

The Valley View

NEWSLETTER OF THE GREATER MADISON VALLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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Creating the MLK, Jr. Community Center

BY ANDY ENGELSON



As spring approaches, our neighborhood effort to create a community center at the former Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School continues to blossom. In February, we received news that the Department of Neighborhoods has approved

the School Use Advisory Committee (SUAC) report. The result of a six-month public process, the SUAC report formally sets the zoning for the former school. We're extremely pleased with the committee's report, since it approves, amongst other potential uses, zoning for a multi-purpose community center.

Now that this essential zoning change is in place, Citizens for a Community Center at MLK (CCC@MLK) now await the start of the school district's public input process to select a master tenant for the former elementary school. The district has declared the school a surplus, and now must find a group to buy or lease the school. CCC@MLK will be presenting a plan to the school district to create a self-sustaining community center that would lease the property. Our eventual vision is to purchase the property with funds provided from city, county, state, federal and foundation funds. We're also securing funds to renovate the existing building.

Our plan is to create a self-sustaining independent community center run by a nonprofit organization providing a range of arts, services, lifelong learning opportunities, and events in the community. We look to fund our lease with the school district through rental income from various office, performance, and meeting spaces. This model has worked well at former schools throughout the city, including Phinney, University Heights, and Youngstown.

We are working with architects to finalize a draft plan, which includes office space, a performing arts stage, community kitchen, preschool, public playground, community "living room" including a computer center with homework and business resources, and a dance studio with a sprung floor. We've applied for a City of Seattle Department of Neighborhoods grant for architectural design work and an operational business plan.

We have already identified several potential partners for programming and renting space, which include Spectrum Dance, Coyote Central, and African American Veterans Group of Washington. We're in discussions with many other nonprofit groups and arts organizations, and actively speaking with several preschool providers.

If you know of a group or organization that would be interested in

PLEASE SEE **CREATING MLK** ON PAGE 3

Get to Know Plum Tree Park

BY NORI HAWKINS



PLUM TREE PARK HAS IMAGINATIVE NEW PLAY EQUIPMENT SURE TO PLEASE NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS ANY SEASON OF THE YEAR.

For many years families in Madison Valley have wished for a local public playground for their children to play. Although we live just blocks from the University of Washington Arboretum, the parklands remain difficult to access for Valley residents who wish to enjoy the walking paths, gardens, swing sets, and playfields that lay just north of Madison Street. However, there is a small jewel of a park located up the hill that you may not be familiar with. Plum Tree Park is a small urban

PLEASE SEE **PLUM TREE PARK** ON PAGE 4



events calendar

Tues, March 3, 8:30 a.m. – **Madison Valley Merchants Association Meeting**. Hosted at Café Flora, Mark your calendars for next month's meeting on the first Tuesday, April 7th.

Wed, March 11, 9:30 a.m. – **City Council's Public Hearing**. Concept approval of Madison Valley Stormwater Facility. At Seattle City Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, Seattle City Hall, 600 4th Avenue.

Sat, March 14, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. – 37th District Town Hall Meeting. Interact with State Legislators Santos and Pettigrew, at Garfield Community Center, on 23rd and Cherry.

Sat, March 14, 9:00 a.m. – **Alder Creek Natural Area Work Party.** Organized by Green Footprints ActionWorks. Mulching, weeding and tree planting activities.

Wed, March 18, 7:30 p.m. – **GMVCC Meeting**. Meets every third Wednesday of the month at the Bush School, Commons Building, Community Room.

Fri, March 20, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. – **Third Fridays Art Opening**. Essential Bakery hosts a monthly art show with live music and complimentary hors d'oeuvres.

Sat, March 21, 9:30 a.m. – **No Name Creek Walk at 28th and Ward Street**. Walk is hosted by Pippa Kiraly and the Green Footprints ActionWorks.

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GMVCC Meeting Minutes

February 18, 2009 – Treasurer's Report is \$12,109.33.

The first quarterly neighborhood potluck was a huge success. We estimate sixty neighbors were in attendance. The next potluck will be April 25th, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. at the Valley School.

The Stormwater Detention pond at 30th and East John – The revised landscape plan for detention expansion is partially complete and is posted at the Basin Kiosk for community review. For more information on the plan visit: www.seattle.gov/util/About SPU/Drainage & Sewer System/Projects/MadisonValleyProject/

House Bill 1490: Density Near Transit Stations – This Bill requires 50 housing units per acre (high density) near certain transit stations, including the planned station on Capitol Hill. To learn more about this legislation, and how it will impact our neighborhood, visit: http:// crosscut.com/2009/02/20/urban/18860



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A Note From the New Editor

BY NORI HAWKINS

As a longtime dog owner and a new mom, I am an avid walker and like to go for daily strolls all around the Valley, up and down the various hills, and into adjacent neighborhoods. I enjoy watching the landscape change and evolve, and like to scope out the efforts of fellow gardeners. Since moving to Madison Valley in early 2000, I have seen many changes in the neighborhood over the past eight years. It seems like every year there are more old houses torn down and new townhomes put up in their place. Some of the change is less than great, and makes one wary of urban developers. However, some of the change is exciting, like the new landscape design for the Stormwater Basin or the citizen's advocacy group with dynamic plans for a new community center.

Certain businesses seem to come and go every year as well, while others have become fixtures on the Madison Street corridor. But the best amenities of Madison Valley aren't commercial, and there are many great resources for the community to enjoy free of charge. In 2009, you can expect the *Valley View* to give you articles which feature a broad assortment of topics, from gardening knowledge, to local history pieces, personal interest stories, community projects and cultural events. Most important, we seek to provide opportunities to get you involved in the stewardship and improvement of our shared community resources.

As the new editor, I hope to keep you informed of all that is happening in and around Madison Valley. We are always looking for writers to help us highlight community events, local talent, or report on anything newsworthy here in the valley. Please send us your comments, article suggestions, or photos for inclusion in our newsletter. You can write me anytime at editor@madisonvalley.org with your questions, concerns or opinions! Please take a look at our March calendar and resolve to put just one of these events in your date book!

A special thanks to the former editor, the intrepid Ann McCurdy, for doing such a great job and keeping the newsletter going for the past two years. She will continue to write the *What's Up on Madison* series, and other hard-hitting stories as her schedule allows. It will be difficult to top her breaking story on the clandestine closure of Lavender Spa in December, but we'll certainly try.

CREATING MLK CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

renting space or providing programming at a future MLK Community Center, please contact Andy Engelson at <u>aengelson@speakeasy.net</u>, or call him directly at 206-484-9823.

Finally, we're also looking for volunteers! Have some time to help us build support for our center? Contact us. We continue to build our steering committee of active volunteers, plus we have all sorts of other volunteer opportunities available. To signup for our e-newsletter, send an e-mail to Andy Engelson, or visit the website. We're starting a monthly series of neighborhood events that will give Madison Valley a taste of what sort of programming a center would provide. We'll have music, lectures, a spring plant swap, and many other fun events coming up. Check our website for more details on all of these exciting developments and to get involved: www.mlkcommunitycenter.org.

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PLUM TREE PARK CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

playground located on Capitol Hill's eastern slope, on 26th Avenue in between East Olive and East Howell streets.

From the street you can locate it by the Parks and Recreation sign and the vertical, slanting pilings which line the path up to its main entrance. It is surrounded by a grove of old plum trees, which look a little forlorn in the winter months. However, in the spring the trees burst into flower at the little park and provide dappled shade in the summer for picnics on the lawn area.

Plum Tree Park was established in the early 1980's with funds from the Forward Thrust Program. Current funding is provided by the Land and Water Conservation Fund, a cooperative project by the National Park Service and the State of Washington. The park formerly consisted of a simple basketball hoop, a small playing court, and a sandpit play area. But recently the park was updated with new play equipment that resembles a tree house, with two slides, a faux rock wall to scramble up, and lots of other climbing features. Unfortunately, Plum Tree Park still lacks a swing-set, and the sand area has been replaced with bark. However, it is still great place to bring your kids on a sunny afternoon some weekend when they have energy to burn. There are benches for parents to sit on, which is always a plus in damp Seattle weather.

So next time you're looking to stretch your legs with a neighborhood walk, load the kids in the wagon and check out Plum Tree Park. For those who prefer to drive, there is alley access and a small parking area for cars at the rear entrance of the park. It's worth a visit this spring!



We are looking for Madison Valley poets to submit their work for publication. Send your creative musings to editor@madison-valley.org, or drop a hard copy of it in the envelope marked *Poetry Submissions*, posted on the Basin Kiosk on 30th Avenue East. We welcome poets young and old alike!

This month's **featured poem** is provided courtesy of the Valley School Art Kiosk located on East Thomas Street. Check out the latest works of art and literature at two small kiosks located at each entrance gate. This poem is from a selection entitled "Poems for Obama", compiled by the Valley School Fourth Graders this past January. The poet who wrote this lovely composition was unfortunately not listed by name.

Our President is...
A leader not a cheater
He is a noble man
Always says yes we can
And he will be the one who
Will lead everyone
A president who is kind
Always making up his mind
He chose the best VP
We always see him on TV
Obama.

Harness Your Spring Fever

BY LINDA BECKER



On those sunny days that pop up here and there during our endless winter-to-spring endurance test, there is a garden project for you that will repay your efforts all year long: get down on your hands and knees and weed! Why now? With many weeds, the trick is to pull them before they can spread their seeds, and some of our peskiest weeds are flowering right now. In addition to the opportunity to interfere with their reproduction cycle, roots pull more easily out of our wet winter soil, making the task less difficult than later in the year.

Weeding may be an acquired taste. I listen to books on tape while I weed, and with a really good book, I don't get bored. Other people find weeding as a way to decompress after work, or as a good reason to walk around the yard and admire the daffodils, and enjoy the lengthening daylight.

Some weeds are not easily separated from your garden. The dreaded horsetail, for instance, can burrow through asphalt and is about the only thing still growing on the tailings of the Tacoma smelter. At a recent Valley View meeting, writers shared ideas about horsetail eradication, which (after an hour on the internet I can attest) will outlast all but the most persistent gardener. You have to dig the horsetail with a shovel and find all the pieces of every root, or they will regenerate from roots left behind (similar to the invasive morning glory). Yet they still flourish, especially in clay soils. The Horsetail genus Equisetum evolved about 30 million years ago, and some species reached a hundred feet tall (imagine a good- sized Douglas Fir). One possibility shared by garden bloggers is agricultural-strength vinegar sprayed on young plants. But, that will only kill the tops of the horsetail shoot. Other people recommend learning to love them!

Dormant season pruning is past, but light pruning (and getting out deadwood) is acceptable and safe for most plants almost any time of the year. But, do NOT prune your lilacs (or other spring-flowering species) at this point unless you are deliberately getting rid of the flowers. Prune lilacs right after they bloom.

Nurseries and grocery stores have started selling cool season vegetable starts---spinach, peas, chives, and other lovely edibles. Be sure to get bush peas unless you have a trellis. If you have never grown a vegetable garden, here are the basics: start with some nice soil, keep it weeded, thin your seedlings after they get established, and if we hit an unseasonably dry spell, keep it damp. Lastly, pray for bees.

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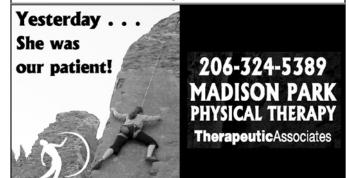
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What's Up On Madison

BY ANN MCCURDY

Who would have guessed there's a new business opening up this month? Way up the hill at 2302 East Madison St. is **Master 5 Star Psychic**, telling your past, present, and future with Tarot cards and palm reading. Opening a business in this economic climate? Perhaps the Tarot cards know something we don't...

Further down the hill, **Apogee**, at 2811 East Madison St, is celebrating its 40th Anniversary! They have been selling European antiques and accessories almost since I was born. Uh oh, I hope that doesn't mean I'm an antique!

Essential Bakery Café at 2719 E. Madison St is now hosting Third Fridays, a monthly event from 6:00-8:00 p.m. featuring an art opening and live music. Music will be provided by students and instructors of The Music Factory, which was recently opened at 2832 East Arthur Place. Owner Ari Joshua is happy to report that **The Music Factory** has been attracting a good number of students since they hung up their shingle. Essential's February art opening featured photographer Isaac Blankensmith, a high school senior at **The Bush School**. Their next event on March 20th will feature photography from Megan Burke. Essential Bakery will provide hors d'oeuvres and samplings for guests, or you can purchase items from their menu. The café will donate 25% of event sales to Artist Trust, a nonprofit organization that supports Washington artists. I love to see all those Madison Valley groups coming together!

When a Lemon Drop or Cosmo sound just too blasé, go and check out **Café Flora's** new cocktail menu (2901 E. Madison Street). Enjoy twists on classic cocktails with organic and seasonal juices and hand infused spirits, like prickly pear and fennel infused light rum in their new concoction "Red Sky At Night". Perhaps they'd give free samples to us thirsty reporters? Just checking...

the valley view's new look

We've got a fresh new look! Now it's time to update our content.

We've added a few new sections like *Poet's Corner* and *Valley Snapshots*, but now we'd like your input.

Now is an exciting, yet challenging time in lives. There are a lot of good ideas buzzing around out there and we'd like to hear them.

Email your suggestions for new sections, article topics and neighborhood snapshots to: editor@madisonvalley.org.

The Valley View's new look is courtesy of Elena Johnson of **Anise Graphics**. Check out her work at: www.anisegraphics.com.

YMCA Women's Wellness Weekend

BY IONATHON HERZOG

I'd like to introduce myself as the Outreach Coordinator for YMCA Camp Coleman. I grew up in Madrona and now live in Madison Valley. We invite you to consider attending our **Women's Wellness Weekend** coming up **March 20th through the 22nd**. It is an exciting opportunity for women 18 years and older to get out of the city and experience a number of activities in a peaceful outdoor setting.

Designed to relax and strengthen your body, the retreat is set in idyllic Camp Coleman, a YMCA facility located on the shores of Case Inlet and nestled in 100 acres of forest. Replenish your spirit with walks on the beach, massage, guest lectures and crafts. Outdoor activities available to guests include sea kayaking, archery, organic gardening, rock climbing, yoga and more.

The cost of the Spring Women's Wellness Weekend is \$150, which includes accommodations in tree-house style cabins overlooking a saltwater lagoon, and all-inclusive buffet meals. The YMCA of Greater Seattle is a charitable, nonprofit organization serving King and South Snohomish Counties since 1876. To reserve your Women's Wellness Weekend, please call Camping Services at (206) 382-5009. For program questions, you may call Camp Coleman directly at (253) 884-3844, or you can email me at jherzog@seattleymca.org. If you can't attend the spring event, but are interested in the fall Wellness Weekend Program, keep us in mind for the first weekend of November.





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Council Report

BY THE GREATER MADISON VALLEY COMMUNITY COUNCIL

March GMVCC Meeting is Wednesday the 18th, at 7:30 p.m.

Discussion Topics: the Community Center project at MLK Elementary School, progress on the Stormwater Detention design, and Community Council fundraising. We will also discuss ways to increase meeting attendance through monthly cultural events that feature music and dance performances, poetry readings, photography or art exhibits from local students and artists, culinary tastings, potlucks, lectures and much more. Make 2009 the year you attend your first council meeting – you won't be disappointed!

Save the Date! The Next Community Potluck is scheduled for Saturday, April 25, 4:00-7:00 p.m. at the Valley School. Contact Charles McDade for more information at 206-325-3518. We hope to see you there!

Check out our Website! The *Valley View* newsletter is now posted online! For all the latest community events and a growing archive of photos, events and past newsletters, visit: www.madisonvalley.org.

Check out the Basin Kiosk!

The Kiosk at the Basin is a useful community resource. There is always great information posted on neighborhood events and other services your neighbors have to offer. The latest landscape design rendering for the expanded Detention Pond is now posted for community review. We are also updating the Kiosk to include local volunteer opportunities, valley photographs and a Community Council Calendar.



THE KIOSK AT THE BASIN

The GMVCC meets the third Wednesday of each month 7:30 p.m. At the Bush School Commons Building, Community Room.

Entrance located on East Harrison and 34th Avenue East.





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