



The Valley View

Newsletter of the Greater Madison Valley Community Council

Issue 133

December/January 2006

Neighborhood Announcements

Next GMVCC Meeting

January 18th 7:30 PM

No meeting in December

Happy Holidays!



Madison Valley Email Group

Learn about newsworthy
community happenings

Log onto:

madisonvalleycommunity@yahoo.com



Holiday Shopping?

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neighborhood businesses



Volunteers Needed

MLK Jr. Elementary: Help with Bicycle Skills

Beginning on January 13th for 2 weeks

Sara Poore: slpoore@seattleschools.org

One of Our Neighbors

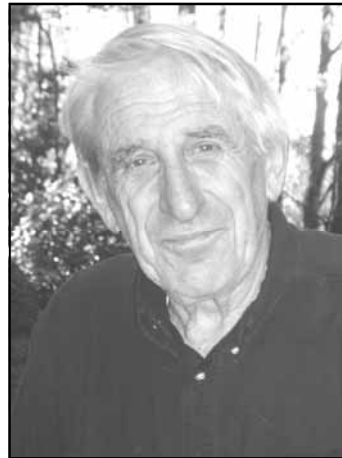
He Teaches His Friends

When he retired from a long career in schools around the Puget Sound, Jerry Sussman thought he was through with teaching. However, a call for volunteers caught his attention and he was once again immersed in the classroom. Fifteen years later, he is still going strong.

In the early 1990's, the Soviet Union dissolved and our country was flooded with Russians, many of them Jews desperate to flee the ensuing chaos. The United States primarily honored visa requests from applicants who were joining other family members. Many of these immigrants found themselves in Seattle and were anxious to begin life again as useful citizens. However, the Russians lacked an integral factor for an independent life: English language skills. Jewish Family Services put out a request for "English as a Second Language" (ESL) teachers and Jerry volunteered.

Jerry had had previous experience teaching ESL in our public schools and also taught history. His grandparents were Jewish Russian immigrants and this coupled with his extensive knowledge of that country's history helped him establish a bond with his students.

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*

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Article submission, advertising, suggestions, volunteers

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The Illustrated GMVCC

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PLEASE support our generous advertisers from the Madison Valley business community. Without their support, it would not be possible to bring you *The Valley View*. Thanks a bunch!

Support *The Valley View*

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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Advertising in The Valley View

We have a circulation of 2500.
Approximately 2 X 3 inch ads or announcements:
\$25 per month
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Contact the editor: Cathy Nunneley
329-4083 or cjnunneley@yahoo.com

Community Council Minutes

GMVCC Meeting November 16, 2005

Gary Emslie, president, called the meeting to order at 7:30. A quorum was not present. Introductions were made.

Treasurer's Report: The coffers are still in the black. The monthly mailing and production costs roughly \$1,000.00. The Spaghetti Dinner took in approximately \$810.00.

Misc. events:

The Seattle Marathon will run through the neighborhood on the Sunday after Thanksgiving.

No movement on the ongoing project of opening East Mercer street end on Lake Washington for public access.

Madison Valley Flood Victims: no news

Spaghetti Dinner: All had a good time. The turnout brought in enough money to break even. **A very special thanks goes out to all the merchants who participated in this event.** Next year more commitment from volunteers will be needed.

Madrona Ravine Revival: Linda Hanson talked about the progress that has been made on cleaning up and planting in the ravine. Thanks to numerous volunteers, the surrounding communities, Seattle and King County funds, and Earthcorps the project is nearing completion. A plaque is to be approved and placed near the boardwalk bridge.

Madison Lofts developer Mike McClure, spoke about the progress. The building across from City People's Garden Store, will be a high-end three-story building with 3,000 sq. ft. retail on the front and twenty condos in the back. It is scheduled for completion in November 2006. Twenty-four parking spaces will be included for the new owners off street. The project owner is sensitive to the parking needs of the existing businesses. His workers are parking along the side of the Arboretum. The project is slightly behind schedule due to city requirements. The project will close down temporarily for the holidays.

Neighborhood Parking: Continued complaints from the area around 29th and Roy have been received about employee parking and traffic for the Valley Merchants. Merchants are continuing to ask their employees to be sensitive to these issues.

Newsletter: Gary Emslie has received initial approval to print the newsletter using the Bush School equipment. It is estimated that this would save approximately half the current cost of printing and mailing.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 PM.

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GMVCC Officers for 2005-2006



This years' officers are Eli Stahlhut, treasurer, Gary Em-slie, President, Larry Kron, Co-Secretary and Charles McDade, Vice-President, Not pictured, John Coldewey, co-secretary.

Neighbors Band Together to Fight Crime



New Block Watch By Heather Searce

Following a number of break-ins and burglaries, neighbors on 29th Ave East have been doing a great job watching out for each other and calling 911 in response to suspicious behavior. Suspicious youths have been seen peeking into windows and hanging around driveways and on porches. This isn't just kids being kids. This behavior usually means they are "casing a house" to see if anyone is home so they can break in through an unlocked window or door. If you see this kind of behavior please don't hesitate to call 911. You may be able to stop a burglary!

A new block watch sign at 29th Ave E and E Republican announces the community effort to thwart crime.

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Dedicated Volunteers Successful Saving Madrona Ravine!

Congratulations to Friends of the Ravine in Madrona (FORM)

By Linda Hanson

Congratulations to FORM for an outstanding Ravine Revival season. Despite early November's persistent rain and wind, FORM members gathered for an end of the season event to congratulate one another and celebrate the completion of its fourth phase of work in the open space ravine adjacent to Madrona Drive. Joined by members of the EarthCorps crew working on the ravine's steep slopes, participants viewed the mock-up of the plaque which will be installed next to the Pine Street Pedestrian Bridge to commemorate the four years of "Ravine Revival". Everyone shared a mutual pat on the back for their commitment and support of the restoration of this significant visual open space area. Although FORM members will continue to host stewardship events to control invasive plants in the ravine, they do not anticipate pursuing additional grant or matching grant funds.

The Friends of the Ravine in Madrona first gathered in 2002 as an informal coalition of community members in response to a call to "Help Save our Trees" from the invasive and aggressive ivy and clematis plants that were damaging the native trees within the ravine. Just over two acres in size adjacent to Madrona Drive, the area is viewed from the historic Pine Street Pedestrian Bridge and enjoyed by the community as important open space and habitat for birds, bats and butterflies.

During the last four years the community, has con-




tinued its restoration work, quickly nick-named the "Ravine Revival", by removing invasive weeds and planting natives within the Madrona Drive Ravine. FORM has greatly benefited from support from the Greater Madison Valley Community Council, positive energy and enthusiasm from The Bush School, a productive partnership with EarthCorps crews, a generous combination of grants matched by individual contributions, and - most important - a dedicated group of community volunteers who have always turned out ready to work, rain or shine.

As noted in the 2005 award letter from Mayor Greg Nickels for the current year's grant, "Your project illustrates how engaged passionate neighbors, coupled with City [and other grant] resources, can result in improvements that provide a wonderful benefit to the community. Citizen involvement is key to building strong and healthy communities."

Despite the rainy November weather, a stalwart volunteer commented, "We always have a wonderful time while getting good work done. This is the best way to meet new friends and learn what is going on in the neighborhood".


Congratulations and thanks to FORM members and to all participants and supporters of FORM's Ravine Revival.



Victoria R. Pearson
ATTORNEY AT LAW


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Open Letter to the Madison Valley Community From the Madison Lofts Developer

In a dramatic move of community spirit, the developers of **Madison Lofts** across from **City Peoples Garden Store** has agreed to suspend work for the holiday season. This move was imperative to the financial health of the business community and a gift to the neighborhood. Thanks a bunch!

This letter was edited due to space limitations.

Madison Neighbors -

I have talked to you all in person, and promised to document the specific steps that MJR is taking to be a good neighbor and to minimize impact to Madison Avenue retailers during the construction of Madison Lofts. As of this morning, we have officially worked through the planning process of shutting down our construction for the balance of the year.

1) We are shutting down construction during the holidays. We have determined that it is not possible for us to accelerate our street work to end before Thanksgiving, so MJR is proposing that we shut construction down on or before November 23rd and restart construction on or after December 28th 2) We have designed our process to keep the street open.

During our entire construction process next year, Madison Avenue will remain open to traffic

3) We designed our process to minimize parking impacts. All visitors to our site are being told to not take up parking spaces on Madison Avenue

4) We are openly communicating our intentions to the neighborhood. This process started over a year ago with meetings with our immediate neighbors and continues today with meetings with groups like MVRA and GMVCC.

5) We are publishing our schedule as it changes.

6) We are building an extremely high quality addition to



Madison Lofts construction site across the street from City Peoples Garden Store. Initially, the activity was cause of great concern as the holidays approached. MJR development has chosen to be a good neighbor!

the neighborhood. Madison-Lofts will be a Class A building (the highest quality possible). It is a brick, steel and concrete building with very high end finishes. You can check out the details at www.madison-lofts.com

All of that said, it is important to acknowledge that we will be the cause of some parking and traffic disruptions during our construction period next year. As hard as we try to be a good neighbors, is just isn't realistic to expect a project of this magnitude to have no impact. We commit to you that we will listen and do our best to make reasonable adjustments to our plans and schedules. What we would like to ask of you is that you bear with us.

To communicate with us, please see:

www.mjrdevelopment.com/about/index.php.

Have a great holiday season!

Regards, Mike McClure



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Annual Spaghetti Dinner: A Fun Time for Everyone

The spaghetti dinner celebrated its 17th year! The dinner continues to bring together a wide variety of neighbors from the community.

Master of Ceremony, Greg Goodell began the program by introducing the children who entertained the audience with song and rhythm instruments.

Volunteer **Andy Goulding** spoke about the sidewalks of Madison Valley project that encourages walking and biking to school.

Susan Gartner, president of the Madison Valley Merchant Association organized and gave away the donated door prizes throughout the evening. **Thank you Susan!!**

MLK Jr Principal Barry Dorsey spoke about the school and encouraged attendees to participate in the MLK School raffle. Winners will be chose at the Winterfest celebration on December 14th. You need not be present to win.

Our perennial entertainers, the **Garfield Jazz Choir** sang and were a hit as always. We truly appreciate the support of their teacher, Carol Burton.

A big thanks to our **MC Greg Goodell** who kept things moving and had a great time himself. **Susan Wilson's** decoration were wonderful as always. Special thanks to **Shana Perina** from **Designed Dinners** for contributing desserts.

Also, a heartfelt thanks to all the kitchen staff, bakers and cooks, grocery shoppers, ticket sellers, clean-up staff and all the other unsung heroes of the evening! The new volunteers really stepped up to make the dinner a success. See you next year!



Thank you to our Madison Valley Businesses !!!

The community of Madison Valley would like to thank our wonderful community business owners. We are grateful for all the support given by them for the neighborhood. We would like to give special recognition to those businesses who contributed directly to the spaghetti dinner.

Bella Rose Fine Gifts and Furnishings: a wrapped gift

Café Flora: gift basket

Designed Dinners: gift basket and desserts

EHII Real Estate: gift certificate

Essential Bakery: the loaves of bread

Fast Frame: framed print

Four Seasons Oasis: candle

Harvest Vine: gift certificate

Izilla Toys: toys!

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Initially, the students were young adults eager to join the work force with acceptable language skills. As they found employment, this population gradually gave way to an older group who wanted to function well in the new society but for many reasons were unable to find jobs. Many of the older immigrants were professionals who did not have acceptable credentials to resume their past jobs in this country. Physicians, engineers, and scientists are among Jerry's pupils.

Jerry finds that all his students have had some English language education in the Soviet system. They know the alphabet and understand the basic structure of English. However, they lack vocabulary and grammar skills and their heavy Russian accents make it difficult for them to be understood.

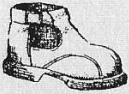
To build vocabulary, Jerry encourages discussion of the students' experiences in the Soviet Union. They have great fun recounting their childhoods. More seriously, the men tell stories of World War II and their time as soldiers in the Red Army fighting the Nazis. Everyone has a tale to tell of life in the soviet era. Education and housing were guaranteed but they all experienced widespread anti-Semitism. Fear of the secret police made any political discussion dangerous. There was no tolerance for dissent.

Life in the American city of Seattle is also a topic of great amusement. The students are often baffled by American liberalism especially concerning the upbringing of children. As with many other immigrant cultures, the Russians feel that Americans are too lenient and that the young are far too independent.

Jerry and the students read books together, especially ones that chronicle immigrants journeys in American. They appreciate the shared experience and the points of discussion it engenders.

After 15 years, Jerry has grown old with his students. They are now all in their late 70's, 80's and beyond, and the group has become an extended family to each other. Children, grandchildren and life's everyday tribulations are shared. In this way, their lives have become intertwined.

The Russians' "school year" coincides with the Seattle district's and Jerry's students put on a great lunch in June to celebrate the end of each term. The women cook a multitude of traditional dishes loading the table with Russian specialties. The musicians play their old favorites and sing folk songs. This festive luncheon is their way to pay tribute to Jerry for his steadfast commitment to them over the years. He has become one of them.



plum

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Please let us know about your interesting neighbors! With their permission we will feature them in an upcoming issue of *The Valley View*! We all benefit from learning about our community.

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