

Harrison Denny Community Council NEWSLETTER

MAY 1993

Member, Seattle Community Council Confederation

District Proposes Closing King School

Staff, Parents, Residents Rally to Save our Neighborhood School

by Zé daLuz

Nearly 70 parents, teachers and neighbors gathered at Martin Luther King Elementary May 3 to hear Mona Bailey, Deputy Superintendent of Schools, present the district's proposal to close King at the end of the current school year. The building would remain open, temporarily housing the African American Academy. Overwhelming opposition to the proposal was voiced.

School staff were only informed of the proposal April 28, and the district plans to present it for a vote at the Seattle School Board's **May 19** meeting.

The plan would place 376 students at the school and requires two to three portables (school capacity is 300). King students would have the choice of enrolling at the Academy or choosing another school in their "cluster". The Academy plans to add one grade per year, growing into a K-8 or possibly a K-12 school.

"Parents have not been worked with and we're angry. Our neighborhood has been violated. You're telling us we don't count," said Jo Marie Cunningham, parent and member of the community council.

King School was targeted because of low enrollment - which has been caused partly by the district's racial quotas - a policy which was just changed to allow up to 82.5% of any one race. The Academy's student body is 84% African American - an ironic twist which was not lost on neighborhood parents of African American children not allowed to attend King.

Although Ms. Bailey insisted this was a proposal, not an edict, she brought three representatives from the Parent Information Center (PIC) to encourage parents to fill out a new student assignment form. The printed forms showed choices for our cluster - **King School was not one of them.** They advised parents to make a new choice before May 14, even though the proposal will not be voted on until the 19th!

"You assume we don't care. You're giving us 30 days to change our lives and our kids' lives." - Melba Mitchell, parent.

Since the district is allowing *all* parents to change their choice due to the revision in racial quotas, we asked whether King School would appear as a choice. John Humphreys *could not answer* the question.

The entire proposal, then, was presented as an already accomplished fact. Ms. Bailey was unprepared

for the nearly **unanimous opposition** from her audience. Parents, while making it clear they weren't attacking the Academy, told the district that it is **unacceptable to close King School.** They were also outspoken about the rudeness and arrogance of the district, who bypassed the Site Council/Staff-Parent Management Team while dreaming up this "solution" to the problem of the homeless Academy.

"Where is the parent partnership in this decision? We've been ignored and the Academy's principal's been used as a pawn." - Ruby Love, SPMT parent representative.

After nearly three hours, Ms. Bailey *still* seemed unsure of what we were saying, asking us to clarify the message she should take back to William Kendrick. (Staff did *not* take notes throughout the discussion.)

Ruby Love spoke eloquently to sum up what we want, and what we deserve.

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Harrison-Denny Community Council General Meeting

MAY 18

7:30 p.m.

2915 E. Madison #204

Neighborhood Community Center Discussion

We will vote on our proposal to buy property for a Community Center.



Also on the agenda:

1993 Executive Board Elections

MLK School -- Action Plan



The Executive Board will meet at 6pm.
Everyone's welcome to attend both meetings.

Unlearning Bias & Racism

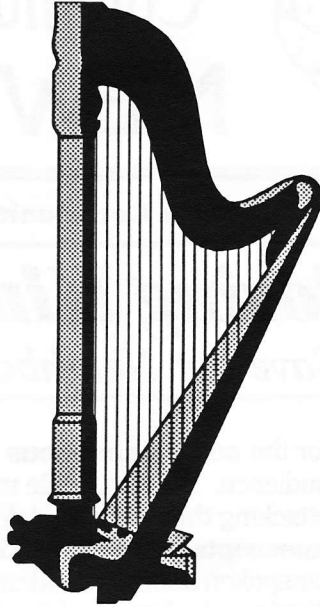
by Dove John

Have you ever felt uncomfortable at community events, on the streets, or in the neighborhood because some people seemed to be biased against you? Have you ever felt uncomfortable about taking part in neighborhood gatherings because you might be rejected for your income level or sexual orientation? Have you felt "invisible" because of your age or your weight?

The Harrison Denny Community Council has applied for funds to start an "Unlearning Racism and Bias Organizing Project" this summer. First we will seek trainers to help us unlearn the biases which have divided us here in the neighborhood. We will then interview all residents interested in telling us about problems of bias they or others have experienced in our community. Then we will have ongoing group training to overcome barriers to harmonious neighborhood relations.

Through this process we will also gather neighborhood history. And, we will identify community-wide issues we can address as a united front. Our community can become a model for the city and the nation!

Everyone interested in joining the trainer search committee and/or the training project should contact Pamela English at the HDCC office by calling 860-8039 (please leave a message!).



King School Fights Closure

continued from page 1

"We want to discuss positive options for our school. We want to strengthen our school. We want to work with you as partners in our children's education. We are willing to help you find the Academy another place."

"We are not willing to accept this proposal!"

What next? On May 6, members of SPMT discussed an action plan, which includes writing letters of support for King School to the School Board and School Superintendent. They will request a meeting with the Academy, and will also ask the Board to include them on the May 19 agenda.

I urge parents and neighbors to write and/or call the Seattle School Board and the Superintendent of Schools to protest the closure of King School - hardly a fitting end after 80 years of serving our community! Please act quickly - the address and phones:

Seattle School Board 298-7040
 Superintendent Kendrick 298-7100
 815 Fourth Avenue N.
 Seattle, WA 98109

Please call the HDCC office at 860-8039 for the latest information. We will discuss a plan of action at our next general meeting, May 18, 7:30pm.

Save Our School!



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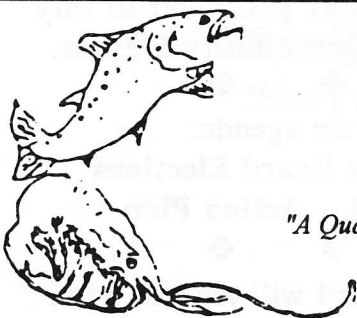


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An Interview with Charles McDade

by Zé daLuz

Charles McDade's smile and gentle nature are familiar to many of us who volunteer for the Community Council, as well as to many folks in the neighborhood. I asked this very special person to share a bit of his wisdom -- and a bit of his life -- with us.

How long have you lived in the neighborhood?

I moved here in October of 1964, and have lived in my same house since then.

When did you first get involved with the Community Council?

The first involvement I had was with the Madison Valley Concerned Citizens during the '70s. They covered a slightly different area: Madison to Howell and MLK to 32nd East.

Then I came to the first Spaghetti Dinner in 1988, because I was happy to see a neighborhood organization starting up again. I was impressed with the big turnout and with the people who had organized the event, so I started working with them. I was elected Vice President in 1990 and have been reelected twice since then.

What are your duties as vice president?

It's a simple job for me to do. I just ask questions and help make decisions, but there's not a lot of paperwork. I also fill in for our president when he's not available.

I help out on all our projects wherever I can and try to make others' work easier, serving where I'm needed. I helped on the remodeling of the Before- and After-school portable, worked with the committees on the Progressive Dinner, and am working on the Reunion Committee, the Newsletter Committee, the Diversity Festival Committee, and the Cookbook Project. A lot of my work involves spreading the word about what's going on here.

It sounds like you don't have much free time with all those projects, but when you do, what are your other interests?

I always take time for myself. I like to play in my garden, visit friends -- my friends are very important to me. I help and support my friends' projects, like moving house, and I counsel them. I also enjoy writing, making art, and music.

Do you think the idea of "community" is getting stronger in our neighborhood?

The neighborhood is becoming better -- people come out and come together more than ever. I think it's going in a positive direction. I would like people to become more in touch, in tune, in harmony with each other. I love to see people working and playing together.

The idea of community is growing -- some folks aren't coming directly to the community council but they are aware of what's going on. I always encourage people to help out any way they can.

People want to stay here because they know the community has something going. New people have told me they like what's happening here. In fact, I know people who'd like to move here and participate but just haven't been able to find a place, partly because it's too expensive.

What do you think about the council's plan to get a community center for our neighborhood?

I'd love to have a community center. If it's possible to get the property we're trying for, I'm all for it. It's right in the heart of the neighborhood, and I think people would be drawn to using it.

Before I even asked one question, you handed me this beautiful credo. I love it -- it's so clear.

I wanted to let this message go out so other people can see how simple it can be. Life knocks us around, and it teaches us to be strong. We need each other in so many ways.

Charles, thank you very much for everything.



My purpose in this community is to build trust, a bridge between the people.

- 1. First, I had to learn to trust myself.*
- 2. I had to make sure my thoughts were never to hurt another person or thing.*
- 3. With that base I proceeded with a clear mind, knowing what my purpose and intentions were.*
- 4. Which brings me to the truth as I understand it, within me.*
- 5. The truth has set my mind free, and my mind has set me free. I have no secrets.*
- 6. I gained everything on this earth that I wanted, using these principles.*



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CALENDAR

Wednesday	May 12	7:30pm	Diversity Festival Committee	Office
Saturday	May 15	3:00-7:00	MLK/Harrison School 80th Birthday Celebration	King School
Monday	May 17	7:00pm	Youth Group Speaker: Andrew Lofton, Deputy Mayor	Office
Tuesday	May 18	6:00pm 7:30pm	Executive Board Meeting Community Council General Meeting <i>Election of Council Officers for 1993</i>	Office
Wednesday	May 19		School Board hearing on MLK Proposed Closure <i>Please call the office at 860-8039 for more information</i>	
Monday	June 14	7:00pm	Youth Group Speaker: Donovan Jackson, Mail & Parcels on Madison	Office
Tuesday	June 15	6:00pm 7:30pm	Executive Board Meeting Community Council General Meeting	Office

SECOND ANNUAL DIVERSITY FESTIVAL

August 1993

*** We are looking for vendors**

*** Sell your ethnic goodies!**

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★ Contact Pamela at 860 - 8039

✂ Cut & fill out coupon below

✓ All fees must be paid by Monday, August 15th.

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Return to HDCC, 2915 E. Madison, #204,
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Writer's Corner

Thanks to both our writers this month, **Alison Young** and **Dale Kim**, for submitting their work.

Alison is a longtime neighborhood resident who's recently rearranged her lifestyle to have more time for writing. I really identified with her piece - it brought back memories of all the alleyways I've walked.

Dale recently moved here from Seoul, Korea, and is trying to make the adjustment from "big city" to "sleepy Seattle". This poem came to him during high school English - where I also wrote some of my best poems (not as assigned work!).

The newsletter welcomes writers and artists to submit their work, which will be published as space permits. Thanks again!

Silenced

by Dale Kim

*Today it confused me,
And tonight it's very clean,
I found the answer in a tear,
Tonight I'll cleanse my spirit,
I'll walk in sin no more,
I've never been afraid of death,
Not like this before,
Yes, as I stare death in the face,
I'm scared and rightly so,
I've never thought of this before,
But I feel it's time to go,
I set outside and watch the moon,
Drawing strength from it,
I'm ready to complete the task,
To get it over with,
I lean up against the porch's rail,
And draw forth a razor blade,
If death is the price for oblivion,
It will be gladly paid,
The razor was of cold, blue steel,
That glistened in the night,
I put the blade to my wrist,
And pulled with all my might,
As the blade left my arm,
Blood rushed to take its place,
And with the effort, I was able to
Keep the pain off my face,
The other arm was just as quick,
And then the job was done,
I sat back for a moment,
And just watched the blood run,
The razor dropped from my hands,
And clattered from my hands,
And clattered to the boards,
And with the blood of my life out,
And I was silenced forever more.....*

Our Neighborhood Alley

by Alison Young

My shadow stretches ahead of me on the pavement. It is old asphalt that probably hasn't been resurfaced since the day it was laid. Weeds grow in cracks between sections that bump up and others that sink down. The uneven alleyway splits the two lines of backyards. I feel I have discovered a secret walkway: quiet, shady and neglected.

Maybe the backyards are like the frontyards. I would have to run around and compare each back to its front. But I suspect the frontyards are for show, whereas the backyards are a true reflection of the house tenants.

A square or rectangular shape is the only thing the backs have in common. Some are fenced to contain a barking dog or toddler. Others aren't confined at all and spill next door. Morning glories have spread from the neighbor's backyard to engulf a rusted tricycle, the child long since grown.

Trashcans haunt the alleyways. They used to topple over and rattle along the pavement pushed by the wind. The new, brown plastic ones roll and the top flies like a frisbee, but the noise is gone.

Alleycats join the trashcans at night. They prowl secret spots among the brambles, howl in the dark and dash across the broken pavement. Squirrels are where squirrels go at night, and dogs are in the houses.

It's desolation that really haunts the alleyways; a certain sense of abandonment. The rosebush left to ramble, the motorcycle that needs repairs covered with a faded blue tarp, grass gone to seed. Back doors often hang on a single hinge and the glass is cracked. The desolation may be momentarily relieved by boys throwing a baseball or shooting baskets into a garage hoop. It returns when their shouts are gone and the quiet resettles.

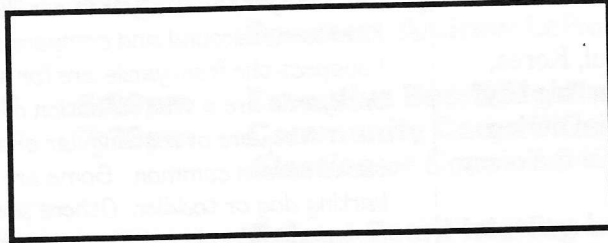
The alley extends a block bounded at either end by the sunshine in the cross street. When I walk the alleyway, I enter behind the obvious of the surrounding neighborhood.

It's normal and healthy for teenagers to explore all sides of human nature, even suicide. But if you know someone who talks frequently of being better off dead; spends nearly all their time alone; doesn't make future plans; seems unhappy or depressed most of the time -- they may be at risk.

If you'd like more information on signs of suicide, call the Crisis Clinic Information Line, 461-3200. If you need someone to talk to about your own feelings of depression, call the 24-hour Crisis Line at 461-3222.



2814 East Madison
Seattle, Washington 98112
tel. (206) 325-1854
fax. (206) 323-0074



This newsletter published by the Harrison Denny Community Council
Mailing Address
 2915 E Madison Street, Suite 204, Seattle, WA 98112; telephone 860-8039.

1992 Officers:
 President, David Foelke (323-4709); Vice President, Charles McDade (325-3218); Secretary, Winnie Coleman (324-2170); Treasurer, Pearl Castle (325-1546).

General Meetings are held at the office the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:30pm.

The newsletter is published 10 times a year. Send letters, articles, notices, recipes, art-work and poetry to **Editor** at the above address. Deadline is the first of each month (except July and December).

Seattle Community Council Confederation
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