



# THE VALLEY VIEW

Newsletter of the Greater Madison Valley Community Council

Issue 150

Our 150th Issue!

madisonvalley.org

November 2007

## Zounds! We have Zumpkins!

by Cathy Nunnely



Look! A Zumpkin!

Our neighbors on 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue between East Harrison and East Thomas had a pleasant surprise this spring. Once the flood waters receded and the storm debris was finally cleared away, a volunteer plant began to sprout along the parking strip. It grew like the proverbial Jack's bean stalk and has now attained enormous proportions. The gigantic fruit of this plant have been identified as *zumpkins*—a cross between zucchini and pumpkin. The zumpkin resembles a pumpkin in dimension but sports the coloring and patterns of a zucchini.

A cruise on the internet unearthed the information that a zumpkin can occur when pumpkins and zucchini are grown within ½ mile of each other, cross pollinating and producing a new seed type. Although these plants were not grown in the zumpkin's block, it is thought that perhaps the flood waters carried the mutant seed to its current home.

The zumpkin plant has been a delightful source of curiosity among the neighbors and is especially appreciated by the students at The Valley School. The neighbors plan to donate the largest zumpkin to the school for carving into an unusual Halloween lantern. Since the edibility of the zumpkin remains questionable at best, the remaining fruit will be hollowed out and transformed into jack o'lanterns.

## SPU's Flood Prevention Proposals

by Shawna McGarry

On October 4, 2007, Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) held a meeting at the Garfield Community Center to update Madison Valley residents on the status of their project to address flooding in Madison Valley. The meeting was conducted in a different style than previous meetings on the subject. This meeting implemented an open house structure with a check-in area and four stations to visit. The city representatives at the check-in table provided handouts and nametags. The handout encouraged residents to visit the four stations for brief on-going informal presentations, to talk with city staff, community organizations, and neighbors at the stations, and to comment on the flip charts or comment forms provided. The comment period has been updated, and is now November 9, 2007. A brief description of the stations follows:

⇒ Please see *Flood* on page 4

## The Chef in the Hat: Thierry Rautureau of Rover's

by Pippa Kiraly



Our Resident Chef

Ah, Rover's. That four-star, prestigious, expensive French restaurant hidden away in the courtyard off Madison, just east of 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue East. But also the little restaurant that could, based in a cottage which holds 50 diners max, and is imbued throughout with the ebullient, generous personality of its chef and owner, Thierry Rautureau.

Rautureau wants Madison Valley residents to drop by. "All of our plates are a la carte," he says. "You can come, have one, two or three plates and a glass of wine, and it's not so expensive. Local merchants should have a way to come to Rover's. Friday lunch, you should be done with your week by then, so come from 1 p.m. to 3:30 and enjoy. The point is it's like having dinner at lunch, and then you just have soup and a salad at dinner time." The three-course Friday lunch is \$35, a few dollars less than having all three plates separately.

It's 20 years since Chef Rautureau came to a meal at Rover's, fell in love with the place, and finding it was for sale, bought it. Though he had been learning the restaurant business since the age of 14 in France, then Chicago and Los Angeles, Rover's is the first restaurant Rautureau has owned.

He is, however, looking around for somewhere to open another one. "It would be fun to have another," he says. "I want to branch out, have a broader spectrum of customers. I want to do simpler fare, done with more volume, more people, and less expensive, more user-friendly. Rover's is a treat, and that's nice, but you have to eat every day."

Rautureau's office is like the man himself, unpretentious and practical. It includes three desks with really comfortable chairs, computers, and a printer, plenty of clutter and a bookshelf, something like linoleum on the floor, and walls painted cream a long time ago. He indicates the wall of framed accolades and awards which cover one of them. "I didn't want to paint the wall, and

⇒ Please see *Rover's* on page 7

### Events Calendar

**Madison Valley Merchants Association.** Wednesday, November 14, 8:30 a.m. Café Flora, 2901 E. Madison St. .

**Greater Madison Valley Community Council.** Wednesday, November 21, 7:30 p.m. Bush School's Common Room (entrance on E. Harrison St. and 34<sup>th</sup> Ave. E.)

**GMVCC ID Statement**

**The Valley View**

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**Cheers**

by Jennifer Karkar Ritchie



Every neighborhood needs a good 'neighborhood' bar, and thanks to neighbors Erin Nestor and her partner Rebecca Denk, we finally have one of our own.

The duo opened the **Bottleneck Lounge** ([www.bottlenecklounge.com](http://www.bottlenecklounge.com)) to provide a local spot for hanging out, grabbing a beer or a cocktail, and meeting other neighbors. They also sought a spot within walking distance from their own home and a space that would let them create an intimate atmosphere, where a sense of community could be fostered.

That's just what they've done. From the moment you walk through the door of the Bottleneck Lounge, located at 2328 East Madison (next to Philadelphia Fevre), the "Cheers" theme song will come to mind; you'll be greeted by a smiling face and a hello, and a room full of other warm, wondering eyes. The big bar is welcoming and the creative cocktails from the dog-themed menu are both delicious and amusing to contemplate. There's the Dog Noir, the Skirt Chaser, to start, and even a cocktail for cat lovers - La Gata Loca.

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# Minutes from GMVCC Meeting of Wednesday, October 17, 2007

by co-Secretary Ann McCurdy

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by GMVCC President Wallis Bolz.

**In attendance:** Wallis Bolz, Charles McDade (Vice-president), Ann McCurdy (co-Secretary), Jennifer Janzen (Treasurer), Peter Triandafilou, Cathy Nunnely, Jerry Sussman, Joanie Robertson, Melody Walker, Grace Stewart, Angie Bolton, Dan Schmitt, Barb Oliver, Kate Thayer, Adrienne Bailey.

**Treasurer's Report:** Jennifer Janzen reported that a decision to print the newsletter at Office Depot as well as print it on lighter paper stock reduced costs for the October *Valley View* by \$470. This means the October issue made a slight profit! Ending balance for the GMVCC is \$14,085.

**Kiosk Proposal:** Cathy Nunnely has spoken with the Madison Valley Merchants Association about putting a poster/bulletin kiosk on a blank wall on the side of Madison Cleaners, at the corner of East Madison St. and MLK. The merchants association approved of the idea; Cathy will identify the owner of the building and seek permission to install the kiosk. Coyote Central will fabricate the kiosk.

**Meeting Banner:** Wallis Bolz presented an idea from Lea Baker that the community council create a banner to publicize monthly community council meetings. This banner would be hung at the traffic triangle at the corner of Madison and MLK. Wallis volunteered to "own" the banner project as well as put it up, take it down and store it. The GMVCC summer BBQ banner cost approximately \$175. A motion was approved to spend up to \$200 to purchase a banner for the community

council.

**SPU Flood Proposals and GMVCC Response:** Wallis, Peter Triandafilou, Charles McDade, Andy Engelson, Angie Bolton and Dan Schmitt met with Seattle City Councilmember Richard Conlin to discuss the city's preferred flood control alternatives; Wallis, Peter and Charles met with Deputy Mayor Tim Ceis shortly after the meeting with Conlin to discuss the issue. Both Conlin and Ceis stated the city is willing to spend up to \$33 million to solve flooding problems in the lowest parts of Madison Valley. The city has offered two alternatives: the Northwest lobe diversion and the 200 block buyout. The residents of the 200 block are unhappy with SPU's handling of the whole affair, feeling information is not being delivered in a timely or complete manner, and input from the community is discouraged or misconstrued. In response, Linda DeBoldt and other SPU staff will meet with the 200 block at the Bush School at the end of October to take questions, comments and provide more information (meetings are scheduled tentatively for October 24 and 31). The council approved a motion permitting Wallis to write a letter to Conlin and Ceis indicating the alternative the council will support; this motion delayed transmission of the letter until 200 block residents have met with SPU. The utility has extended the comment period to November 9.

**Bob Cummings Painting:** Jerry Sussman is pursuing possible locations to display this painting, which is owned by the GMVCC. Those approached so far would prefer a gift, but the GMVCC would like it to be a loan.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

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**Flood**, continued from p. 1

**Station 1: Project Overview**

**Station 2: Option A - NW Diversion and Washington Park Storage Option.** This option diverts 1/3 of storm flows from the NW portion of the Madison Valley basin away from 30<sup>th</sup> Ave E. and E. John St. and into above or below ground storage at Washington Park. It also increases capacity in the existing storage area at 30<sup>th</sup> and E. John. Both areas would ultimately hold 1.5 million gallons of water or 3 million total.

**Station 3: Option B - 200 Block Above Ground Storage Option.** This option involves the purchase of 17 homes in the 200 block of 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> Avenues E. and 2 homes in the 100 block of 30<sup>th</sup> Ave E to create two above-ground storage facilities that would hold approximately 4 million gallons of water total. These facilities would have park features.

**Station 4: Other Alternatives Considered**

Some residents from the 200 block whose homes would be demolished under Option B sat united around a table near Station 2 - Option A. About an hour into the event, these residents demanded an opportunity to ask questions of SPU leadership as a group so all that were present could hear the responses. Linda DeBoldt of SPU answered their questions and almost everyone at the event gathered around to listen and contribute their own input and/or questions. One important issue for the residents from the 200 block was whether SPU could assure them that the Washington Park Storage Option would be able to solve the problem and allow them to live in their homes without fear of future flooding. They also wanted to make it clear that they would prefer to stay in their homes if the Washington Park Storage Option would substantially address the problem. Ms. DeBoldt's answer was not conclusive on this question, though the presence of news cameras and lawyers may have contributed to the ambiguity of her answer. For many who had not expected the more informal layout of this meeting, this centralized question/answer period was a much-needed opportunity to express heartfelt views, concerns, and questions. Seattle City Councilmember, Richard Conlin, who is the director of the newly formed Environment, Emergency Preparedness, and Utilities committee, was also in attendance. Upon request by the community, the comment period was extended to Nov. 9. More information can be found online at: [www.seattle.gov/util/About\\_SPU/News/Current\\_Issues/MadisonValleyFlooding/](http://www.seattle.gov/util/About_SPU/News/Current_Issues/MadisonValleyFlooding/)

Do you have worries, concerns, complaints or comments you'd like to give SPU? Hurry! They are due **November 9!** The contact information is:

Cheryl Paston, Interim Project Manager  
Seattle Public Utilities  
700 5th Avenue, Suite 4900  
P.O. Box 34018  
Seattle, WA 98124-4018  
email: [cheryl.paston@seattle.gov](mailto:cheryl.paston@seattle.gov) tel: (206) 684-4609

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# Voices of Our Neighborhood

By Roz Barnett

Nothing makes me feel older than telling people I paid \$18,000 for my house in Seattle in 1978. When I moved here from New York City in 1971, I discovered a neglected corner of town that felt too good to be true. The neighborhood didn't have a name yet, and many considered it a "ghetto": a part of the Central Area, a predominantly African-American area. The houses were almost all small, built in the early 20th century for people who worked for the rich folks in the tonier neighborhoods of Madison Park and Capitol Hill. Many of the houses in my unnamed neighborhood were vacant, abandoned. Many had been repossessed in the "bust" of the late 1960s, when Boeing laid off half its workforce (50,000 workers, more or less). There were "Keep Out: Property of the U.S. Government" signs on numerous houses that had defaulted on Federal mortgages.

In the pits or not, my new neighborhood was perched above the  
⇒ Please see *Voices* on page 6



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**Voices**, continued from p. 5

Arboretum, with fabulous views of the Cascades and Lake Washington, close to the University and Downtown, shopping on Broadway E. and 15th Ave E., and walking distance to beautiful beaches. After watching friends buy places for under \$4,000 (you read that right, as is, cash only) in the mid-1970s, I felt as if I'd missed the boat, bargain-wise, when I paid \$18,000 for my tiny house. It was a wonderfully sited, one-story gem, albeit what my New York City mother called a "studio house": the bedroom walls had been torn down, and the main floor opened up. I loved it... all 640 square feet of it.

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Now, like many of the old houses, it's been remodeled several times over. I can look out from the new upstairs rooms and see the Cascades from Mt. Rainier to Mt. Baker. I can see a few of the rare old places that are still standing, totally unimproved. They sell in the \$400,000 range, and are often torn down to make way for new construction—houses in the million dollar range. It really is enough to make a person feel old.

*Editor's note: Do you have memories of Madison Valley, old or new, which you'd like to share? Write to us, and we may publish you as another "Voice of Our Neighborhood"*

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## Rover's, *continued from p. 1*

these cover it," he explains. "I come from very humble beginnings. I never got a big head. I tell my staff, the day you think your \*\*\*\* don't stink, that's the day you're in trouble!"

Rautureau and his family live only two blocks away. His sons, aged 13 and 17, so far show no interest in following in their father's footsteps. "I'm definitely not pushing it. This is a very hard business, very demanding both mentally and physically. It's very rewarding and I do this because it's my passion. Deep down, do I want my kids to do this? Honestly no, unless they feel the passion."

A few weeks ago, anyone going to the Mad-Cap Farmers' Market by Grocery Outlet would have seen Rautureau in his signature fedora (underneath the hat his hair is black) demonstrating cooking techniques under an awning, something he has also done many times at the University District Farmers' Market. One of those dynamos who somehow seems to achieve everything but still has time for you, Rautureau can also be heard regularly on KIRO radio in a Saturday afternoon three-hour kitchen show with Tom Douglas, or on KUOW-FM, helping people decide what to do with three disparate items from the fridge; and he does countless fundraisers for good causes. "There are many different forms of helping," he says, "and it's inexpensive advertising—just my time. It's easier than 2000 bucks worth in the paper."

Over his 20 years at Rover's, Rautureau has seen big changes in Seattle's eating styles. He credits the influx of world travelers and out-of-towners who demanded more diversified, more sophisticated dining. He's proud of having been part of this movement, though his cooking has not changed. "Portion sizes are now getting where I want them," he says. It still bugs him to see someone go to a restaurant and eat a 20-ounce steak and nothing else. "I can't eat 20 ounces of *anything*," he says. "It's so much more fun to have multiple plates of different flavors, and if you are short of time, you have all the plates served at once."

He has also seen a proliferation in the number of farms in the area from Everett to Tacoma, and Bainbridge Island to the mountains. "There's a variety which didn't exist then, and an availability of produce. You can almost customize the farmers—ask them to plant a specific thing and next year have it from them. Having been raised as a farmer, I've always been keen on farms and the last 10 years we've seen a beautiful array."

He mentions the 11 area farmers' markets as an example of the change, and the opportunity to find organically grown food, but he's also deeply concerned about growing crops sustainably by using the old methods of rotating crops. "What we've done to food in the last 50 years in the U.S. and other countries, it's insane. It's WMD," he says outraged. "You have a single crop and Monsanto. A field of broccoli and a hangar with a crop duster. They chemicalize the \*\*\*\* out of the crop. It's crazy."

He trusts the farmers he buys from. "We should always ask at stores, even at the farmers' market: Where does this come from? How was it grown? Has anything been added? Is it clean? You have to evaluate. If a store says we don't know, you say, I'll be back when you do."

In November, Rover's is featuring beef in different dishes on every menu. Not having prepared steak at Rover's for 18 years, Rautureau has found Wagyu beef grown in Oregon to be similar

to the famous Kobe beef from Japan, and he's excited about its quality. In January he says, "We're revisiting the classics, based on my going back through my childhood upbringing. Last year we did this and it was so successful we did it two months in a row. We were packed." These French country classics from his childhood will be the basis for the new, more inclusive restaurant—when he finds it.

Rover's has just completed its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary year. "I feel very excited to have been able to survive 20 years in Madison Valley," says Rautureau, who remembers that when he began, the only places with food in the neighborhood were the New York Deli (where Voila is now), the Mini Mart, and Fran's Chocolates, with lots of drug exchanges going on in corners. He was insistent when Rover's began to be known, that it be located in Madison Valley, not Madison Park. "The first ten years were very hard, but I'm looking forward to the next five. Just five at a time!"



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## What's Up On Madison

By Ann McCurdy

**Café Flora** (2901 E. Madison St.) has done it again—it has won an *Evening Magazine Best of Western Washington Award* for “Best Vegetarian Meal”...for the fifth time in a row! Congratulations to Café Flora! Maybe this will convince my 3-year-old that vegetables can be yummy.

**Madison Lofts** (across the street from City People's) was supposed to be completed in November. But, no surprise to anyone who's had a major construction project, the date has slipped until February.

**Arosa Waffle Café** (3121 E. Madison St.) has a new owner! The previous owner Joe Limtiaco will happily be sleeping in, while the new owner Michelle Staples plans not to change anything. My husband, who loves their mochas and waffles, will zealously ensure that's true. Michelle has actually bought both Arosa Cafés (there's another one on Capitol Hill.) Visit Arosa for more information about a farewell party for Joe on November 10.

**Pregnant Pause** is closed and will now become **Sugarlump** (2709 E. Madison St.), a fresh new children's clothing consignment shop. Former Pregnant Pause owner Linda Clemon-Karp had too many commitments pulling her away from the store. Sugarlump owner Sarah Isakson, who used to work at Pregnant Pause (you may have met her and her wee daughter!), hopes to open a lovely, uncluttered space with all new clothing for ages 0-8, as well as children's books, and gifts for babies, young children, and new parents in

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