

U-CLUB NEWS



Rogue River Valley University Club

May 2020

We are not alone ...



In response to the COVID-19 situation, the University Club of San Francisco is temporarily closed until further notice.

AN ELEGANT HISTORIC CLUBHOUSE ATOP NOB HILL

The University Club of San Francisco



Cancellation of University Club programs due to Coronavirus.

Dear University Club Members and Friends,

All gatherings in Claremont city facilities are canceled through (at least) May 15. We apologize for this inconvenience, but we want all our members and friends to remain safe.



Precautionary Closure of UCPA facilities effective April 1, 2020

*Response to Covid-19-
Click for more information*

THE PENINSULA'S BEST-KEPT SECRET

We are dedicated to bringing families together, building lasting friendships, and fostering healthy lifestyles

RRVUC is temporarily Closed — and we're missing our friends, Jason's spectacular lunches (and SOUPS!) and Lori's welcoming presence. But we can still stay in touch!

Club Annual Meeting POSTPONED

In This Issue

- [U Club Closures across the nation](#)
- [Member Spotlight - Bill Thorndike, Jr.](#)
- [From Club Files](#)
- [Bequests](#)
- [Invite a New Member](#)

member

SPOTLIGHT

Bill Thorndike, Jr

William D. Thorndike, Jr. started out life at Sacred Heart Hospital, which later got torn down creating a vacant lot where Bill could ride his bicycle. We know him now as a well-regarded and distinguished citizen in the city, state, and region, but at one point he was “Billy” and a student at Hoover Elementary school. He played football for the Hoover Hurricanes on the front line — the position played by husky fifth and sixth graders.

Even back then he was making news and making Medford proud. The Medford Mail Tribune reported that “Billy Thorndike” and several other students sent samples of art work to Medford’s Sister City, Alba, Italy at the suggestion of Mayor John Snider and principal Bob Baccus. Bill graduated from Lewis and Clark College but reports that he has no heroic sports stories to tell.

Bill is the third generation of University Club members. Our Bill is William, Junior. His father was William Senior, and his grandfather, Eugene. preceded them both.

Bill has the distinction of being an accomplished member of boards of directors, indeed, so accomplished that he has been called on to serve on literally dozens of them, one after the other and sometimes simultaneously. He was recently Chair of the Southern Oregon University Board. He is treasurer of the Northwest Health Foundation, which distributes money around the state. He was an early trustee of the Carpenter Foundation, then later of the Oregon Community Foundation and currently is an officer of Philanthropy Northwest, a regional grant makers association that advises philanthropic organizations.

Your editors asked Bill if he had any youthful hijinks to confess. Any water balloons? Anything crazy on Halloween? Anything strange with a car getting stuck? Bill drew a blank. Later that afternoon he thought of something, some typical-for-Bill piece of good effort with prominent movers and shakers. “Claim to fame: I sponsored a political party!” (The exclamation point was his.) He suggested Greg Walden run for Congress in 1996, and suggested a name for the new independent party, “the Second Congressional District Party.” He admitted the convention could take place in a phone booth, but shortly thereafter Walden ran on his own as a Republican, and the rest is history.

Bill’s company, Medford Fabrication, was a recent recipient of PPP money, the federal Payroll Protection Program that is in the news. He told a story about his name and the DocuSign system for authenticating signatures remotely in this age of COVID-19. Club members understand his name to be William D. Thorndike, Jr. and we call him “Bill.” On some of his identification materials, he goes by his full name, William Downie Thorndike, Jr, written without a period after the Jr. However, on others he is William Downie Thorndike Jr. *with* a period.

So what? Well, it was a big, big deal to the DocuSign program. After all, his name with a period after the Jr. didn’t match his name without the period, and the whole system was built around identical matchups of names.

After a series of false starts, Bill said he finally got the signatures accepted and the PPP money sent here, where he said it comes in really, really handy. Bill says he offers a big “thank you!” current and future federal taxpayers.



University Club maintains low profile

It's a small, inconspicuous building at 218 W. Sixth St. in Medford. It is tucked between the Jackson County Education Service District offices and the Holly Theater Building. It is painted dark brown and has a barely noticeable sign.

Only a few outsiders know it as home of the Rogue River Valley University Club.

The University Club is one of Medford's oldest institutions, founded in 1910. Originally, it provided a lunch place for graduates of major eastern universities who had moved to Oregon as ranchers and orchardists. As is traditional with such organizations, it is closed to women.

It also has always been a social center, the inspiration for golf tournaments, winter dinners and an annual outdoor party in summer.

"It's a fun place for professional people," says Mark Bayliss, currently the club's secretary.

"We have social dinners once a month during the winter and special events as energy allows."

Bayliss adds that the club operates under an unwritten law prohibiting business talk or transactions during lunch. A law in the club's original constitution states that "regularly constituted requirements" for membership "include sometime attendance at some recognized college or university."

The original membership list, compiled by Willard W. "Bill" Aldrich for his history of the club from 1910 to 1973, shows 47 charter members. Their schools are listed along with their classes — Yale 1890, Williams 1890, Harvard 1898, Yale 1897, Harvard 1905 (that was the late Alfred S.V. Carpenter) and so on.

The Yale class of 1904 was represented by A. Conro Fiero, who married Grace Andrews of the Andrews Opera Company. Their home in Central Point became Mon Desir Dining Inn.

Although Yale and Harvard dominated the original members' list, Cornell, Columbia, Stanford, the University of California and the University of Michigan also were represented. Others were the University of Pennsylvania, Michigan State, Indiana, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

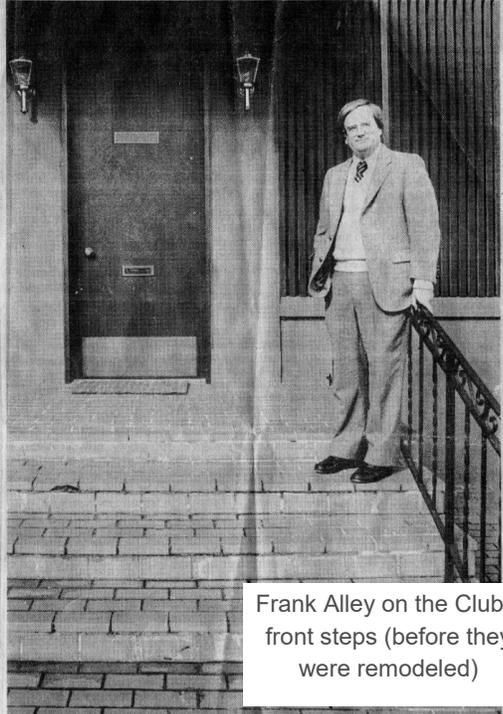
W.J. Hartzell listed his school as the University of Vienna, Austria. The West Pointers were Gen. William SooySmith and Col. Gordon Voorhies, class of 1891.

The group originally met at the Com Club, an early Chamber of Commerce formed a permanent organization on S. 1910. By Jan. 7, 1911, the club took space second floor of the Medford Mail building at 27 N. Fir St., presumably the help of charter member George (Nebraska 1895), who owned the paper selling it to Robert W. Ruhl (Harvard 1914) became a University Club member.

Bayliss speculates on the club's origin. "Most of them were graduates of eastern universities, which never had fraternities Bayliss. "Instead, undergraduates form they called eating clubs, because the food dormitories was so poor. The University really just an extension of the undergrad



Dining room at the University Club.



Frank Alley on the Club's front steps (before they were remodeled)

eating clubs at Yale and Harvard." The club members were a lively group. Aldrich tells some stories of their exploits. He describes a special golf match, played one Thanksgiving morning from the Mail Tribune building to the golf course, north of Medford on Foothill Road. He says that 10 to 12 members started, playing through three or four miles of streets and dirt roads.

"With the inevitable slices and hooks, only two men got their original ball to the golf course," he writes. "Alfred Carpenter thinks that he was one of the two."

He includes "one oft-told story, which I have confirmed." It concerns Eddie Burgess and Phil Hamill, two charter members.

"Sometime late in the evening, one decided that the other should go home, but as to who tried to put out whom — well, stories differ. Anyway, both fell down the long stairway. Whereupon both picked themselves up and rushed back upstairs to find out 'who in hell threw us down those stairs.'"

In 1916, the club moved from the Mail Tribune building to 310 W. Main St., into the former home of W.I. Vawter (Oregon 1888), also a club member. The Depression years brought the club close to extinction.

who were holding dances and needed a permanent building... To bring in needed funds and to amuse, a slot machine was soon brought in. Allie Egan, wife of Chan Egan (Harvard 1905), liked it so well that she bought one for her home.

The University Club was revived on its own in 1937, once again a luncheon club that excluded women. It moved to 123 E. Main St., over the Rex Cafe.

Camp White in what is now White City was built and the club's privileges were extended to the officers. A Junior Officers Club called The Outpost was opened in the former Home Telephone Company building, at 218 W. Sixth St., then owned by Helen and Alfred Carpenter.

In 1946, the club moved into The Outpost's now empty quarters and has remained there ever since.

The club's officers in 1947 were Ralph Norris, president; Herb Grey, vice president; Jack Crawford, secretary, and Max Peirce, treasurer. The board of governors consisted of Nat Bender, Alfred Carpenter, Ernie DeVoe, Ben Trowbridge and Shelby Tuttle. Trowbridge, Wally Graf Jr., and Glenn Jackson were remodeling committee members. They were assisted by Bender, Heinie Fluhrer and Al Potter of the house committee.

Guests

Date	Name	Address
7/28/72	John Zell	44 N. Front, Medford
7/28/72	Arnold Ed	Road Home, Glen
10/13/72	Jim Ritzloff	91 Black Oak Dr.
10/13/72	Allen Bosworth	2425 East Main St.
1/5/73	Alan Young	Kennel nyc
	W.B. Beavey	SFO
	me	
	Patricia & Mickey	7-14-73
8/15/74	John Baughman	Dallas Texas
8/14/74	Bill Worthington	26 #1 Black Oak





"Let us remember that the University Club has been here since 1910. The culture of the Club may need to change with the times but the tradition and fellowship needs to carry on for future generations."

— President Jack Salter
August 2002

Many Members have previously provided for the Club's future in their estate plans and their generosity has helped create the experience you've enjoyed here.

Please consider helping to strengthen the Club's future by securing a bequest invitation form from [Jerry Jacobson](#) at 541-773-2727. **Your bequest can be made to either the Club or the RRVUC Foundation.**



Do You Know Someone Who Would Like to Join the Club?

A Personal Membership Application can be
downloaded at:

[Personal Member Application](#)

Rogue River Valley University Club

218 West Sixth Street
Medford, OR 97501

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services and products

Rogue River Valley University Club
218 West Sixth Street
Medford, OR 97501

(541) 772-4707

admin@medforduclub.org

Visit us on the web at
www.rrvuclub.org