



THE VALLEY VIEW

Newsletter of the Greater Madison Valley Community Council

Issue 155

madisonvalley.org

May 2008

Northwest African American Museum

by Sandy Stahl

photo credit: Jack Storms/Stormsphoto.com



Northwest African American Museum at 23rd and S. Massachusetts.

At the intersection of 23rd and South Massachusetts, atop the I-90 lid park in Seattle's Central Area, sits the former Colman School. The building, a historic landmark within a 30-acre greenbelt, houses the new Northwest African American Museum (NAAM).

Until this year, this was one of the few major cities that did not have an African American museum. Seattle's was 25 years in the making. The Colman School, built in 1909, originally served the Italian Americans who lived in the Central Area. The school's population changed as the Af-

frican American community grew during World War II. During the construction of I-90 in 1985, the school closed. Activists occupied the building for years, demanding that it become a black heritage center. Debates raged until finally, in 2001, the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle bought the school. In March 2008, the Northwest African American Museum opened its doors.

The mission of the 19,000-square-foot, \$22.9 million Museum is to "document and exhibit the historic and cultural experiences of African Americans in the Northwest." While it's filled with history and art, it's not only a space for culture but also a meeting place for the community. And "community" is not limited to African Americans: This is a museum for anyone interested in the history and culture of the Pacific Northwest.

Once inside the building, you'll enter the Journey Gallery--the anchor gallery of the Museum, with displays on the history and culture of the Northwest African American community; and the Northwest Gallery, for changing exhibits of art. Look further and you'll find another gallery for meetings, special events, and traveling exhibitions; a genealogical library; and a space for artist workshops or educational programs.

In the Journey Gallery, there's a large timeline across one wall that shows the growth of the African American population in the Northwest against a national timeline that goes as far back as 17th-century Africa. It shows that African Americans settled in the Northwest after the Civil War to forget about slavery. More came during World

Please see Northwest African Museum on page 2

Creating a Community Arts and Idea Center at MLK School

by Andy Engelson



A group of Madison Valley residents has gathered to help create a community arts and meeting center at the former Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School. We've organized a working group and are talking with elected officials to make this vision a reality.

A School Use Advisory Committee process has been started by the Seattle School Board. This means that the Madison Valley community, the School Board, and city officials will meet and hold public meetings over the next three to six months to determine what the neighborhood would like to see in the former school. We've had great interest from elected officials, including support from City Council President Richard Conlin.

Our grassroots effort is building! We're looking for committed and talented volunteers to join our group (which we hope to have a name for soon!) To get involved, contact Andy Engelson at aengelson@speakeasy.net or 568-2676. Read about our progress at <http://madisonvalleyarts.blogspot.com>.

Please see Arts and Idea Center at MLK on page 4



Events Calendar

Madison Valley Merchants Association. Wednesday, May 14, 8:30 a.m. Café Flora, 2901 E. Madison St.

Greater Madison Valley Community Council. Wednesday, May 21, 7:30 p.m. Bush School's Common Room (entrance on E. Harrison St. and 34th Ave. E.)

East Precinct Crime Prevention Coalition. Thursday, May 29, 6:30-8:00 p.m. at Seattle Vocation Institute, Room #401, 2120 S Jackson St.

Open Meetings with Mary Bass, Seattle School Board Director. May 9 & 23, 6:00 p.m. Garfield Community Center, 2323 E. Cherry St.

Madison Valley Spring Art Walk and Sale. Saturday, May 31, noon-5:00 p.m. See p. 8.

The Valley View

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GMVCC Meeting Minutes for April 16

by Ann McCurdy, co-Secretary

Treasurer's Report: Jennifer gave a report for two months, since there was no report in March. The balance at February 18 was \$14,244.34, and at April 15 was \$12,980.82. It is a little lower than expected since some Valley View advertisers have not yet paid. We expect their payments soon.

Proposal for MLK: Andy Engelson, who is heading a group in support of a Community Arts and Ideas Center at the old MLK site, gave a report. The Seattle School Use Advisory Committee (SUAC) process is starting, involving the Seattle School District, Dept. of Neighborhoods, Dept. of Planning and Development (DPD), and community representatives. A committee will be formed to determine all permitted uses for the site, and then find out which of these uses are acceptable to the neighborhood. The process should take three to six months, and will include community meetings. The property will not be sold until the process is complete. The closure of the Oddfellows Hall (Capitol Hill) highlights the lack of art space in the city. Andy met with SMR Architects who looked at the drawings of MLK. There are challenges, including asbestos and an old boiler. They have gathered advice on the SUAC process and the names of possible partners. He is also meeting with Environmental Works, a nonprofit group. (See p.1 for details.)

SPU and Flooding: SPU said "No" to capping the Stormwater Overflow Facility (the "Pit") because DPD will soon designate it an environmentally critical area as a peat bog, which will prevent building there. Two more adjacent houses have been torn down to expand the Pit. SPU hasn't decided on which final flooding solution to implement. Once that decision is made, the public amenities for the affected spaces would be designed. E-mail Linda Deboldt (Linda.Deboldt@Seattle.gov) about suggested public amenities in those locations.

There were complaints about how slow SPU has been. It was suggested we ask the mayor to come to the next meeting and ask about the decision.



Northwest African Museum, continued from p.1

War II for work. By the 1950s, there was a thriving black community. The civil rights movement in the mid 1960s fought discrimination in jobs and housing. Then in the 1970s, immigrants began arriving from African countries.

Displays show how African Americans came to the Northwest, and also how they lived, worked, and socialized. Some of the items you'll find: Jimi Hendrix' hat from a 1968 concert in LA; a typewriter from the first African American office worker at Boeing; a window of a jazz club with two of Floyd Standifer's trumpets; a jacket from one of the Tuskegee Airmen; a stained-glass window and a wooden door from an old church; and a replica of a TV from the 60s plays a video loop of civil rights demonstrations and Dr. Martin Luther King delivering his "I Have a Dream" speech.

In the Northwest Gallery, divided into two rooms, you'll find the Museum's first major exhibit, "Making A Life/Creating a World." One room is dedicated to the silkscreens, prints, and gouaches of Jacob Lawrence, an artist who came to Seattle from New York City in the 1970s. On one wall is one of the large (108" x 216"), colorful, enamel-on-steel murals he did for the Kingdome. In the other room are the prints, oil paintings, watercolors, pastels, and sculptures of the late James W. Washington, Jr, a Madison Valley resident who came to the Northwest in the 1940s from rural Mississippi. While they were from vastly different backgrounds, both men were active in the Northwest black community, and their works depict the struggle of their community against racism.

The last space speaks to the past as well as to the future. The Multimedia Learning Center is a large room with computers and a small library dedicated to genealogical research. Young and old can search through books, magazines, and even the bank records of former slaves to trace their history. And, as a major part of the Museum's mission is outreach to schools, they have also dedicated spaces for students to create their own exhibits. (Northwest African American Museum is at 2300 S. Massachusetts Street. (206) 518-6000. www.naammw.org. Admission: \$6 adults, \$4 students/seniors)



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Local Madison Valley Waffle Connoisseur.

I first discovered **Arosa** (3121 E. Madison, Suite 101) as a new dad, giving my wife a break from mothering by wandering up and down Madison Avenue at the crack of dawn with my son strapped to my chest in his Baby Bjorn. I became intimately familiar with every provider of coffee in the neighborhood, and Arosa quickly became my favorite. First of all, they serve what I believe to be the best mochas in Seattle (and, similarly, the best hot chocolates, for those non-coffee drinkers out there), thanks in no small part to the core ingredient: premium shaved chocolate shipped in from Switzerland.

Second, they are the only place in town I know that serves Belgian Snack Waffles. If "Belgian Waffle" conjures up the image of a breakfast dish on a plate (with fruit, powdered sugar and perhaps some whipped cream), banish that thought from your mind. These are fresh, hot, sweet snacks you carry around as you would a muffin or a doughnut. On the streets of Brussels, countless street vendors sell them to passers-by, much as Manhattan pretzel stand owners dispense their fresh, hot savory walk-and-munch snacks to New Yorkers.

For a little side trip to heaven from a busy day, try both these treats in one visit. They also serve an array of Italian sodas and freshly-grilled Panini sandwiches. Service is always excellent, with a friendly staff that remembers your name and usual order. Arosa is conveniently located across the street from the Denali Fitness health club, if you find you're spending too much time sampling their compelling menu and need to work off the extra insulation.

The café is under the management of a new owner, Michelle Staples, a friendly, energetic young entrepreneur who bought the business late last fall from Joe Limtiaco. Ms Staples also purchased the other Arosa location (on First Hill), which had been owned for many years by the Hans Riechsteiner, the original Arosa waffleman (who now happily patronizes both locations as a customer!) 

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What's up on Madison


by Cory Smith & Ann McCurdy

Kate's Day Spa (2711 E. Madison) just celebrated their 20th Anniversary! To celebrate, they completely revamped three treatment rooms and spruced up with fresh paint throughout, so they're ready for another 20 years of massages, steam baths, and facials. Ahhhhh.

My CoffeeHouse (2818 E. Madison) provides more than just coffee and a place for the kids to play--it provides the chance to meet parents like yourself. Single parents meet the third Saturday of each month at 3:00pm, while a breastfeeding group meets the second Thursday from 1:00-3:00pm.

Love homegrown tomatoes, but lack a green thumb like I do? **City People's Garden Store** (2939 E. Madison) can help us! Take their "Tantalizing Tomatoes" class May 17 at 11:00am. It's free!

Who knew wines came from Africa? **The BottleNeck Lounge** (2328 Madison) knew, and they're having an African wine tasting May 12. Space is limited, so please RSVP at 323-1098.

Was it the sun, the balloons, or the merchants donating to charity? We're not sure, but happy to see lots of shoppers and diners on April 26 for the **Madison Valley Merchant's Association's "Shop for Children's"**. Over 25 businesses gave 10% of their sales that day to Children's Hospital. Thanks for supporting a great cause! 

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Arts and Idea Center at MLK, *continued from p. 1*

For nearly 100 years, Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School (MLK) has been a focal point of the Madison Valley neighborhood since it opened (as the Harrison School) in 1913 and has provided education and community pride to generations of Madison Valley residents. In 2006, the Seattle School District closed the school; this year the School Board declared the property surplus. In response, a community group has formed to plan and create a community space at MLK. We have begun soliciting broad community input, building a nonprofit, recruiting allies, securing funding and enlisting partners.

We believe that the former school property should remain a true public space that serves the immediate neighborhood and the larger community. Youngstown Cultural Arts Center in West Seattle is an inspiration, but not necessarily a blueprint. We see MLK as a place **where people of all ages, ethnicities, and economic backgrounds could come to meet, to learn and to create.** We envision MLK as a community anchor for **lifelong learning and creativity.** **Serving youth is integral to this vision**, whether providing youth art classes, after school programs, teen activities, or supporting the work of existing youth-centered organizations.

Book groups meet. Children make art or record music after school. Hip-hop dance performances take place as well as children's theater. Events are free or affordable to the community. A community arts and idea center at MLK could include:


- Community meeting rooms and classrooms;
- Children and teen spaces: media center, sports and arts facilities, playground;
- A multi-purpose theater-performance-meeting space;

- Affordable offices for nonprofit, arts, and community groups; and
- Additional creative facilities (e.g., recording studio, dance studio, pottery kiln, etc.).

We are investigating the feasibility of these and other ideas, and meeting with possible partners who can provide guidance, programming and operations well into the future. We are consulting regularly with Youngstown Cultural Arts Center. We are working with architects to explore whether it is practical to renovate the existing building or to consider a long-term vision for a new building that is modest, practical, energy-efficient and cost-effective.

We are preparing a formal letter of intent to the School Board to establish a community center at MLK. Our interest is to move quickly, but we are asking for time to organize, create a formal proposal and pursue viable funding options. Neither the community nor the District wants to see the building sit vacant.

Our next steps involve setting up a community nonprofit, getting input from both the immediate neighborhood and broader community about what it wants in a community arts/idea center, and meeting with potential funding sources, experts, arts organizations, and partners. Seattle City Councilman Richard Conlin and Washington State Representative Eric Pettigrew (D-37) have taken a serious interest in this proposal and in assisting with several potential funding sources.

We believe our vision best meets the District's requirement that redeveloped former schools serve youth and families. As a lifelong learning and creative space, this center would keep Dr. King's dream alive. It would be a place where we can, as King once said, "transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood." 

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PUT OUR KNOWLEDGE ON YOUR SIDE

Removing Blackberries and Morning Glories


by Rebecca Wiess

When Green Footprints mapped the neighborhood's flora, they noted many invasive non-native species. Two common ones are blackberries and morning glories. Removing blackberries and morning glories without using chemicals can seem overwhelming, however it's very possible if have a little persistence.

An established blackberry plant grows from a base like a buried woody iris corm. The base can be a foot long in an old plant, and will re-sprout many times if you only cut off the canes. Each year new large canes grow from the base and root at their tips if they touch ground. During the second year these canes put out side shoots which bear flowers and berries and then die.

A blackberry can exist in the form of a seedling (skinny and easy to pull up), a newly rooted end of a cane (usually fat and also easy to pull up), or an established plant with a woody base (which requires serious digging). You will not get all the roots that come off the base of an existing plant. The larger roots will put up shoots that do not have good food reserves. Cut them out as deeply as is convenient. They may reappear, but after two or three cuttings these root remnants are exhausted and die.

Morning glory (a.k.a. bindweed) has no woody parts. It shifts easily from being a white fat root to being a green vine. The vines climb everywhere, the vines/roots run along the ground just under everything, and the roots grow in a tangle up to a foot or so deep. Every little part tries its best to grow. The vines die back to the roots in the winter.

In the spring and fall, when the soil is soft, dig out the roots and watch particularly for the deep root masses. You will not get them all, and they will re-sprout. The vigor of the sprouts is an indicator of whether they come from a little piece of root or a big one. Just yank up little ones. Prepare to yank up big ones repeatedly, or dig for that hunk of root. In summer, when the ground is hard, forget about the roots, continue yanking off the tops, and note target areas where you can dig roots in the fall when the soil is soft again. 



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CONTACT: Todd Lengacher
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206-322-7978 x 7673.

Green Footprints Spring Clean Success!

by Wallis Bolz

On April 12, Green Footprints (greenfootprintsactionworks.com) teamed up with Seattle Public Utilities for a Spring Clean event. By all measure, it was a great success: 67 volunteers contributed 158 hours of work (equivalent to \$2,381 in credit toward our grant match) plus \$230 worth of "in kind" donations including: plants from City Peoples, Starbucks coffee, gas, and donated baked goods. Our specific accomplishments:

1. Neighbors at the 24th Ave E Alley Cleanup between Valley and Aloha opened up a neighborhood corridor that had been overrun with invasive plants, mired in toxics and garnished with garbage. It is now a neighborhood open space, ready for the next step toward beautification...and naming.
2. Volunteers at the Harrison Right of Way, a Class III wetland at 25th Ave E and E Harrison, removed invasive plants and laid down cardboard and wood chips to inhibit invasive re-growth. Native plants were installed along the edge of a small rill—we're dreaming of tadpoles and frogs. Contact Eileen Maloney, eileen.maloney@gmail.com, for more info about upcoming work parties, and naming.
3. Folks at the "Woody Lane" site planted two serviceberry trees in the planting strip at 28th Ave E and E Ward and installed a wood stump buffer to ward off errant vehicles. The "Woody Lane" work party crew christened the Alder grove that lies between E Helen and E Prospect, east of the creek in the 26th Ave E Right-of-Way, "Alder Creek Park". Volunteers clipped and sawed English ivy at the base of trees in the park, and a group called "Friends of Alder Creek Park" was born. For more info about Friends of Alder Creek Park and upcoming work parties, contact Wallis Bolz at wallis@allaboutcarl.com or 329-3672.

Thanks to the many hands that made light work!



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Sheet Mulching is Green Fun!

by Ann Hirschi, Chair, Green Footprints Action Works

If you are trying to get rid of gnarly knotweed, brutal blackberry or other tough invasive species, I have some tips for you. Before you get overwhelmed and call in the heavy equipment, try Sheet Mulching. This refers to sheets of cardboard that are applied right on top of the mess and covered with arborist wood chips.

The general idea is to use multiple layers of cardboard, available free from many businesses, to block sunlight and act as a barrier to new growth. The most successful approach goes something like this:

- Use a trusty pair of pruning shears or a machete to make inroads, laying waste to as many canes (blackberry) or stalks (Japanese knotweed) as possible.
- When you have access, dig out as much of the root mass as possible. A Pulaski, mattock or hand pick with a flat blade works great as a grubbing tool.
- Gather the largest sheets of cardboard you can find, such as refrigerator cartons and remove all the plastic tape.
- Over lap cardboard so there are no gaps, because the new growth will find them and exploit them! (Sunshine is a powerful force.)
- Start laying down lots of arborist chips over the cardboard. Use at least 4-6" or more at sites that can sit for a year until planting time.

OK, I confess. I have run out of cardboard on a job and used... well, whatever I could find! First choice is biodegradable material. Weed fabric is also an option, but it requires a cash outlay, and along with other materials that do not biodegrade, will require removal in three years. This becomes quite difficult after weeds have threaded themselves through the weave.

Arborist chips can be had for free (or a small dumping fee) from tree services working in your neighborhood. They commonly need places to dump but it is generally a large quantity, so make sure you have room, and share with your neighbors.



Open House
Sat. May 17th, 10am-2pm

We're celebrating the grand opening of our new studio in Madrona during the Madrona Mayfair! Come see our new space at the corner of 34th and E. Union St. Meet our instructors and try free demos of our classes as well as our STOTT Pilates equipment. Mention this ad and get a Free Pilates DVD with purchase. We hope to see you there!

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Farmers Market Now Open!

by Kimberly Larson-Edwards

When the Madison-Madrona Farmers Market opens for the season May 16, the community can once again enjoy delicious seasonal vegetables, fresh salmon, vibrant floral bouquets, artisan baked goods, and cooking demonstrations from area restaurants. This coming season will also feature certified organic eggs and chicken. Judy Kirkhuff, Market Master, said we can expect berries in June and local potatoes and beef starting in mid- to late summer.

The market is open Fridays in the Grocery Outlet parking lot (corner of Martin Luther King Jr. Way & E. Union) from 3:00-7:00 p.m. The first market day will feature cooking demonstration from St. Clouds restaurant. Dogs and strollers welcome, rain or shine!



COME TO THE NEXT COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING!!

To be discussed: The latest on MLK; Flooding & SPU;
Summer BBQ; Electing Officers!

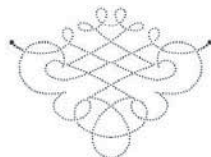
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Madison Valley Art Walk on May 31

by Theresa Harris

Join us Saturday, May 31 for **Madison Valley's 6th Annual Spring Art Walk and Sale!** The Madison Valley Merchant's Association will team up with local artists for another year of festive fun.

Support our community artists by perusing the diverse array of art that will be showcased this year including: paintings, ceramics, glass, jewelry, collage, photography and sculpture. Artists' work will be for sale and a percentage of the proceeds will go to Coyote Central. Balloons will be placed outside each participating business and guests can view art, enjoy refreshments and possibly meet the artists.

Art work made by students of Thrive Art School, located at 2900 E Madison Street, will be professionally matted and displayed along with local artists' works again this year. Last year's art walk raised over \$1000 for Thrive's scholarship fund which has supported art tuition for three children for a whole year! Thrive Art School sees the art walk as a valuable opportunity for children to feel a part of the community and receive some recognition for their work.

As the weather warms, this is a chance for art enthusiasts of all ages to stroll down Madison Ave. and celebrate our local talent. Come on down! 



Art by Thrive students will be displayed.

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