



The Valley View

Newsletter of the Greater Madison Valley Community Council

Issue 74, April 1999

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President's View

by G. Emslie

Spring is here and the sun returns, but how did it get so cold? Our neighborhood and neighbors were active this past month. Our thanks go out to the principal and faculty of the Martin Luther King Elementary School for organizing the 7th annual Progressive Dinner and Silent Auction. Special kudos go out to Toni O'Neal for the hard work organizing the dinner. Sunday's dinner was a huge success and again the food provided by the owners of Rover's, the New York Style Cafe, Tony Maroni's, Fran's, and Cafe Flora was superb. We're truly blessed to have such talented, generous people in our community.

GET OUT THE WORD: Paul Dorpat speaks on local history at the Greater Madison Valley Community Council meeting on April 20th. This rare event will be held in the Martin Luther King lunchroom. The program

begins at 7:30 pm. Mr. Dorpat writes the "Now and Then" column that appears in the Sunday Seattle Times' Pacific Magazine section each week.

Last month, neighbor Jules Bloomenthal brought to the Council's attention the concern neighbors have with airplane noise. Read details in the minutes of our March meeting (page 3).

As I walk down Harrison I am again profoundly impressed with the labors of our neighbors and the wonderful playground space they have constructed at the school. Great work, neighbors, and many thanks to Lisa St. George for spearheading the project.

For those of you who have been saddened to watch and listen nightly to the effects of the war in the Balkans and the human suffering of the tens of thousands of people uprooted from their homes, there is something you can do to bring hope to the region. If so moved, join the Bush School community in collecting much-needed supplies: baby and children's clothing, shoes, blankets, disposable diapers, baby bottles and

nipples, and sweaters and jackets. You can take your donations to World Concern, 19802 Highway 99, Lynnwood (425/771-5700) or drop off donations at the Bush School at 405 36th Avenue East. Bush middle school students are spearheading a community collection drive and will have boxes set up on campus for any of your donations. If you'd like to help pack and load donations, call World Concern directly to help out. Thanks for caring. ▼▼

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Thoughts on Kosovo

by J. Sussman

The following article is one person's opinion. The Kosovo dilemma is a tough one for everybody. We want your views — please write or e-mail.

The scene out there is not encouraging. Ethnic, religious, and territorial urges outweigh morality and justice. Dictators like those in Serbia and Iraq keep hold on power by nourishing hatreds against some of their own people and shrewdly manipulating their powerful enemies. Paradoxically it was in two dictatorships, that of Marshal Tito or this very Yugoslavia and of Stalin in the USSR, that diverse peoples

were ruled in relative peace. The deal in those states was that you could keep some of your cultural tradition, but breathe not a word of dissent against the masters on top.

For our part, the superpower democracies, we act with selectivity and caution. We are too late or indecisive in Bosnia or Rwanda. We do nothing about Indonesia crushing East Timor, and are ambivalent about human rights in China. Now, following a new round of repressions by Serbia, we engage in air attacks with expensive weapons that hardly deter the crimes on the ground. Critics argue two ways: send in an army to drive the Serbs back, and restore the Albanian people to their homes; or, desist from the violence and use other means. There are probably a dozen positions in

between.

One wishes the marvelous revolution in communications (piling up such a mountain of wealth) would enable us to intervene in the propaganda and information stream of the bad guys' domain. Alas, this doesn't happen. I heard the deputy mayor of Belgrade on

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CORRECTIONS

In our March issue we mistakenly dated the minutes of our last meeting in January. The correct date was February 16, 1999.

A misprint gave the median sale price for a house in our census tract in 1998 as \$300,00. That should have been \$300,000. Can you believe it?

Return the Arboretum to the Original Olmsted Plan ©

by Professor B. W. Twight, Ph.D.

The poet John Keats wrote in 1818 that "A thing of beauty is a joy forever: ... it will never pass into nothingness ; but will still keep a bower quiet for us..." Keats's romantic linking of beauty to a permanent place of refuge indicates that to him beauty was good in its own right.

However, to the pure utilitarian, a beautiful place is not marketable and therefore of no value. "Useful" urban space is for human occupancy, either as a place to live or for an organized production process---regardless of undisciplined individual desires for occasional experiences of privacy amid aesthetic surroundings.

Historically the Romantic movement represented by Keats was reflected in the naturalistic "picturesque" paintings and informal gardens of England, and the movement's values spread from Europe to the U.S. in part via the Hudson River School of painting and via the English influenced landscape designs of the founder of the profession of landscape architecture in the U.S., Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.

But these early publicizers and designers of American aesthetic environments and their successors have had to fight the "efficient" users of space in New York City's Central Park and elsewhere from generation to generation since. Ball playing and other regimented human activities, as well as economic uses of open space came into competition for land and parks wherever mass housing, commercial shelter and marketable entertainment leisure were developing. Aesthetic uses of landscapes in particular, became regarded as inefficient and wasteful.

However, the increase in educational levels in this country and the increased refinement of aesthetic taste resulting from both education and from increasing prosperity, led to a correlated rise of both landscaped private estates, landscaped developments, national park and wilderness reservations, and to the survival of the profession of landscape architecture. With Central Park, Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. and Architect Calvert Vaux attempted to bring a bit of the unspoiled countryside into New York City, in order to prevent that city's leadership groups from fleeing the central city. That Park development led to many more cities seeking Olmsted parks during and following the "City Beautiful" movement of the 1890's. Landscape parks and landscaped exposition grounds designed by the Olmsted firm were soon to be found in most large cities across the country, including Seattle.

Here the Alaska, Yukon, Pacific Exposition grounds and approaches were designed by the Olmsted Brothers, and the site of that Exposition became the current site of the University of Washington campus. The campus's focused viewcape, Rainier Vista, channeling ones eyes on that distant landscape feature--- is an Olmsted technique repeated in the design at the University of California with the Berkeley

campus's design focus on the Golden Gate. The Olmsted Brothers also designed aesthetic landscapes for the homes of the wealthy, such as the grounds of the Vanderbilt mansion at Biltmore, North Carolina in the 1890's and the Palos Verde estates, in Southern California, in the late 1920's. The renovation of the L'Enfant plan for the Washington D.C., including the streets, the Mall, and the approach highways were all renovated and added to from 1903 to the mid 1930's for the National Capitol Parks and Planning Commission by the Olmsted firm.

The son and Olmsted firm partner, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. seems to have had thoughts similar to those of Keats about beauty and refuge in mind when he



revisited their 1903 designed Washington Park in 1934. He wrote on the firm's new plan for the Washington Park Arboretum that while one of its purposes was to grow and display a collection of plants artistically under natural conditions ... he concluded that it was to serve ... particularly as a beautiful naturalistic park." Consistent with his father's and his Harvard colleagues' (Hubbard and Kimball)

perspectives, the junior Olmsted also believed that a landscape park is a work of art, the main use of which is to provide people with relief from excessive close contact with their fellows.

Somehow the master artist's work continued to be doubted by professional usurpers and land grabbers. In the late 1960's and early 1970's it was Sasaki, Walters and Associates, sponsored by a local interest group with some excess funds, which wanted to revise the design and add a Floral Show Hall with roads and parking lots to the beauty, privacy and peace and quiet of the Olmsted design. A scientific sampling of the users of the Arboretum over the course of one year at that time showed that more development in the park was opposed by 75% of the of the more than 580,000 visitors to the Arboretum that year. 63% felt the peace and quiet of the Arboretum was more important than the variety of plants and flowers.

Since 30 years have passed, the self serving utilitarians are again arguing for development and design changes. They have replaced Sasaki with Portico, and are said to have done some new surveys of users. None of these surveys appears to approach the extensiveness or the statistical validity of the 1967 work above, and since the same questions were not asked, no change in the user public's perception of the Arboretum was demonstrated.

A set of workshops on this Portico plan were held at the Seattle Center, and represented only interested volunteer attendees. I was present at one of these sessions and found that the participation and agenda topics were strictly controlled by a highly manipulative set of "facilitators" who specified controlled agenda questions and/or statements to be responded to, and did not permit open volunteered information or unconstrained

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GMVCC to Vote on SCAA Endorsement

During our March 16 meeting we heard from Mike Rees, president of the Seattle Council on Airport Affairs (SCAA).

Mike discussed the operations of SeaTac and Boeing Field airports, as well as other activities (seaplanes, helicopters, etc.) that adversely affect residential communities in Seattle. Greater Madison Valley is an affected community, which is why Mike urged us to support SCAA's activities. Several other community councils have already joined SCAA.

SCAA is a Seattle organization devoted to coordinating and informing residents in their fight against adverse impacts (such as noise and pollution) of aircraft activity. SCAA also meets with elected officials, writes articles for papers, monitors developments, and opposes expansion at local airports.

At our next meeting (April 20) GMVCC will vote on whether to endorse the SCAA and whether to become a supporting member. Please attend, and let your vote count.

Arboretum

(Continued from page 2)

commentary. The workshop process followed the managed culture change methods of the current school of Organizational Development practitioners, and seemed to be a bureaucratic attempt to reprogram the voters, rather than to be responsive to them.

It was obvious that the sponsors did not want information and were attempting to divide and conquer. This is a normal strategy for proponents who know they are outnumbered, but who wish to conceal that information from political decision-makers.

In the current land grab the utilitarians wishing to transform the Arboretum are trained in one of two regimented methods of organizing subjects; 1) recreation "leadership," which provides the model for recreational activity and games programming or 2) are trained in the logic of Adolph Engler's plant classification system and wish to impart their taxonomic categorizations to well ordered rows of docile students seated in classrooms in their planned Arboretum teaching, research, and office building. Art and other individual forms of aesthetic experience do not fit either of these models of thinking.

The "sense of freedom of the unspoiled country" and "use...to relieve a man from too close contact with his fellows," both intended by an Olmsted landscape Park, play no part in the new utilitarians' Portico plan except by default. The Olmsteds favored the individual user's freedom from regimentation. The University and the Seattle Park Department seem to wish to organize and control the user. To develop their buildings and parking lots, they have hired another pretender to the throne. How arrogant and presumptuous these usurpers of the Arboretum!!! How disrespectful of the art of America's master landscape designer..... ▼▼

The author is a retired professor of Outdoor Recreation Management at the Pennsylvania State University.

Minutes of the Greater Madison Valley Community Council Meeting for March 20, 1999

Pres. Emslie called us to order at 7:30 pm. We had a quorum of fifteen people by 8:00 pm. Mike Rees was guest speaker. He is president of Seattle Council on Airport Affairs. This is a nonprofit group working to make people aware of bad effects of aircraft and air operations around Puget Sound. They work to reduce these ill effects on the city's people. He explained the obstacles that face the controversial third runway at Seatac: wetlands lost, huge amount of fill dirt required, and unforeseen costs. Seatac airport charges fees for all landings, but King County airport, whose planes fly over us, does not. He showed two maps of flights to and from Seattle; the heaviest tracks go over Capitol Hill and Madison Valley. We learned that European airfields shut down at night; ours do not. Mr. Rees is careful not to propose that other neighborhoods must take on burdens we don't want. He wants equitable solutions good for the whole city. He points out that large fields north and south of Seattle are much less used and could share the volume of air traffic. He proposed that we consider joining SCAA to add support to their efforts. Our consensus was that we discuss this and vote at our April meeting.

We had coffee and Cathy Nunneley's cookies, and adjourned at 9:15 pm. ▼▼

Harrison Greenbelt Work Party

Seven outdoor lovers appeared March 27 to clip bramble vines and tend the young trees. As promised, we had no rain but the temperature was still wintry. We made a fine heap of the thorny cuttings and found very little of the rubbish that used to be thrown in the woods. Neighbors and strollers are much more aware about littering today. Twelve year old Connor Lee was one of the volunteers who helped locate and remove some dangerous widowmaker dead branches. We had coffee and peanut butter sandwiches from Peggy Sussman and everyone went home happy. Watch for the date of the next gambol in the woods. ▼▼

Kosovo

(Continued from page 1)

radio complain that western reporters spread noxious rumors and that images of Kosovar refugees were staged events. There are different truths in the eye of each beholder, regardless of the power of the internet.

My feeling is that "ethnic cleansing" is a crime that must be stopped, and people restored to their homes. I am aware of the failures of recent military efforts, yet I see no way to resolve this situation without force. Since this is a NATO enterprise and the crisis is in Europe's front yard, European soldiers should carry the greater burden. Are their people or our own prepared for this fight? I say we should be. ▼▼

THE VALLEY VIEW
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Next Community Council Meeting

Tuesday, April 20, 1999, 7:30 p.m.

Martin Luther King School — meet in the lunchroom this time
3201 East Republican St. (parking available on playfield)

FEATURING SPECIAL PRESENTATION AND SLIDE SHOW BY
PAUL DORPAT OF THE SEATTLE TIMES

Donate to the Courtyard Sale

Do you have fine quality unwanted clothing that you don't know what to do with? Look no further. You can donate them to the Greater Madison Valley Community Courtyard Sale.

Women's, children's and men's apparel, as well as shoes and accessories in good condition will be greatly appreciated. Your donations of unique, attractive clothing items will help the GMVCC raise money to print and mail this newsletter. Last year we made enough money to support this newsletter for six months.

If you have donations please call Eli at 322-7196 or Peggy at 325-6308 to arrange your drop-off of boxed clothing, boxed household items, and intriguing strange stuff.

The Courtyard sale will be held in early July in the Bush School Courtyard. Everyone is welcome! ▼▼

Neighborhood Tree Planting

Twelve of your neighbors on Republican Street decided to take advantage of the Department of Neighborhoods' annual Tree-Planting Program. They ordered trees, to be planted along Republican between 29th Avenue East and 31st Avenue East.

As the representative of the group, Suzanne Wilson attended the seminar at Delridge Community Center on April 3rd. Personal instruction and films were available, and literature was contributed to the community group's library.

This was the first step in the planting program, to be followed by actual delivery of the free trees on Friday, April 23rd. Planting is best done that Saturday, April 24th. Trees to be planted include the Gingko and flowering ornamentals.

This is part of an ongoing Department of Neighborhoods program designed to assist individuals and community councils in improving and beautifying our surroundings. ▼▼

Paul Dorpat is the unofficial historian of the City and appears each week in the Pacific Magazine section of the Sunday Seattle Times. He digs into archives and private collections for images of Seattle's beginnings and documents the changes to the present day. His Then and Now books are a wonderful record of our streets, architecture, and neighborhoods. Come to our April meeting to meet Paul and have a look into the past of our central district. We're inviting our Madrona friends to come too!