resident who died in March 2020. He was also a friend of the Columbia Press, occasionally submitting first-person reports about his childhood in Warrenton. This report appeared in the May 18, 2007, issue and seems appropriate to reprint after a recent find in the area.*

**BY KEN SHOOP**

The year was 1949 and World War II was over. Families had returned to normalcy. Our nation was victorious and unified.

It was a warm, sunny, lazy day for us boys. We had no television, so we lived to roam the woods and sand ridges.

Oral histories were riveting and, at times, our daydreams had no boundaries. We were heavily influenced by stories of war and battles and loved the tales of high-sea pirates and local Indian wars.

We would re-enact the battles, fashioning guns out of boards, and bows and arrows from willow trees.

Three of us boys lived on Southwest Ninth Street; in those days it was simply called "the dump road." It ran from Main Street, past Warrenton Grade School and stopped at what is now Southwest Juniper Street.

At the top of the hill was the old dump. Folks simply drove up there and threw their garbage over the side.

In the evenings, Dad would take me up the old dump road and turn north on a dirt trail that led to Burk Lake (behind the present-day soccer fields). We would fish for bass and perch.

The eldest boy in our group was giving the commands – a skill he would use later in life. Our mission was to go to the "Indian Graveyard" and explore the graves. The site was



Bob Ellsberg

Warrenton City Commissioner Rick Newton, right, found what appears to be a historical sign near the entrance to the old county cemetery, sometimes referred to as the Indian cemetery. He was roaming through the area in January with historian Bob Ellsberg and Ellsberg's wife, Claudia, left.

known by the adults as the "old pauper cemetery."

Our leader furnished us with a garden shovel and led the way. We arrived at the scene about 100 yards east of the intersection of Ninth and Juniper, on the south side of the road. There is still an old trail there, with a steel gate that goes south to Oceanview Cemetery.

As we ascended the plateau, our hearts beat wildly upon entering that sacred ground. There were small wooden crosses before us and the tips were burned with fire. I felt uneasy, but was overwhelmed with the excitement of exploring forbidden territory.

"The Indians always buried their ponies, bows and arrows, knives, beads and full-feather war bonnets with them when they died," our leader told us.

Wow! I felt like I was in another world!

Then he commanded us to begin digging at one of the graves. He told us that we'd dig up the treasure and share it (although there were three



Ken Shoop with wife, Eileen

of us and only two shovels). He then left his younger brother and me to dig, vowing to return in an hour.

We soon ran into roots and hard soil and made little progress.

Our leader returned and was disappointed that we were unable to dig more than about 10 inches deep. So we abandoned the project for another day, which never occurred.

Recently, I returned to the scene of the "ghastly crime of grave robbery." It had been nearly 60 years and the graveyard is now a jungle of salal brush and trees.

Want to know more? Contact Gil Gramson, the mayor of Warrenton, and the leader in this adventure.

## County's health score: Just OK

A national study released last month that examines community health by county found that Clatsop County residents are in the "higher middle range" compared to other Oregon counties.

The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps program is produced annually and is a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

Out of Oregon's 35 counties, Clatsop County ranked:

- 13th in health outcomes, which measures how long people live and how healthy people feel while alive.

- 15th in health factors, which influence the health of a county. It includes measurements of health behaviors, clinical care, and social, economic, and physical environmental factors.

"This 2022 report is a snapshot that shows our community strength as well as areas needing attention," said Margo Lulich, Clatsop County's interim public health director.

The annual county health rankings measure vital health factors, including high school graduation rates, obesity, smoking, unemployment, access to healthy food, air and water quality, income, and teen births in nearly every county in America.

### AGENDA

#### CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WARRENTON REGULAR MEETING TUESDAY

May 24, 2022 – 6:00 P.M.

Warrenton City Commission Chambers – 225 S. Main Avenue  
Warrenton, OR 97146

*This is a Preliminary Agenda. A final Agenda and full meeting packet will be available on the City's website at [www.ci.warrenton.or.us](http://www.ci.warrenton.or.us) and at City Hall after 4:00 p.m. on Friday, May 20, 2022.*

*Public Meetings will be conducted in the Commission Chambers and will also be audio and video live streamed. Go to <https://www.ci.warrenton.or.us/administration/page/live-stream-public-meetings> for connection instructions.*

### BUSINESS ITEMS

- Presentation – Recology Rate Review; Dave Larmouth
- Consideration of July 4th Parade Event Application; Spruce Up Warrenton
- Consideration of Professional Services Contract for ERP, RRA, and O&M
- Consideration of Business Oregon Contract – Tide Gate #9 Project
- Consideration of Resolution No. 2623; Updating Business License Fees

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Sanitation Rates

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Under the authority of ORS 192.660(2)(e); to conduct deliberations with persons designated by the governing body to negotiate real property transactions.

*Warrenton City Hall is accessible to the disabled. An interpreter for the hearing impaired may be requested under the terms of ORS 192.630 by contacting the City Recorder, at 503-861-0823 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting so appropriate assistance can be provided.*