



THE VALLEY VIEW

Newsletter of the Greater Madison Valley Community Council

Issue 143

madisonvalley.org

February 2007

One of our Neighbors - In Memoriam



cedarhouseaudio.com

Kate Fleming

By Myra Platt

Kate Fleming was a magnificent human being. Her tragic death was devastating to so many: her family, her large circle of close friends, and the compatriots she collected through her business, Cedar House Audio. Kate was a magician in the audio world, as an actress, director and producer. She employed dozens of local artists, and developed listening fans that span the globe. She was a great friend to me and to my friend, Jane Jones, to several of our close friends, and most recently to Jane's and my theatre company, Book-It Repertory Theatre. We knew Kate from her years in the Seattle theatre community, but it was more recently that she impacted our lives as a devout fan, incredible colleague, fun companion, and even an amazing boss for what we imagined would last for decades to come. Instead, we are grieving, cheated by the horrific storm that struck in December and stole her from us all.

Kate approached Book-It several years ago and asked if we'd ever considered recording Book-It productions on tape. We laughed over the irony, as it had been a goal of ours for a decade. "I can make this happen," she said to us flat out. "It's a natural, girls. It's dreamy and delicious! Let's go for it."

Kate promptly introduced us to her affiliate publishers and got them excited about the possibility of a pilot project. She spent months researching and meeting with talent unions, agents, and potential investors. Everywhere Kate went, people were in awe. She not only possessed business savvy; she had a gift for language and communicating ideas. Within less than a year, she produced a demo of one of our productions. She gathered the cast into the theatre, where she passionately believed she could capture the feel of live theatre by recording on the stage, thereby creating a new listening experience. Now, without her vision, this project is forever on hold.

The story of what happened to Kate has affected even those who did not know her. Many still cannot quite imagine why she was where she was at the time of the flooding. But to those who understood her passion for her art in preserving the spoken word, and for those who recorded in her home studio, it is all too clear.

Two summers ago, I had the privilege of working with Kate in her basement studio when she hired me to record a novel. It was an idyllic job: three and half days of reading every word aloud from a 300-page novel. I'd show up with coffee in hand at her magical Madison Valley cottage, the morning dew shining

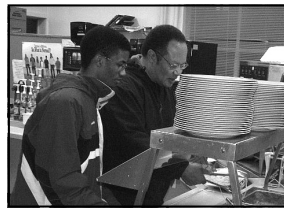
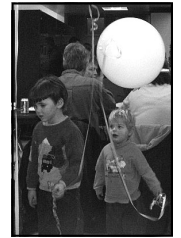
⇒ Please see *Kate Fleming* on page 4

GMVCC News

Spaghetti Dinner a Success!

About 125 people gathered together at The Bush School cafeteria on Friday evening, January 19th, 2007, for the 18th annual Madison Valley community Spaghetti Dinner.

Eric Geir, a Western Culinary Institute graduate and Madison Valley resident, was the lead chef, providing three delicious pasta sauces for meat eaters, vegetarians, and vegans. Garlic bread and salad accompanied the main course, and the feast was completed with offerings of fresh baked chocolate chip cookies by Lea Baker and handmade profiteroles provided by The Harvest Vine restaurant. It was quite a meal for a mere \$5 ticket per person! A profit of \$350, above the cost of the food, was made on the dinner.



Following the repast, two raffles were held, with prizes donated by local merchants totaling more than \$1700 in value! The first raffle, with donated items valued under \$50, was for anyone present at the dinner who had bought a meal ticket. The second raffle, with donated items ranging in value up to \$225, was for people who bought additional \$2 tickets (or 6 tickets for \$10). Over \$980 worth of raffle tickets were sold! Finally, \$60 worth of T-shirts bearing the Madison Valley logo were sold (see madisonvalley.org for how you can purchase a shirt!).

All proceeds from the dinner and raffle tickets go directly to the GMVCC, to be used for future community events and to offset the printing and mailing costs for *The Valley View* newsletter (advertising does not cover all the costs).

One attendee was overhead saying, "They should have more of

⇒ Please see *Council News* on page 2

Events Calendar

Sat, Feb. 10th from 8am-11am: **Free Pancake Breakfast**
Bush School Commons

Wed, Feb. 21st at 7:30pm: **Council Meeting***

Wed, Mar. 21st at 7:30pm: **Council Meeting***

*Council meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:30pm at the Bush School Commons building (entrance on E Harrison St. and 34th Ave E). All are welcome to attend.

GMVCC ID Statement

The Valley View

February 2007, Issue 143

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Greater Madison Valley Community Council

P.O. Box 22278, Seattle, WA 98122

Member of the Seattle Community Council Federation

2006-2007 GMVCC Officers

President: Tom Scearce

Vice President: Charles McDade

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Newsletter Staff

Lindsay Felcyn Zaccara, *editor*

Peter Triandafilou, *advertising*

Frank Lawler, *layout*

Ann McCurdy, *copyeditor*

Cathy Nunneley & Jennifer Karkar Ritchie, *contributing staff*

GMVCC Contact Information

Council Affairs: Tom Scearce, President
president@madisonvalley.org · 971-5123 (daytime)
Council business, agenda requests, inquiries, concerns

Valley View : Lindsay Felcyn Zaccara, editor
editor@madisonvalley.org · 709-0505
Article submissions, suggestions, volunteers

Valley View Advertising: Peter Triandafilou
SeattleLaw@msn.com · 720-0488

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Council News, continued from page 1

these dinners!" The food was delicious, the cafeteria had just the right amount of seats, and the many children enjoyed the balloons placed at each table. It was a community in every sense of the word.

A ROUND OF APPLAUSE for all the volunteers who helped make our Spaghetti Dinner such a success:

Lea Baker, Mike Barta, Jay Borseth, Eric Gier, Andy Goulding, Jennifer Janzen, Chris Janzen, Susanne King, Larry Kron, Charles McDade, Cathy Nunneley, Heather Scearce, Tom Scearce, Cynthia Shelly, Jerry Sussman, Peter Triandafilou, Janet Waggoner and John Waggoner.

A HUGE THANK YOU to all the merchants who SO GENEROUSLY donated items for our raffle prizes:

Baas Art Gallery & Framing, Birth and Beyond, Cafe Flora, Catch Me If You Can, Chinoise Café, City People's Garden Store, City People's Gardens Design and Landscape, Fast Frame, Four Seasons Oasis, Frenchy's Day Spa, Fury Women's Consignment, Gentlemen's Consignment, Glow Natural Health Center, Istina, Izilla Toys, Lavender Heart, Monart Drawing School, Oh! Chocolate, Rover's, Rue de Lyon, Santosha Yoga, Seattle Law Office, Teriyaki Seven, The Harvest Vine, The Pregnant Pause, Voilá, a French Bistrot.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU to **The Bush School** for letting us host our event in their cafeteria!

Minutes of the GMVCC for 1/17/07

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by President Tom Scearce.

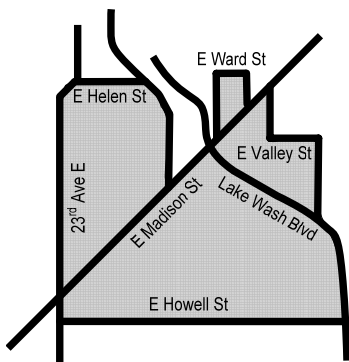
The GMVCC observed a moment of memorial silence in honor of Kate Fleming, our neighbor who died in her home during the December 14 flood.

Treasurer's Report: Jennifer Janzen reported that the treasury had a \$300.00 increase due to some donations. The newsletter was not published in January, as planned.

Residential Parking (RPZ) in Madison Valley: A spokesperson from the City Parking Department has completed a preliminary neighborhood study on the residential grid between E. Harrison and E. Roy, and 27th Ave. E. to 29th Ave. E. The study qualifies this section of neighborhood to initiate a restricted parking program with street signage and additional City Parking Department monitoring. The next step is forming a committee consisting of a neighborhood representative and a Merchants Association representative to design the restrictions with the City Parking Department (e.g., "Two Hour Parking," etc. signs). A two-year sticker for resident's vehicles is \$35.00 each and \$15.00 each for guest vehicles. Sixty per cent of residents within the grid must agree to the final decision. Any Madison Valley resident interested in being on the committee should contact Richard Winsler at 206-328-5449.

Miller Greens Project at 24th and E. Thomas: Three spokespeople representing the neighbors living near the proposed Miller Greens development presented their argument against the Department of Planning and Development's potential approval of the project. The developer initially asked for a zoning

➡ Please see GMVCC on page 6



Where is the Greater Madison Valley?



"It's a Boy!"



Kimberly Larson-Edwards and Scott Edwards (29th and Denny) welcomed **Miles Robert Edwards** on November 8th, 2006. Miles was 8 lbs, 11 oz. and 21 inches.

Do you have a birth announcement you'd like to make in an upcoming issue of The Valley View? Please email editor@madisonvalley.org with your information.

Neighbors Fight Against Rezone

By Ann McCurdy

When over 40 people attend a community council meeting, it grabs the attention of the council. Many of the people at the January 17th GMVCC meeting were there to express their concerns over a requested zoning change at 305 24th Ave. E. Currently a large empty lot at the western edge of Madison Valley, the parcel of land is zoned for 3 single-family residences and is in a neighborhood primarily consisting of single-family homes. However, the lot is only a block north of E. Madison Street—a high-density corridor—and just outside of an “Urban Village” boundary. Seattle’s “Urban Village” concept identifies areas within Seattle that already contain high-density development, and attempts to limit high-density growth to within those areas.

Miller Greens, the name of the proposed housing development, has requested that the Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD) rezone the lot in order to build multiple units—possibly up to 11, though their website currently says “several.” (See www.millergreens.com.)

Concerned neighbors had attended a presentation in December and concluded that the rezone would have no positive benefit for our existing neighborhood. Rallying together, the neighbors crafted a proposal for the GMVCC, which was presented by Rebecca Wiess. The presentation discussed the above points, and also voiced concern over the lack of affordability of the units (originally stated as \$650,000), and the builder’s plan to level all trees on the site.

The council voted to support the proposal (see box below). They also encourage anyone interested or concerned about this project to attend a DPD Early Design Guidance meeting on Wednesday, February 7th at 6:30pm, at Seattle Central Community College, Room 3211. You can also contact John Potter at johnrpotter@qwest.net or at (206) 320-0947.

Miller Greens Project Resolution

At its regularly scheduled meeting on January 17, 2007, the Greater Madison Valley Community Council adopted the following resolution:

Be It Resolved That:

1. We fully support the City’s comprehensive Plan, the need for densification, and the Concept of Urban Villages.
2. We embrace Green Building concepts and designs.
3. Existing zoning intentionally constructs a high-density corridor along E. Madison Street, which we support.
4. The long-standing boundary between this high-density corridor and the surrounding residential zoning should be respected.
5. 24th Ave is a great “family friendly” neighborhood with lots of long term residents.
6. The proposed development at E. Thomas and 24th Ave. will degrade the long-term family oriented quality of the neighborhood.
7. We believe there are sites for this project available within the Urban Village boundary.

In conclusion, we feel the development is inappropriate and the requested zoning change of the proposed Miller Greens Re-Zone at 305 24th Avenue East (DPD Project #3004806) should be denied.

Greater Madison Valley Community Council

Valley Gems



Be Mine (For all Budgets)

By Jennifer Karkar Ritchie

As Valentine’s Day rolls around, many of us will stick to tradition—a box of chocolates and a bouquet of flowers—to celebrate our love. For the rest of us, the hunt for a less-traditional gift begins. To get us started, I’ve created a partial list of local finds that will fit every budget and please even the most finicky Valentine.

On the Cheap: Under \$15

Bella Dolce Bakery & Café’s delicious red velvet cupcakes (\$2.75) taste as festive as they look. **For furry Valentines: All the Best Pet Care’s** catnip toys and/or dog chews (under \$10). **Cookies from Essential Bakery Café** make a nice treat. The day-olds are a steal and equally as delicious (3 for \$3). Pick up a beautiful **card, wrapping paper,** or a **Sweet Petite Journal** made by Peculiar Pair Press (\$14) at the **Real Card Company.**

Budget Conscious: \$15-\$35

Lavender Heart’s his or her gifts run the gamut from gourmet salts, oils and vinegars, to recycled tire bins (small size) for holding mail, keys, or flowers—anything your heart desires. Take a yoga class together at **Santosha Yoga** (\$15 per person/drop in rate). Indulge in **profitéroles au chocolat** (\$7) and a glass of champagne at **Voilà! Bistrot.** A box of chocolates can

be special when they’re premium handmade confections from **Oh! Chocolate** (\$30 for a box of 24). Buy a preassembled box, or select your own favorites from dozens of choices.

Splurges: Over \$35

Select from a variety of architectural, interior design, and specialty cookbooks at **Red Ticking** (\$35 and up). Have lunch at **Rover’s** on Friday and be treated to exquisite French cuisine via a 3-course set menu (\$35), or choose from the à la carte menu. The cashmere beanies, gloves and scarves at **Veritables Object** are luxurious. Prices begin at \$90.

Madison Valley is chock-full of businesses that can meet your Valentine’s Day gift needs. See you next month with another great find.

Madison Valley Merchants Food Drive!

Each year, The Madison Valley Merchants Association organizes a **food drive for Valentine’s Day**, a time when food bank donations are low. We typically choose a local food bank, and this year we have selected **The Foodbank @ St. Mary’s**, located at 611 20th Ave South, across from Franz Bakery. Businesses along Madison Street from 23rd Street to The Arboretum Court at Lake Washington Blvd. will have flyers in their windows with collection boxes inside to collect dry goods. Please, give your heart to those in need and we will all have a Happy Valentine’s Day!

Thank you from all of us at the **Madison Valley Merchants Association.**

Charity in The Valley

As most of our readers know, the December 14th rain and wind storm caused lasting damage for many members of our community. Two funds were set up to help specific victims.

The **Kathryn Fleming Memorial Fund** was created by our neighbor, Janelle Graves, in order to help Kate Fleming's life partner, Charlene Strong, recover from the damage caused by the torrent of water that destroyed Kate and Charlene's home and tragically took Kate's life. (To make a donation, see box below.)

The Landmark Group also set up a fund, which included raising \$800 for six families with children that lost their Christmas gifts. A team of Fidelity Title employees shopped, wrapped and delivered the gifts.

Additionally, 2-3 families that need financial assistance have been identified, and the Fidelity Title group will be disbursing the remaining funds (\$625) after interviewing the families.

Stephen Saunders of The Landmark Group was able to contact a local radio station that interviewed him about the problems - both immediate and the need for long term planning for the area - helping to raise awareness and to bring in donations for the flood relief. Arosa Café was also instrumental in raising funds at their coffee shop location at Arboretum Court.

Said a spokesperson from Fidelity, "On behalf of the entire group, it has been a pleasure to get involved and help out members of our community that were affected by the flood."

The Kathryn Fleming Memorial Fund

Kate's partner, Charlene Strong, lost not only her life partner, but also most of their possessions in the flood - including their house, which will not be restored. She truly needs our support to begin rebuilding her life. This fund, in memory of Kate Fleming, has been created to help Charlene begin this process. As this issue of *The Valley View* goes to press, over \$10,500 has already been raised.

Donations to The Kate Fleming Memorial Fund can be made at any Washington Mutual branch - the account number is 3061486459. Wire transfers may be made using the routing number 325070760. Donations may also be made via mail at:

Washington Mutual
c/o The Kate Fleming Memorial Fund
4020 E. Madison St. Seattle, WA 98112



Kate Fleming, *continued from page 1*

brilliantly in her garden. She'd answer the door talking simultaneously to me and her cats. Each day, she had me laughing within the first minutes of being there. Whether it was a story from the day before, or some ridiculous quote from President Bush she'd heard on the radio that morning, Kate's wit set the tone for a fun, yet serious and smart workday.

Reading in her little recording booth was like stepping into a time travel capsule. The instant quiet, the soft buzz of electronic equipment, and, once I put on the headphones to start recording, the immediate calm. Then, Kate's voice would come into my ear from the other side.

"Myra. Are you ready?" Her vocal pitch and tone were something near perfection.

"You bet, Kate, ready to rock!" My vocal pitch and tone were in need of her direction.

For three and half days, I read a myriad of characters that ranged in age, gender, and nationality: French, British, German, and varying American dialects. I relied on Kate's brilliant coaching to find and sustain distinct and accurate characterizations, and to read the complex narrative intelligibly, in order to sustain the listener's interest. She was the conductor of a symphony of words. Her patience was endless as I'd stumble over a French phrase, or get mush-mouthed near the end of the day.

"Sorry to stop you, Myra, but did I just hear your stomach gurgling?"

"Uh...that would be the coffee and cream, Captain."

Her infectious laugh erupted. "Well, we'll just have to fix that won't we?" Each session from then on began with her tucking a pillow over my belly to muffle the annoying sound that threatened to interrupt our process.

We'd take breaks outside in the garden. Up the stone steps onto the little hillside where Kate and Charlene created a private, park-like oasis, we'd sit with a glass of lemonade and marvel at the work they had put into that corner lot. Kate's smile was wide. Finding this property, fixing it up with someone she loved dearly, and creating her workspace in her own home was truly her pride and joy. I remember thinking I'd never witnessed anyone so completely happy.

When Jane and I attended the memorial service at St Therese, I brought my 15-year old son (and Jane's godson), Wilson. Wilson met Kate when he was younger, so he didn't really remember her. But I wanted him to witness how losing one precious life impacts hundreds, and how we find the strength to simultaneously cope with the loss and celebrate that life. I wanted him to experience a church where an all-welcoming congregation can offer a service of love through words and songs of comfort. Wilson held our hands as we laughed and sobbed. And he lifted his voice to sing hymns he'd never heard in honor of a woman he'd never know but one whom he understood loved to sing all the words.

Seattle Public Utilities Discusses Valley Flooding

By Cathy Nunneley

Seattle Public Utilities hosted a community meeting at The Bush School on December 28th to address the December 14th flooding in Madison Valley. To get the word out, they distributed flyers to homes and posted signs in the area near the "Stormwater Overflow Protection Facility" project site. About 120 neighbors and a dozen city officials were in attendance. Initially, the mood was calm and attentive. The community is very experienced with flooding and its aftermath.

The city's engineers explained that the emergency storm facility, known locally as "The Pond," was not designed to contain the water from such a large storm. The measured rainfall of 5/8" in an hour overwhelmed the storm drain system. The heavy rainfall during this fall season has saturated the ground, and local backyard flooding occurred from groundwater that was unable to be absorbed. Additionally, since the valves to prevent sewage backup were not yet operational, sewer contamination was able to reach our homes. This latest flood is estimated to have affected at least 40 homes.

The valves have now been installed and are expected to prevent sewage problems in the future. Outlines of the "long term" solution were explained. No system currently under consideration will address localized backyard flooding. Toward the end of this informational presentation, the audience became restless and began to express feelings of hopelessness and despair about their situations. Individuals wanted to know what measures were to be taken to ensure the safety of residents before the final fix. Families expressed feelings of fear and panic during rainy nights. Unfortunately, it was apparent that the SPU

⇒ Please see *SPU* on page 6

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SPU, *continued from page 5*

staffers, although sympathetic, have not made an emergency action plan. Staffers suggested that the community call their emergency phone number (386-1800) to report rising water. This idea was not met with enthusiasm, as neighbors have called repeatedly in the past with little resulting action.

One neighbor suggested that SPU could at least clear clogged storm drains in the streets. SPU admitted that they do not routinely clear neighborhood drains, but possibly they could begin to do so. This admission was met with a measure of astonishment from the audience.

Property owners were very concerned about the value of their homes declining. There were questions about the possibility of FEMA money becoming available. Claims for lost property were also paramount in our minds. Although the staff declined to address property values or federal disaster funds, SPU did have claims representatives available for consultation. They announced that the city is committed to restoring property to pre-storm condition.

It became apparent that once again it will be necessary for us as a community to be very organized and committed to help the city solve the flooding problem in our valley. Further meetings are planned and SPU seems more than willing to review all suggestions. Toward the end of the meeting, one neighbor suggested that perhaps the only real fix would be for the city to buy all the valley property, remove homes, and restore the area to its historically marshy nature as new open space. Although appealing in some ways, a current of sadness wound throughout the audience with the realization that this plan would mean the destruction of our beloved community.

HOW TO OBTAIN AND FILE A CLAIM FORM

1. Call 684-8213, leave your name and address, and SPU will mail a claim form; or
2. Pick up a claim form at the City Clerk's Office, located at City Hall 3rd floor, 600 4th Ave; or
3. Download a claim form from www.seattle.gov/riskmanagement

Return the completed claim form to the City Clerk with original signature. Do not fax it to the City Clerk. Once the claim is filed it is assigned to an adjuster.

The time frame for filing a claim against the City of Seattle is 3 years from the date of occurrence (the applicable statute of limitations).



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GMVCC, *continued from page 2*

variance to build 11 units in a single-family zoned neighborhood. A motion was passed for the GMVCC to send a letter supporting the neighborhood's efforts against the current scope of this project. See related article, p. 3, "Neighbors Fight Against Rezone."

Kiosk/garbage cans for the "Temporary Stormwater Overflow Facility" at 29th and E. John: Spokespeople from Seattle Public Utilities have agreed on a standard "Park Department" style kiosk to be installed in mid spring along with the finished landscaping. A garbage can and doggy bag dispenser will be chained to the fixture. Frequency of garbage pickup will depend on neighborhood use during the first six months.

Spaghetti Dinner - January 19th: The event starts at 6:00 PM at the Bush School cafeteria with two raffles planned. The Madison Valley merchants have graciously donated nearly \$1,700.00 in prizes for Friday night. Additional help will be appreciated, especially in the cleanup department.

December's Flood - Neighbors at 29th and E. John: Since the neighborhood grounds were flooded, it was noted that many of these homes now have contaminated soil due to underground oil tanks leaching out. Homeowners need to contact the city to alert someone to address this problem.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM.

Letters

To the Valley View:

Our neighbor, Kate Fleming, died in the storm of December 14, 2006. She lived with her partner, Charlene Strong, in the small green house across the street from the Mad P-Patch at 30th and Mercer. If you worked in your P-Patch plot in the evening, you might have said hello to Kate and Charlene as they walked their dog, Pepper, up the hill, or looked for their cat, whose favorite haunt was our garden.

When the P-Patch was first proposed to the Greater Madison Valley Community Council, Kate and Charlene were not enthusiastic supporters of the effort. As time passed, and the garden blossomed, Kate and Charlene began to appreciate the garden, becoming friends of the garden and its community.

Now Kate is dead. She drowned in her basement when water on Madison Street could not drain and found a route downhill just west of City People's Garden Store. The water moved fast and blew out an uphill neighbor's retaining wall, sending a four-foot wall of mud and water down Dewey Place East. This surge punched a hole in the side of Kate's house and filled her basement.

I walked over to the P-Patch that night, as soon as I heard of the death. The street was several inches deep in muck. Muck also covered the kids' garden and the lower perennial bed. Pieces of the P-Patch—lengths of fence, a tea kettle, and



Please see **Letters** on page 7

Letters, continued from page 6

other items—had floated out of the P-Patch and were now resting across the street, in the neighbor's yard, and on the sidewalk.

This is the second major flood event in Madison Valley in two years. The first flood event almost killed several people in their basements. The city condemned several houses and has been hard at work putting a big hole in the ground. It wasn't [completely functional] when the December 14th storm event occurred, and many of the people at the southern end of Madison Valley experienced another round of storm flooding.

Kate died because the water that came rushing off Madison had nowhere to go. It pooled at 30th Ave. E. and E. Mercer St., blocked by the big earthen dam we call East Madison Street. Water used to flow down the valley. [Madison Valley once contained a salmon stream.] And then the city's developers, needing a place to put the fill from the cut and a dozen other projects, filled in the trestle bridge on East Madison Street, blocking drainage. Housing was built in Madison Valley, but adequate drainage infrastructure was not — possibly because the neighborhood in creation was African American and poor. Who else lives in a swamp? And, perhaps, the flooding was originally less significant as uphill development was not so dense and people didn't live in their basements.

Now, uphill development has been and continues to occur at a rapid clip. Take a look at the neighborhood bounded by Madison, Union, 23rd and MLK: it is chock full of thoughtful and thoughtless urbanization. Thoughtless development kills people. The now chronic flooding in Madison Valley is a consequence of thoughtless development; the death of Kate Fleming indicates the city has not kept pace with its growth. The death of Kate Fleming indicates the city is not managing its increased storm water runoff in a fashion that spares life, limb and property damage. This is unacceptable.

City hydrologists say they will study the water issue in the Valley and should have a report next spring. Will the city then act upon the report, implementing solutions to the problem of now severe, catastrophic and chronic flooding in Madison Valley?

I'd hate to see another big hole in the ground like the one already in the Valley. It seems to me that digging bigger and deeper holes in the ground is a short term fix. Perhaps the better solution lies in restoring the Valley's original hydrologic function, as drainage. Perhaps we should be talking to Seattle Public Utilities and the city about punching a hole in the Madison Street dam so that the flood plain on the other side can do its job.

Kate Fleming died a real dumb death, and I am sorry.

Wallis Bolz

Wallis Bolz is a resident of Madison Valley and gardens at the Mad P.

Photos from the December Flood

Following are photos of the streets near the new overflow storage facility, during and after the flood.



Gavin Gray



Lindsay Felcyn Zaccara



Frank Lawler

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