

The Valley View

Newsletter of the Greater Madison Valley Community Council

Issue 127

February 2005

E-mail: gmvcc@hotmail.com

Neighborhood Announcements

COMMUNITY FOOD DRIVE

For the benefit of Northwest Harvest

"Give your Heart to Those in Need"

Sponsored by the Madison Valley Merchant Association

Collections through Valentine's Day, February 14

See page 3 for more information

ANNUAL FREE PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Celebrating

Neighborhood Appreciation Day

Saturday, February 12th

8 AM until 11 AM

Bush School Lunchroom, E Harrison Street

Please consider bringing a donation of canned food to support the community food drive.

MONTESSORI AT ML KING?

DEADLINE FOR YOUR SUPPORT IS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4TH

seattleschools.org/schools/mlking to fill out survey

Or call the school: 252-2910

See page 3 For more Information

These Are Your Neighbors

For the Love of Her Son

Michael, Helen Powell's son, is now 18 years old. That magical birthday pulled Michael into the world of adulthood and recognized the culmination of his childhood. The end of those 18 years also holds a special meaning for Helen. For her volunteer work on behalf of her son and others, Helen was recognized as the **2004 Local Hero for Neighborhood Excellence**. This award is presented annually by the Bank of America Charitable Foundation.

Michael Powell has a diagnosis of **Asperger's Syndrome**. To Helen, this diagnosis came as a sort of

(Continued on page 5)



Helen Powell with her award naming her the 2004 **Hero for Neighborhood Excellence**.
(P.S. She lives in **OUR** Neighborhood!)

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Article submission, advertising, suggestions, volunteers

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The Valley View staff cheerfully works countless unpaid volunteer hours to bring you this newsletter. The printing and postage costs are over \$700 per month. We must have financial support from the community to continue the newsletter. **Please** make a contribution or place an ad with us. Everything helps! **Thank you so much!**

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The meeting was called to order by the president, Gary Emslie. A quorum was present. The council and visitors introduced themselves. The minutes of the November, 2004 meeting were approved as reported.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The bills have been paid. The printing of the newsletter will increase from 2050 to 2200 copies due to high demand. We continue to need more ads to fund it.

SEATTLE CITY COUNCILMEMBER RICHARD CONLIN:

Richard Conlin, Seattle City Council Member and Chair of the City Transportation Committee was present. Concerns presented were traffic congestion and speeding, parking and need for additional crosswalks. Use of side streets to avoid congestion on Madison has contributed to the need for speed bumps on Harrison to slow traffic.

Conlin confirmed that the City transportation budget has been severely cut but that some traffic studies are being conducted. The studies include the possible reconfiguration of the 520 interchange at Montlake, with closure of the onramp reached through the Arboretum. The study will be completed toward the end of this year. Meanwhile, there may be some hope for a speed bump on Harrison.

NEIGHBOR APPRECIATION DAY: Saturday morning, February 12th, between 8-11 AM, there will be a **free** pancake breakfast at the Bush School Cafeteria.

NEIGHBORS OF BUSH ASSOCIATION: At last week's meeting with NOBA, Bush Headmaster Frank Magusan announced that the Phase 2 portion of the large Bush School reconstruction project had been approved by their Board in December and is now scheduled to take place in two steps beginning June 13. The heavy construction of the parking garage and lot will take 6 weeks. This whole project is to last approximately 15 months.

Architects for the project will be available at an open door meeting at Bush School at 6:30 PM, Monday Jan 24th. They will have renderings of the final appearance of the school and will discuss the scope and timeline of the project, the plans for routing construction traffic, and the impact of the project on the neighborhood. **All interested neighbors are urged to attend.**

MLK JR SCHOOL: Andy Goulding reported that MLK has resubmitted a proposal to establish a Montessori school within the school. The school's official name was changed to add Jr.

COMMUNITY KIOSK: Andy Goulding displayed plans for a community kiosk in the triangle at the intersection of Madison and ML King. (see page 5 for picture) There may be additional locations. We have until April to submit a grant application.

Andy also unveiled the plan for a sign on the Harrison entrance to MLK Jr. School. None currently exists.

SEATTLE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL REPORT: David Alvord, the GMCC liaison with the City of Seattle Neighborhood Council, has been attending meetings. No news to report.

MVFVA/FLOOD VICTIMS REPORT: Flooding during the week prompted another meeting concurrent with GMVCC tonight. Information to be reported next month.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 PM. ♥

The Classified Valley

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Give Your Heart to Someone in Need

The merchants and businesses of Madison Valley are sponsoring a food drive to benefit **Northwest Harvest**. Your donations of non-perishable food items will greatly enhance the lives of individuals and families within our city that depend on Northwest Harvest for their groceries.

Please bring your donations to any business displaying the "**Give Your Heart to Someone in Need**" flyer in the window. Participating merchants are located along E Madison Street from 23rd Ave E to 31st Ave E.

The food drive began on January 14th and continues until **Valentine's Day, February 14th**.

Thanks a bunch to our valley's businesses for their growing commitment to the community and for making it so easy for us to help others. ♥

Montessori Proposal at ML King Jr:

By Joanie Robertson

Martin Luther King, Jr Elementary School Principal Barry Dorsey and other supporters were disappointed last December when the School District notified Dorsey that their proposal for a new enrichment program, which included a Montessori program, had been turned down. The school board was concerned that the increase in enrollment projected by the proposal was too small, and spread over too many years.

However, this may not be the end. In January, Seattle School Board member Mary Bass and Elementary School Education Director Pauline Hill attended the PTSA meeting and listened to the concerns of parents and community members, and the proposal has been re-worked and submitted again.

Consideration of this proposal comes at a time when the School Board and district leadership team are working to finalize a five-year plan for Seattle Public Schools, they aim to close a projected \$12 million budget gap for 2005/2006 school year.

One strategy being considered is the consolidation of schools, which would result in some school closures. Important community meetings concerning selection of consolidation criteria began in January, and a recommended list of criteria is due to the Board in early March.

If you feel that a Montessori education is the right choice for YOUR child. Do not delay! Act NOW! The deadline for the proposal is Friday, February 4th.

Complete the online survey:

www.seattleschools.org/schools/mlking

or call the school: 252-2905

Upcoming PTSA Meetings held in the parent resource room:

Monday February 14 at 6pm

Monday March 14 at 3:30pm



Around the Neighborhood

Neighbors **Andy Goulding** and **Rolande Chesebro** are collaborating on a project to enhance the triangle on E Madison and MLK Way. Andy has designed a community display board and will be submitting a grant for its construction. Rolande of **Chesebro Garden Design** will be landscaping the area.

The **Madison Valley Merchant Association** has begun the process of building a website for their businesses. It will include links of community interest. The merchants donated funds to buy art supplies for MLK students. The students will be making hearts for business windows.

A **shoplifting gang** who has been plaguing the businesses has been apprehended. The merchants are considering hiring off duty police to work as security guards.

Café Flora is hosting its **14th Annual prix fixe dinner for Valentine's Day**. Call soon for reservations: **325.9100**

Continued on page 7



A mock-up of the proposed community display board by **Andy Goulding** at the triangle of ML King and Madison, across from Bailey-Boushay House.

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For the Love of Her Son, (continued from page 1)

relief after years of frustration and confusion about her son's difficulties.

Helen first became aware of Michael's problem when he was asked to leave preschool about the age of three. The teacher did not understand his behavior and inability to engage with the other children. This initial school incompatibility was only the beginning of a long series of educational failures. In spite of her best efforts to acclimate her son to a school's program, Michael was unable to integrate into the curriculum or the society of other kids. Michael bounced from school to school with some interim periods of home schooling to ease transitions.

Helen consulted many health care providers. Michael tried many prescribed medications. They tolerated well meaning advice from friends and family. The physicians diagnosed anxiety disorder, sensory integration dysfunction, developmental coordination disorder, and ADHD among other conditions. Years went by and Michael did not improve. In fact, the situation became more difficult. He developed a seizure disorder. (Seizures affect about 20% of persons with Asperger's Syndrome.) Additionally, the schools were not following the 504 disability guidelines for his educational needs.

Finally, a school nurse asked Helen if she thought her son may be affected with Asperger's Syndrome. (see highlighted box for description) Helen had never heard of Asperger's. After some personal research about the syndrome, Helen felt that the puzzle was fitting together. Following intensive testing at the UW Autism Center, Helen's belief was confirmed. Michael was diagnosed with Asperger's and Helen had a vocabulary to begin to advocate for her son.

An incident in high school was the turning point for Helen. Michael was rebuffed by a girl he liked which resulted in an off hand comment about damaging the school. The school district's "zero tolerance" policy for threats landed him in jail. Helen was furious. After this latest incident, she decided to take action.

Helen began the **Seattle Asperger Parent Support Group**. Initially, this was a small support group whose goal was to bring parents together to work with the school district. When the group's scope expanded, it evolved to become the **Asperger Support Network**. An email news-

letter is presently received by over 600 families every month. The group invites speakers to enlighten them about topics relative to their needs. Workshops help families build bridges and successfully negotiate with school and medical personnel.

Helen was elected Co-chair of the Special Education Advisory and Advocacy Council (SEAAC). All members of the council are parent volunteers that advise the school district about the needs of disabled students. **The district listens!**

Michael, currently enrolled at Seattle Central Community College, is a dedicated and gifted writer. His fascination with newspapers and writing has earned him a place on the school paper. He also was able to intern with the Madison Park Times.

He receives very effective therapy from Molly Kenny, a speech & language pathologist. She works with all age groups concentrating on self-calming skills, social skills, and building self-esteem with a yoga-based method. Michael's seizures are well controlled with medication. At Ballard High, he developed increased coordination as his strength increased with weight training. Roosevelt High encouraged his journalism passion. He is a pleasant young man finding his place in the world.

Helen Powell has worked countless hours to bring a better life for kids and families affected by Asperger's Syndrome. With her son's graduation from high school, Helen retired as co-chair of SEAAC. Other volunteers, trained by her program continue her work there. Helen will use her highly developed skills to usher Michael into adulthood and eventual independence. That's a mom's job.

Congratulations, Helen! And...thank you. 

Asperger's Syndrome is named for Hans Asperger, a physician who first described the disorder in 1944. Children with the syndrome display social isolation and eccentric behavior. A hallmark of the disorder is a child's preoccupation with an interest (such as Michael's obsession with newspapers) to the exclusion of other age appropriate activities. ADHD is a common misdiagnosis.

For more information about Asperger's Syndrome, Helen invites you to email:

seattleaspergers@yahoo.com

Please let us know about **YOUR** neighbors and we will feature them in *The Valley View*. We **ALL** benefit by knowing our community. Thanks a bunch!

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The Valley Views the Past

The Harrison Ridge Greenbelt: a History of Preservation

Some of our newer neighbors may view the Harrison Ridge Greenbelt as only an undeveloped hillside above 32nd Avenue. However, the preservation of this community green space developed over a period of 70 years.

During the 1930's, the city of Seattle was still in the process of paving the streets in the Madison Valley neighborhood. One specific street project involved paving a pathway directly through the heart of the woods from E Denny Way to E Harrison along what is now 33rd Avenue E. However, during the construction, the hillside gave way in a landslide bringing the work to an abrupt halt. The project was abandoned and the hillside remained intact. This is the reason that 33rd Avenue E is not a throughway. The only residence on the hill is from 1920.

In the 1960's and '70's, developers approached the neighborhood with a design for a "Model Cities" low income housing project. The developers' goal was to construct 25 unit apartment buildings on the site. Among other radical changes, this plan called for significant excavation of the woods for a parking lot to accommodate the large numbers of prospective tenants. However, the builders underestimated the negative reaction and cohesiveness of the Madison Valley community.

The first group to protest the development of this neighborhood land was the Harrison School PTA (the now renamed ML King School). The protesting group called itself the Harrison-Denny Community Council whose boundaries encompassed the woods. The Council found much support among the valley residents. With so much support, the organization was able to send a large delega-



The sign along 32nd Avenue E between E Denny and E Harrison which designates the woods as the
Harrison Ridge Greenbelt

tion of residents to the Seattle City Council hearing regarding the federal Model Cities Proposal. During the meeting, there were accusations that the protestors were motivated by a desire to restrict low income people from living within their neighborhood. However, angry African-American representatives countered that assumption with disheartening tales of living within such projects in other cities. They did not want to see another "warehouse" approach as an assistance for low income people.

Appreciating the presentation of the community, and recognizing other problems with the proposed plan, the Seattle City Council ultimately refused to permit the apartment buildings. Their recorded decision was based upon probable geological instability of the hillside.

Once again, the wooded hillside was saved from development. The neighbors relaxed, and over the next few years, lacking a burning issue to rally around, the Community Council was dissolved. However, in early 1990's another threat arose which initiated a new alarm regarding the woods

The next chapter of greenbelt history will be presented in the March issue.



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Around the Neighborhood (cont. from page 4)

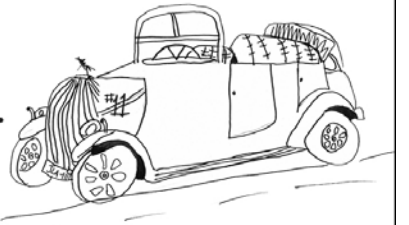
Art Happenings: At the **Baas Gallery:** monotypes from printmaker, Ruth Hess will be shown through February 28th. Also continuing, paintings from Julia Ricketts series "Bird's Eye View". ♥

Below: "Megaflower IV, a monotype by Ruth Hess



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Greater Madison Valley
Community Council
Member of the Seattle
Community Council Federation

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The Valley View is published nine times each year.

Deadline: 15th of each month.
Your submissions are appreciated!
Mail to the address above.

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Next Community Council Meeting

Wednesday, February 16th, 7:30 p.m.

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