



# THE VALLEY VIEW

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## Kate Fleming — Her Legacy in Spoken Words & Action

By David Jacobson



Three and a half years have passed since Madison Valley resident and audio book narrator Kate Fleming died in the fierce “Hanukkah Eve Windstorm” of December 14-15, 2006, but her legacy still looms large.

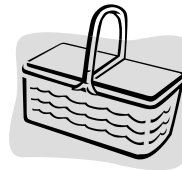
Her former partner Charlene Strong, who nearly died herself trying to save Fleming, has forged a new life as an advocate for the partnership rights of gays and lesbians, after a social worker at Harborview Medical Center prevented her from seeing her dying lover because Strong was not considered “next of kin,” according to Washington law at the time. And Fleming’s death focused greater attention on the chronic flooding problems in Madison Valley, giving added impetus to the pursuit of a long-term fix.

### *Fleming’s Narration Was “Perfect”*

Trained as an actress, Kate Fleming made audio books her life’s work, after falling in love with the art form during a job at a Washington, D.C. audio book studio. She liked being a clause in someone else’s contract, she told her partner with characteristic humor. Fleming left behind more than 250 audio book recordings, including narrations of best-sellers such as Ann Patchett’s *Bel Canto*, and... *Cont’d p. 6*

## Community Rummage Sale & Summer Potluck Party

You are invited to a special summer event! Hosted by the Greater Madison Valley Community Council and benefiting the *Valley View*. Come join the fun!



**Where:** 30th Avenue East  
**When:** Saturday, July 31st  
**Yard Sale:** 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
**Potluck:** 12 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Please see page 3 for complete details on how to participate in the rummage sale or potluck planning.



## Summer Events Calendar

**Tues, July 6, 7:00 p.m.— Merchants Association Monthly Meeting** at Casa del Caffee, 2810 E. Madison. Food & Networking from 6-7 p.m. Come meet your local merchants!

**Sat, July 10, 9:30 - Noon — Homer Harris Park Weeding Party.** BBQ starts at 12 p.m. Call Sandy for info: 206-384-5169

**Sat-Sun, July 10 thru 11 — Greenstage Shakespeare in the Park Series at Volunteer Park.** See website for scheduled performances, <http://seattleparkshakespeare.org>

**Sat, July 17, 9:00 a.m. - Noon — Alder Creek Work Party,** hosted by Green Footprints Action Works.

**Wed, July 21 — No GMVCC Council Meetings will be held in July or August.** The next meeting (and officer elections) will be Wed, Sept. 15, at the Valley School on 30th Ave E.

**Thurs, July 22 — Passport Shopping Event** on E. Madison Business Corridor. Discounts, treats, raffle, and goodie bags.

**Sat, Jul 31 — CleanScapes Waste Reduction Rewards Contest Deadline.** Last day to submit proposals to bring a \$50,000 community improvement project to Madison Valley!

**Thurs, Aug 12, 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. — Art in the Park: Open-Air Art Exhibit & Wine Tasting,** at the Arboretum Graham Visitors Center. Art show is free. Call 206-325-4510 to register.

**Thurs-Fri, July 12 thru 13, — Greenstage Shakespeare in the Park series at Volunteer Park.** See website for schedules!

## GMVCC ID STATEMENT



### THE VALLEY VIEW

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## GMVCC Meeting Minutes

### Wednesday, May 19, 2010

**Treasurer's Report:** Closing balance: \$6,185.33

**General Business:** The meeting was called to order by the President. A quorum was not present. New Council Officers for 2010-2011 are as follows: Adrienne Bailey volunteered for Treasurer and Charles McDade agreed to continue as Vice-President. The offices of Secretary and President remain open for volunteers or nominees. Daniel Johnson, who offered to work towards a grant for improvement of the Harrison Ridge Greenbelt, does not believe he will receive the grant. The specific area he wished to address is in Madrona. Cathy Nunnaley will contact Urban Forestry to see if they will help evaluate the health of the greenbelt. Charles McDade reminded everyone there will be many summertime events to which he hopes neighbors will attend. Re: the Rummage Sale and Potluck: Adrienne Bailey will organize donation of remaining clothing to homeless shelters. She will look into having 30th Avenue E. closed for the event. The Taste of Madison Valley event was discussed but has since been cancelled. However a buy Local Campaign has been initiated by merchants.

MLK Community Center: The School Board has decided to open up requests for proposals for another round. It's feared the nod will go to the highest bidder & the CCC@MLK group won't be able to compete.


### Wednesday, June 16, 2010

**Treasurer's Report:** Closing balance: \$6,273.87

**General Business:** The President called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. A quorum was not present. Discussion began with the CleanScapes Grant contest, a \$50,000 grant, which may be shared by many neighborhoods, and is still in play. Suggestions for submission from our community included a "tot lot" play structure, permanent chessboard tables at William Gross Park, and an information kiosk along Madison Street. With the push for higher density, our neighborhood character may be in peril. It was submitted that we organize a land use committee to oversee development along the Madison corridor.

Phase Two construction of the Madison Valley Stormwater project is set to begin in July. Information may be obtained at the SPU website [www.seattle.gov/util/MadisonValley](http://www.seattle.gov/util/MadisonValley). Overall Central Area urban planning is beginning at the District level. My Coffeehouse has reopened as Casa del Caffee and will offer open mike sessions. On July 22 the merchants are planning a fashion shopping event with participants showcasing their merchandise. The Rummage Sale will proceed on Saturday, July 31. Flyers have been made and a variety of events will be held in conjunction, including the summer Potluck Party.

MLK Community Center: The School District extended the proposal review period through June 30. Previous proposals may also be revised. They intend to have their decision by year's end. Election of Council Officers for next year will be taken up at the September Meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m. 

## Community Center Updates

By Kimberly Larson-Edwards

This session, the Washington State Legislature, led by Speaker Chopp, Reps. Tomiko Santos, Pettigrew and Sen. Kline, allocated an additional \$1.5 million for a non-profit to purchase MLK Jr. School and convert it to a community center. This money is in addition to \$1 million the state had allocated previously. If the School District accepts our proposal, [CCC@MLK](mailto:CCC@MLK) would apply for the \$2.5 million in available state funds. The School District finally issued an update on the RFP process, extending their proposal deadline until June 30th. We've updated our proposal and business plan, adding more potential partners including: Green Plate Special (youth education about growing & cooking food), Neighborhood House, and St. Cloud's/Neighborhood Cooking Foundation homeless cooking project. This summer we'll be doing community outreach to show local support for a community center. **For more updates, information & events, or to get involved in our efforts, visit [www.mlkcommunitycenter.org](http://www.mlkcommunitycenter.org)!**



## Alley, Alley Upgrade!

By Jerry Sussman



We live in an alley alongside the Harrison Ridge Greenbelt in Madison Valley. There are five houses in here and we have a problem because our address is one that people cannot find. Get a new mailperson and we won't see any mail for a week!

Lately, though, alleys in the city are getting some attention. Knute Berger, aka Mossback, a local magazine writer, wrote a fine article lamenting this neglect of city alleys, which are mostly unnamed and unmapped. Then some amateur geographer spoke with Steve Scher on KUOW, urging us to clean up the alleys and give them dignity and recognition with appropriate names. This broadcast was in March; I Googled the station but couldn't learn his name.

These calls to action resonated here. Give our dead end alley a name and we solve our chronic loss of identity. How many Rotorooter men, phone line fixers, and Craigslist contacts have been lost trying to find us? GPS and MapQuest systems are useless for locating my house. How many times have I run out to the street vainly searching for the delivery truck going round and round the neighborhood? A sign! The simplicity and brilliance of the idea came with a glow and I am happy.

Of course, it must be "Swanson's Alley". Swanson, a Swedish carpenter, lived here in the 1930's. He built the second house in the alley with old growth Douglas fir, stock mahogany windows available then in the Depression, and clad it in a brick façade. The first home was a little wooden farmhouse from 1900 and demolished in 2005. He built the third one also, a cedar-shingled cottage that he gave as a wedding present for his daughter. His initiative and unusual house designs made the character of the place.

*Cont'd at right...*

## Community Wide Rummage Sale & Potluck Party!



The Greater Madison Valley Community Council is hosting a community rummage sale & potluck party. Bring your wares and unwanted, gently-used items to 30th Avenue East (btw. E. Denney & E. John). Set up a table, lay out a groundcover, and buy, sell or trade to your hearts desire.



**Saturday, July 31st**  
**Yard Sale: 10am - 2pm**  
**Potluck: Noon - 4pm**

GMVCC will handle publicity and any unsold items will be picked up afterwards by two charitable community organizations. Clothing will be donated to the homeless.

**Busby Junk Removal** will be accepting all your unwanted/unusable **computers, monitors, TVs, VCRs, electronics and small household appliances** for recycling. A complete list of what will be accepted can be found at <http://buzz-bee.net/recyclingeventseattle.html>.

GMVCC is asking for **\$10 participation fees**, if you are so inclined for your sales space. All funds raised will go to support *The Valley View*. **Other community groups and organizations are encouraged to set up information tables.**

Not in the mood to buy or sell? Just fix your favorite dish to bring & share with neighbors. For questions, call Charles McDade at 206-325-3518, or Adrienne Bailey at 206-323-3738. [Kismet\\_2000@yahoo.com](mailto:Kismet_2000@yahoo.com).

We set to work to create two plywood signs painted green with white boat letters fastened on with brass nails. We screwed them onto the post at the street and we are now a named passageway. It is with real satisfaction that I can say on the phone, "find the sign that says SWANSON'S ALLEY and come on in." It works! People can find us!

I am searching for the original Swanson or his descendants to tell him of this development. There are a lot of Swansons here and many were carpenters. The trail may be cold but I will keep at it. I'll let you know when we make contact. 🏠

**Photo: Cathy Nunneley and "Jack" Sussman are all smiles after installing the new sign for Swanson's Alley.**

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## Backyard Cottages in Madison Valley

By Sloan Ritchie




As of December 2009, the city's new *Backyard Cottage* ordinance allows Seattle homeowners to build a second dwelling unit in their backyard. Why? Backyard Cottages provide affordable city living, housing flexibility,

family-friendly housing options for extended families, and contribute to sustainable urban density.

How does this affect residents in the Madison Valley? We are in an area where many residents meet the requirements for adding a second dwelling unit. The requirements include: 1) a single family home on at least a 4,000 square foot lot ; 2) the lot must be at least 25 feet wide and 70 feet deep; 3) the owner must reside on the property at least 6 months a year, in either the primary house or the cottage.

Backyard cottages are very common in European countries where living small and having access to mass transportation are a part of everyday life. For Seattle these units offer homeowners new options for guests, aging parents, adult children, home offices, a nanny, a retreat, or even a way to create new rental income. The cottage can be up to 23 feet tall or two stories, depending on lot width and roof type, and up to 800 total square feet.

Backyard cottages also have the inherent ability to change uses over time. For my family, it started as a home office and become a new way to create income. For some, it's a place where they can retire and a younger generation may live in the main house. And for others, it's a space for the nanny to live and later a guest house for in-laws.

For our neighborhood, I hope it means more neighbors to engage with everyday, increased patronage for our local businesses, and a notable shift towards the continued creation of a sustainable urban core. For more information, please check out our website at [www.backyard-cottage.com](http://www.backyard-cottage.com). — Sloan Ritchie has lived in Madison Valley for over 10 years. He is the founder of Backyard Box, a company that delivers pre-fab backyard cottages to Seattle residents and beyond. 

## What's Up on Madison?

By Ann McCurdy


We MAY have a new coffeeshop, but I'm not sure. **FIXX Coffee Bar** is at 2310 E. Madison, the site of the former **Café Char**. However, when I walked by, the place was closed, hours not posted, and their web site was down. They were open earlier. Let's hope for the best.

We DO have a new coffeeshop! **Casa Del Caffé** is the new name of **My Coffeeshop** at 2818 E. Madison. Redecorated and less focused on a place for young children, it opened in March. I was curious about their liquor license application—for a coffee house? No, no plans for daily alcohol sales, just possible wine or microbrew at special events an evening or two each month.

To solve an impressive list of ailments, try **Inner Renewal and the Healthy Path** at 3130 E. Madison. Opened in April by Inderjeet Ramgotra, services include acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, and moxibustion. What's moxibustion? It's a traditional Chinese medicine therapy using *moxa*, or mugwort herb, which also provides me a great new Scrabble word.

Vision a little blurry? Check out our new **Eyewear Gallery** at 3121 E. Madison. To be opened soon by optometrist **Dr. Anthony Homan**, as "your community eye care center." In the mood for brunch? **Harvest Vine** is now serving brunch on Saturdays and Sundays at 2701 E. Madison, while **Café Flora** is now serving breakfast starting at 9:00a.m. daily. I'll never need to cook again!

Baas Art & Framing has a new name as **Baas Art Collective**. Still framing art for all your needs, Karrie Baas is also providing a space for a large variety of art and jewelry. She has a great eye, so you should get a great find! Visit her at 2703 E. Madison.

In June of 2008, I reported that retired child psychiatrist and artist Jack Raskin would be opening his new art gallery **Madison Colors** "soon". Finally, two year later, the gallery is now open at 2914 E. Madison. The gallery space had been the sales office for **Madison Lofts**, but with only 1 loft left, the office space is finally full of colorful watercolors and photographs. To everyone at Madison Lofts: Welcome to the neighborhood! 

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*Kate Fleming Legacy, Cont'd from p. 1...*

a portion of the *9/11 Commission Report*. Her recording of *All Over Creation*, winner of the American Book Award, was itself the recipient of a 2004 Audie award, the top honor bestowed on an audio book.

*All Over Creation* author Ruth Ozeki told the Valley View that she was stunned the first time she heard Fleming's reading. "The voice perfectly caught the spirit of the books and the characters," she wrote in an email. "I was so grateful, I remember I cried."

*Strong Testimony Won Votes*

Like Fleming, Charlene Strong preferred to remain behind the scenes. But after tragedy struck, indignation at how she was treated forced her to take her own place in the spotlight. Just a month after the storm, Strong testified before the Washington State Senate about her demeaning experience being turned away from Fleming's deathbed. Her testimony was instrumental in convincing reluctant legislators to support domestic partnership legislation, and, two years later, in persuading voters to uphold that law. They did so by a 53%-47% margin, making Washington the first state to support gay partnership rights in a popular vote.

"Every time you put a face to who gay and lesbian people are, and the reality of our lives and the reality of our families, you win votes," commented Senator Ed Murray, in a documentary "For My Wife" about Strong's transformation into an activist (Strong acted as co-producer of the film). "So, yes, her presence, her testimony won votes. It was part of how we came to victory [that] year."

Last year, Strong was appointed to the Washington State Human Rights Commission by Governor Christine Gregoire. She maintains a busy schedule traveling around the country, giving talks about her experience in conjunction with screenings of "For My Wife." Just last month, she was invited to meet with President Barack Obama at the White House.

*New Attention to Madison Valley Flooding...*

Fleming's death also focused renewed political attention on flooding even though the waters that caused her death are thought to have a separate cause. "Kate's death inspired all who knew her and many who didn't," says Shawna McGarry, a

former Madison Valley resident who wrote her master's thesis in Environmental Studies on the local flooding issue and participated in community meetings. "A tragedy like that is logically going to encourage broader attention to the problem, passionate activism on the part of residents, and most likely faster action from government."

But, continues McGarry, who is currently employed with an environmental consulting firm, "The real reason the city finally took serious action on the flooding in Madison Valley is because the socio-economic status of the neighborhood had changed. There were a lot more people with money, high-level educations, and professional clout to demand a better fix to the problem. I would say that after Kate's death, even more of these kinds of people... got involved."

Lack of such clout may have been a major cause of Madison Valley's flooding problems. A March 6, 1981 report in the Seattle Post-Intelligencer says opposition from clean water advocates and wealthy lakeside residents, fearing a flow of "cigarette butts, garbage and oil" to the beaches, succeeded in preventing the city from completing a planned stormwater pipeline from Capitol Hill to Lake Washington.

The pipeline was built as far as Madison Valley, where it rapidly discharges stormwater from uphill neighborhoods into the existing combined sewer/stormwater system. However, the pipe conveying stormwater out of the Valley was never built. As a result, both stormwater and sewage back up. The city acknowledges that wastewater backups and flooding have taken place at least every four years, on average, since the 1970s.

*Be a Light. Be a Flame. Be a Beacon.*

The city of Seattle and Seattle Public Utilities had been working on a long-term plan to reduce chronic flooding and sewage backup in Madison Valley since 2004, when another flood wreaked havoc in the Valley and galvanized local residents to organize. Indeed, it was just two weeks away from completing a one million gallon stormwater detention pond at 30<sup>th</sup> Ave. and E. John when the 2006 storm hit. That facility, which has since been expanded to 1.7 million gallons and is costing the city \$3.27 million, is expected to be finally complete and opened to the public by the end of July. Also in July, the city intends to begin work on the \$27.4 million Phase 2 of the "Madison Valley Stormwater Project," comprising a 48 inch pipe channeling water out of Madison Valley, across Madison into a 2.2 million

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gallon stormwater detention tank in Washington Park. Readers of this newspaper and the Central District News have suggested that the new stormwater facilities be named in Fleming's honor, but SPU declined, saying that it doesn't name its stormwater facilities so the public doesn't confuse them with true "parks."

Instead, it is including a memorial to Fleming as part of the Phase 2 construction, which will be placed on Madison St. along a path that will lead to the planned stormwater detention facility. Strong is working with a Seattle landscape architect to design the eight-foot tall stone sculpture, which will be inscribed with the message: "Be a light. Be a flame. Be a beacon."

Strong says Fleming would recite those words to herself before appearing on stage, when she worked as a stage actress. Given Fleming's continuing impact on our community, we would do well to listen to her voice. 

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*Editor's Note: The author of this moving tribute to Kate Fleming is David Jacobson, a resident of Madison Valley and former journalist. We thank him for writing such an important piece, and giving us all pause to remember Kate's life and legacy. Photo provided by Charlene Strong.*



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## We're A CleanScapes Winner!

By Ann McCurdy

Madison Valley — along with Capitol Hill, First Hill, Madison Park, Denny Blaine, Madrona, and Montlake — are the winners of the *CleanScapes 2009–2010 Neighborhood Waste Reduction Rewards* competition. What does this mean? The above neighborhoods reduced their garbage, recycling and yard debris by 19% during the competition period. Great work, especially since it's doubtful anyone was even aware of the competition. As a reward for winning, CleanScapes is offering a \$50,000 community improvement project selected by the community, to be installed and maintained by CleanScapes. Through July 31, individuals can submit project ideas for construction in one of the above neighborhoods (such as public benches, playground equipment, or neighborhood kiosks, accessible to the public). See more information about the Neighborhood Waste Reduction Rewards & proposal forms at [www.cleanscapes.com](http://www.cleanscapes.com). A \$50,000 project will come to Madison Valley *only* if someone proposes a project for our area! I've already submitted mine... What's your idea?



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