

The Valley View

Newsletter of the Greater Madison Valley Community Council

Issue 96, September 2001

E-mail: madisonvalley@juno.com

President's View

by Gary Emslie

While the August downpour surprised us, it refreshed us and brought us thoughts of fall: gutters to be cleaned, annuals to be trimmed, raspberry vines culled, and the ever-present maple leaf to rake into the beds for mulch. We are also reminded of the opening of our neighborhood schools: Martin Luther King Elementary School and the Bush School. M. L. King has a new principal: Barry Dorsey. You can contact Mr. Dorsey online at bdorsey@seattleschools.org. I'm confident you'll enjoy meeting him and sharing your support for the schools with him.

Mr. Dorsey explains that a few changes have occurred over the summer. The school has hired a new kindergarten teacher, new librarian, family support staff, instructional assistants, and special education teacher. The school's reading program has moved away from the old Distar approach and has adopted the

Houghton Mifflin reading series, which has a more thematic focus while also reinforcing the instruction of phonics and use of whole language materials. The school's enrollment is up this year to 260 students in kindergarten through fifth grades.

We send out a hearty community welcome to Mr. Dorsey and his staff at the Martin Luther King school. Their jobs are among the most challenging, rewarding, and important.

Remember last spring when neighbors living on Dorffel Drive discussed possible changes in the traffic flow with neighbors on 32nd and Lake Washington Blvd.? How did their summer discussions about traffic in our community turn out? Maybe we will hear from this group at the September 19 Community Council meeting at 7:30 in the portable at Martin Luther King School. Please note this *special meeting day*, on account of Tuesday being Rosh Hashanah.

The Bush School has also been busy this summer. Head of school, Frank Magusin, announced that the school and the architects from the

Miller/Hull firm will host an open house on the 20th of September at 6:30 p.m. in the Bush School Commons. The purpose of the open house is to share the preliminary design elements of Phase One of the Capital Master Plan. You are all invited.

Last and certainly not least, we have an upcoming citywide election. Which candidate will best unite the city, specifically the police department, neighborhood groups, and business in our changing city? It seems that both communication and cooperation need improvement. Which agendas and which candidate will help this city and its neighborhoods solve problems effectively? Has anyone tired of the traffic mess? How bad must it become before solutions are initiated? Help!

Look forward to seeing you at the next council meeting on Wednesday, September 19. The fall agenda includes a continued look at cars and traffic woes on our streets, community policing, and the next steps needed for renovation of the field house at Washington Park. ▼▼

Seattle's Endangered Sense of Community

by Aaron Dixon

The writer of this article is a longtime activist in our Black community. He is currently working to develop housing and services for troubled young men. - Ed.

I left Oakland almost seventeen years ago. I was fleeing a city that was turning its back on communities to court Big Business. A crack epidemic was widening that would change Oakland forever. I remember how good it felt to be back in the friendly slowed down town where I had grown up. Homes were still affordable, traffic was mild, and the community had that strong ethnic cultural flavor that is so vital for raising healthy families.

But Seattle began to change. We had a Black mayor for the first time, and things were looking up; unfortunately Mayor Rice was more a supporter of Big Business than a lookout for preserving the Northwest quality of life. The gang and crack misery that was swallowing centers in California began to seep its way into Seattle.

It wasn't long before we had our own drive-bys and crack houses springing up on almost every block. Many of my friends that I had grown up with had become addicted to this monster. A generation of kids was left to fend for themselves in the streets as their parents split up. Families dissolved or were never formed. There was an outcry of fear for public safety, and a demand for more police and harsher crime laws. Many young men, mainly African-American teenagers, were sent away. Kids were left fatherless, women lived without their men, and a spiral of breakdown in the community began.

The City administration pushed for expansion and develop-

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Endangered Community, continued

ment as people moved here to share the fruits of the "new economy." Our Central Area community enjoyed little of this. Seattle slowly began to lose the quiet congenialness of the past and was becoming a big, noisy, unfriendly city.

The ethnic mix here began to change. People were fearful for their families and moved away. The pall of crack cocaine addiction cost people their homes. Their parents had to give up their houses and leave. In their place came Whites who improved and remodeled, making these streets far too expensive for the old residents to stay. A similar scene played out in cities all across the country.

Thoughtful people are afraid that for the sake of Progress we are losing our past, our Black community culture, our Asian community culture. Are we slowly losing our humanity? If this continues we will all suffer. There are a lot of things we have the power to change, and certain things we cannot change. The trick is to recognize what is possible and fight to get it done. Let us be active to protect our families, our block, our neighborhood. I am convinced that all of us have a right to exist in the happiest way possible. ▼▼

P-Patch News

Thanks and Giving at the P-Patch by Sarah Trethewey

What an incredible addition to our neighborhood. With this warm, sunny summer the p-patchers are harvesting everything from arugula to zucchini.

I wish to thank everyone involved with this project. First the diligent p-patchers: the Edgertons, the Fallon/Coleman family, Larry Grant, Dawn Hoffer, Kerri Laumna, Jerry Lewis, Roy and Jesse Lewis, the Marklyn family, the Ouellets, Ginny Stearns, Tamara and Alex Still, the Teague family, Kwame Turner, Chuck Weed, and Zenko Zulu.

Next are the folks who showed up to help us build the garden: Andrea Dafforn and her family, Miriam Roskin, Jerry Sussman, the Krewsons, Trent Spellmen, Py Bateman, Margo Lauritzen, Kate Flemming, Charlene Strong, the Vanderwals, Suzanne Wilson, W. C. Fields, Winnie Coleman, Gavin Gray, Jeff Cobb and his crew from the Parks Department.

And last but not least, those behind the scenes who donated items to the project: the Tretheweys, Judy McCabe, Anna-Karin Svensson, Gary Emslie and the GMVCC, Jay Magruder, Julie Meyer, Judy Philips, Lillian Feist (come see the dahlia patch!), Bert's Red Apple, City People's Garden Store, and Sarah's kids at Epiphany: Max, George, Ari, Helen, Paul, Annie, Breahna, Emily, Patrick, Peter, Andrew, and Bayard.

One of the ways that p-patches help the community is through the yearly "Day of Giving." The p-patchers work

Neighborhood Projects

Update on the 27th & Denny Traffic Circle by Cathy Baker

After a couple of false starts with private contractors, we have persuaded the City to actually do the construction of the traffic circle we applied for at 27th & Denny. Construction is scheduled to begin later this fall. Interested residents will be meeting together soon to choose the types of trees and plants we'd like to see in the circle. If all goes as planned, we should have the traffic circle in place and planted by this winter. We would be happy to share our experience with other folks that might be interested in getting a traffic circle in their area. You can contact me at cab_63@yahoo.com. ▼▼

Arboretum Fieldhouse Project Underway by Jerry Sussman

Our council's application for a grant from Department of Neighborhoods was approved on August 20. They awarded us about \$5,000 to make plans to renovate the brick building at the playfield in Washington Park, just off Madison. That fieldhouse, once containing lockers and showers plus meeting rooms, has been shut for years. Now the Parks Department would like to see the place remodeled and made useful for the community. Many organizations in the valley and central area such as athletic teams, school groups, local councils, and the Japanese tea garden society showed interest in using the facility for meetings or as a classroom in the park.

Our task is to assess the needs of the building and to present a plan that the Parks Department can incorporate in their budget. The place needs interior renovation and upgrades to utilities. We will match the cost of hiring the architect and cost estimator with many hours of volunteer effort to publicize and direct the planning. Bush and M.L. King schools have already promised student help to do plant maintenance and litter control at the field and nearby woods. The Madrona Council completed a similar project at the fieldhouse near Madrona School and it has created a wonderful asset for their community.

Join in this restoration work: call us at 325-6308 (Jerry) or 323-6312 (Sally) and tell us how you might help. ▼▼

with Northwest Harvest to collect and deliver fresh produce that will be distributed to our neighbors in need. We decided to make a day of it. First we collected, washed, and delivered 72 pounds of produce, the p-patchers had a work party to clean up and build raised beds for future food bank plots. The finale was a potluck that was organized for all of the folks who helped out. Over 20 people showed up to help us celebrate, and we had a great afternoon. Plans are in the works to try and make this an annual community event — maybe we will see you next year!

If you want more information about the "Mad" P-Patch, please call Sandy Pernitz at the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods' P-Patch Office at 206/684-0264.

Thanks again to all for all the support! ▼▼

Community History

Denny-Blaine Centennial: 1901 – 2001

by Joseph C. Baillargeon

The second of two parts. The June, 2001 issue of the Valley View published Mr. Baillargeon's article on how Denny-Blaine was platted and the origins of some of the neighborhood's curious and curvaceous travel routes. This article focuses on place names for some special neighborhood landmarks. – Ed.

The history of Denny-Blaine is partially the history of the names with which it was endowed when the plat was dedicated. Some have since been changed. Lake Washington Boulevard, for instance, was originally platted as 40th Avenue North and then for twenty-five years became Blaine Boulevard. Stixrud Drive, that short stretch of the Boulevard just south of McGilvra, had earlier been subsumed into Blaine Boulevard. The roadway north from East John to East Thomas Street that is now Dorffel Drive was first designated 37th Avenue North. The name Dorffel Drive first applied to the street that emanated at East Denny Way on the west side of the Denny-Blaine bus shelter and then curved northeast to join East John Street. Instead that route is now recorded as 36th Avenue East. Whitman Place became Denny-Blaine Place Park. In early years a fountain played in the middle of its green-sward.

What of the people who gave the Denny-Blaine neighborhood its name? Blaine was Charles and Viretta Denny's business partner and co-developer of the Denny-Blaine tract, along with other Denny properties. In 1903 he became president of the re-chartered Seattle Parks Board and in that capacity he commissioned the Olmsted Brothers to develop plans for the City's parks and boulevards. Blaine was popularly known as "The Father of Seattle Parks," and, in 1914, a group of his enthusiastic friends, having already achieved re-naming in his honor of the street that ran by his house, also petitioned to rename Lake View Park for him. However, the "Blaine Park" movement came to naught.

The Blaine home was the first to be built in Denny-Blaine. In fact, it was well under construction in early 1901, months before the plat was accepted by the City. It still stands at 171 Lake Washington Boulevard East at the north end of Viretta Park. Thanks to caring owners over the years and, especially, to Courtney Love who restored much of the exterior after her husband Kurt Cobain took his life there in 1994, the house appears today almost exactly as it did in its first photographs.

Minerva Stone Blaine, Blaine's wife, is commemorated by the name of the pond where East Denny Way turns into Madrona Drive. It was dedicated as the "Minerva Fountain," and early photographs show the fountain's waters at play. The open-air, rustic shelter adjoining the Fountain was originally

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Minerva Fountain at Denny-Blaine Lake Park, 1904
Photo courtesy of City of Seattle Photo Archives

Community Council Minutes

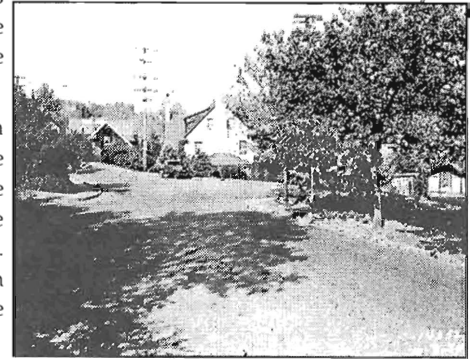
GMVCC Meeting of June 19, 2001

Special Agenda: Dorffel Drive Traffic Issue

Charles McDade, acting as President in the absence of Gary Emshie, called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

Jerry introduced the topic of this special meeting: the traffic concerns of our neighbors on Dorffel Drive, who have applied for a grant to make some changes to the street.

A representative from Dorffel Drive gave the Council the statistics that he and his neighbors have worked out on their street. During school times, which comprise a much busier time for the street, 80% of the cars on Dorffel are non-resident commuters. Dorffel residents feel this is an undue burden for a narrow street like Dorffel.



Intersection of E. John and Dorffel Dr., Oct. 1936
Photo courtesy of City of Seattle Photo Archives

The various suggestions for improving the street included making it one-way and even blocking it from "Mud Park" at the end of the street. These types of changes would do much to ease the fears of the parents on the street, where there are many children.

The main problems that non-Dorffel-dwellers had with the suggested changes focused on potential impacts to traffic levels on Lake Washington Boulevard and 32nd, with traffic reductions on any one of the three routes simply pushing traffic to the remaining two alternatives. For instance, were 37th Ave. E. to become a one-way street, per one suggestion, overflow traffic would increase the traffic on the other neighborhood streets exponentially, noted several speakers.

The conclusion was that all the streets in the neighborhood have problems and that we need to work together to solve them. Consensus is key because, as a visiting city official reported, at least 60% of neighbors in certain boundaries must agree to any change to traffic rules before it may occur.

A motion was made to form a committee with representatives from all arterials that would be affected by any changes made on Dorffel and 37th Ave. E. The committee will meet over the summer to discuss potential effects of the proposed changes and solicit and report on feedback from neighbors.

The motion was amended to assure that the group would be a strategic group, thus ensuring the profit of all, and that annual funds will be devoted to fix serial problems after they have been properly identified and discussed. The motion was seconded and carried.

A second motion was to be made, asking for the use of speedhumps. This motion was seconded and carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9 P.M. ▼▼

Minutes prepared by Miranda Levy, GMVCC Secretary.

THE VALLEY VIEW

2802 East Madison St., Box 184
Seattle, WA 98112
Greater Madison Valley
Community Council
Member of the Seattle
Community Council Federation

Newsletter Staff

Cathy Nunneley
Miriam Roskin
Eli Stahlhut
Jerry Sussman

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Your submissions are appreciated!
Mail to the address above.

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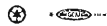
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E-mail: madisonvalley@juno.com



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Next Community Council Meeting

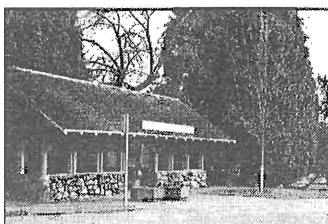
*****NOTE SPECIAL MEETING DAY*****

Wednesday, September 19, 2001, 7:30 p.m.
Martin Luther King Elementary School Portables
3201 E. Republican Street
(parking available on playfield)

Denny-Blaine, continued

an enclosed building constructed for the office of the Denny-Blaine Land Company. The fountain and the building were the first landmarks prospective buyers of Denny Blaine lots would have seen as they disembarked from the East Union Street electric trolley that ran between the Madrona turn-around and Broadway.

There has long been a theory that the Denny-Blaine bus shelter was designed by the neighborhood's most eminent architect, Ellsworth Storey. Storey produced a dozen of Denny-Blaine's and Madrona's most charming and authentically Northwest houses, many of which have been torn down and replaced. His own residence at 260 Dorffel Drive East, however, survives as does the original Epiphany Church (now the chapel) that he designed in 1911. However, it's difficult to attribute the bus shelter to Storey since he arrived in Seattle to start his architectural practice several years after the Denny-Blaine Land Company had started functioning on that site. Ah well, a good story while it lasted. ▼▼



Fighting Petty Theft:

A Look Ahead to the GMVCC's October Meeting

Have you had items stolen from around your house? Petty theft has become a huge problem in this community with everything from potted plants, power tools, and garden furniture disappearing during the night.

We are inviting the community police team to the GMVCC's October meeting to discuss this problem and what options we have. So please mark your calendar and join us at the October 16th meeting, for only working as a community can we hope to combat these crimes.

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