

Biography of 'community godfather' is also important history of Tri-Cities

Community Godfather: How Sam Volpentest shaped the history of Hanford and the Tri-Cities, by C Mark Smith, Etcetera Press, 2013

By Dennis Cresswell

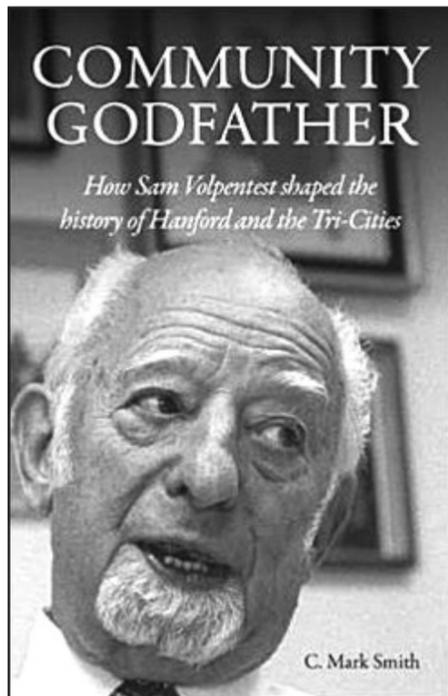
I'm a reader mostly of nonfiction, and whenever I read a biography, it's almost always about someone I've admired. So if I come away with a good feeling about the book, I often wonder if it was the subject that left me satisfied or the author's telling of the person's life story.

In this case, it's both. Anyone with roots in the Tri-Cities knows that this book is about an extraordinary man who earned tremendous admiration from his peers and from those he left behind. But the author also deserves praise for an outstanding job of capturing the essence of the man and recounting what he did for our region.

C. Mark Smith did his homework, and it shows in his book, *Community Godfather: How Sam Volpentest shaped the history of Hanford and the Tri-Cities*. Smith is an economic developer and an experienced biographer who also wrote about a controversial former Senator and Tacoma mayor in *Raising Cain — The Life and Politics of Senator Harry P. Cain*.

Sam Volpentest's career can almost be divided into two parts that would each be a lifetime career on its own — the 40 years from 1922 to 1963, when he was a salesman and businessman, and the 50 years after 1963, which is the year he helped found the organization now known as the Tri-City Development Council, or TRIDEC.

Sam never retired. A few years before his death in 2005 at the age of 101, I asked a TRIDEC executive if Sam still showed up at the office every day. He assured me that he did, and it



turns out he was still going to work even a few weeks before his death. He was also the oldest living Eagle Scout and the oldest registered lobbyist.

But it was not just Sam's longevity that was so remarkable — it was what he accomplished in his last 50 years, even in his last decade. If he had lived an average life span or had settled into retirement at an average age, the Tri-Cities would be a very different place today.

Sam influenced decisions by government agencies and elected officials to keep the Hanford Site viable, to prevent an interstate highway from bypassing the Tri-Cities and to bring Richland and Pasco together with a bridge that bears his name. His projects were not necessarily his ideas, but whatever decisions or funding the Tri-Cities needed he would

go after with tenacity, salesmanship and his many political connections.

The Richland Federal Building, the Bypass Highway and the N Reactor all bear the stamp of Sam's lobbying efforts. And over the years he ticked off an alphabet soup of projects such as the FTF, EMSL, LIGO and HAMMER, the training center that also bears his name.

It wasn't all about Hanford, either. The boom-and-bust cycles of government dependency drove TRIDEC and its predecessor organizations toward economic diversification as a major goal. The inside story of how Sam managed to deliver the goods in both the public and private sectors is one that most of us had never heard until Smith told it.

There are personal stories in the book, too. Smith recounts details of Sam's early life in an Italian immigrant family in Seattle. He went to work at the age of 10 and had a full-time job by 17. He was a salesman for the same wholesale grocery company for 23 years, but his search for a better life brought him to the Tri-Cities. When he had a family of his own, he often neglected them in favor of his work.

Smith's meticulous research into Sam's life included scouring news archives and doing personal interviews with about 60 people who were close to Sam, including his children. He received written input from at least 40 more.

It certainly paid off. By telling the life story of a single man, Smith has contributed an important chapter to the history of the Tri-Cities.

Community Godfather is available in local bookstores, museums and libraries, and you can purchase it online at cms-author.com.

Lauren Hodge's compelling YA Discord Trilogy gets a bit darker in *Abomination*

Abomination, by Lauren Hodge, CreateSpace/Kindle, 2013

By Andrea Green

Local author Lauren Hodge continues her enthralling young adult paranormal series with the second novel in her Discord Trilogy, *Abomination*. Unlike the first novel, which was narrated by eldest sister Taralie Severin, the sequel finds Tara's beloved Alexander revealing the further exploits of the powerful Severin sisters and their adventures in the dark "life after life" of newly turned vampires.

Despite their desire to live quietly, unmolested by things that go bump in the night, the sisters remain caught up in the deadly power struggle between the ruling vampire faction, known as the Noricum, and the renegade vampire group called the Dacians, who lust for the power to control all vampires. These half-blood witches-turned-vampires must also contend with their former magical community, the Milunfran Order, which has decreed that the sisters' unnatural powers must be destroyed at any cost.

Taking off not long after conclusion of the first novel, *The Golden Apple of Discord*, the sequel reveals that the Severin coven — sisters Tara, Ann, Aggie and Cora — and their unlikely vampire allies Alexander, Thomas and Ruben, have been forced from

Alexander's sumptuous Chicago estate and have relocated in secret to Cannon Beach, Ore. Despite retreating from their former home and stronghold, the Severin sisters have managed to extract a delicate peace agreement from the Noricum. However, as outsiders, they fail to grasp just how tenuous that amnesty may be, and how violently any infraction, however innocent, may be punished by creatures unaccustomed to disobedience of any sort.

When the fragile peace is shattered, the Severin coven and their allies are given the option to submit willingly to Noricum rule or be hunted to their deaths. Consumed by grief for the losses they've sustained, Tara struggles to find another way out of their predicament, but will her actions cost her and her loved ones more than they can endure? What are the consequences when the hunted turn the tables and become hunters themselves?

The second installment in Hodge's unique YA paranormal fantasy series doesn't disappoint. Much like the first novel of the Discord Trilogy, Hodge's sequel challenges the staid conventions of traditional vampire fiction to create something unexpected and delightful. Much like the originating novel, *Abomination* has a notably romantic aspect, but it also maintains the strong focus on the importance of family, responsibility and personal

identity that offer the Severin sisters more complex identities and motivations than many fantasy heroines in the genre.

The trilogy's story arc becomes more solid in the second novel. The divisive vampire civil war may be coming to an end as both sides seek to find — and control — the prophesied "golden apple," which comes to light as Tara Severin herself. *Abomination* uses former vampire spy Alexander's voice to provide the reader with more insight into the men the Severin sisters have chosen to bond themselves to. Gaining a new perspective on the fascinating Severin sisters, whom Hodge continues to portray as unique individual characters, as well as a more complex view of the inner workings of the institutions the sisters find themselves drawn against, serves to heighten the mystery of Tara's unwilling vampiric transformation and the consequences of an ancient prophesy about to play out on an epic scale.

Lauren Hodge's *Abomination*, as well as the first book in the series, *The Golden Apple of Discord*, are currently available in paperback and Kindle editions from Amazon.com. For more information on the Discord Trilogy, including nice book trailers for each of the novels, visit the author's website, www.thediscordtrilogy.com. The third and final book in the series, *Rubicon*, is due out sometime this year.



New Releases Playing in Theaters

February 2014

- 7th The LEGO Movie
The Monuments Men
- 12th RoboCop
- 14th About Last Night
Endless Love
Vampire Academy: Blood Sisters
- 21st Pompeii
Three Days to Kill
- 28th Almanac
Non-stop

March 2014

- 7th 300: Rise of An Empire
Mr. Peabody & Sherman
- 14th Addicted
Need for Speed
Walk of Shame
- 21st Divergent
Muppets Most Wanted
Labor Day
- 28th Noah



New DVD Releases

February 2014

- 4th Free Birds
Escape Plan
Baggage Claim
About Time
Dallas Buyers Club
Romeo and Juliet
- 11th The Best Man Holiday
Ender's Game
The Counselor
- 18th Battle of the Damned
Hellbenders
- 25th Gravity
Pulling Strings
Thor 2: The Dark World
Nebraska

March 2014

- 4th Philomena
The Last Days on Mars
Cold Comes the Night
Hours
- 7th The Hunger Games:
Catching Fire
- 11th The Book Thief
Homefront
Out of the Furnace
- 18th Frozen
Kill Your Darlings
A Touch Of Sin
- 25th Delivery Man
Free Ride
Truth About Emanuel
Welcome to the Jungle