



The Scandalous Scallion

BY MEGAN LEE

Those funny fishmongers are right, about the Seahawks and the weather. Most of the month was rainy! There was like a million days of straight rain and its not even technically "the rainy season," yet. (Although, I wonder exactly how one gages that here is Sea-town). AND, THEY PREDICTED THE SEAHAWKS TO WIN, (this reporter for one didn't believe it). Marketeers foreseeing the local lag caused by highs, lows and downpours were vacant during January, slyly sneaking silently away, somehow.

Some doors shut with little rough-hewn signs stating, "Closed January 1-16," "Will be back January 28th" or "back in 5 minutes" and some were just gone for days. Overall, Marketeers took longer breaks, things slyly shutting down earlier and there was a general sense of January disarray. [Hard fought for] sandwich board signs were erased by rain, knocked down by wind or both. The wind also factored in to taking down the colossal collection of Holiday decorations. The PDA's Jay Harris and Marshall K-L-A-B-O had their work cut out for them pulling down lights, trees and pigs as cold gusts of wind and rain ripped off of Elliot Bay.

The broody, moody weather accentuated the 'locals' feeling of the Market. Despite the overall slowness, showers and stagnation plenty was still happening: The Seahawks were a big part of conversation. The local sports shops reported selling more Seahawk paraphernalia in the middle of January than they had over the last two decades. Friday, January 20, was official SEAHAWK DAY in the Market, banners, well wishing, clothes, hats, and fanaticism. Mack Strong was down here for a Sports Illustrated photoshoot. Wildlife Artist Ed Newbold, in the Economy Arcade next to Read All About It News, displayed his original painting of the bird that is the SEA-HAWK. All month various media outlets were out and about collecting interviews, footage and fodder. Recognizable Market personality Billy B., donning a Seahawk hat, was interviewed by interested television folk from Washington D.C. The PDA's Wayne Porter painted a pig, which put on a platform and illuminated above the FARMERS MARKET sign. No one was more creative than the Bombastic Balloon Bender "Twister" Thomas. Everyday he concocted a new SEAHAWK balloon

creation, and a SUPERBOWL with a moving football inside, uncountable variations on his Seahawk hat and so much more. The excitement only mounted after the big game.

At one rainy, windy point, our lady Bridget was beheaded, the focal fashion fixture on the north deck of the Stewart House is still in shambles. (She had only recently



returned after being banished indoors during the fourth-floor windows and deck remodel.) Miss Fixture is fixable though: The artist says, 'it will just takes a bit of plaster, a makeup retouch and new coiffure.'

The darling daffodil Miss Gildersleve, Pike Place Flower Co., L is gone. Not that she's deed or

away she just got married. The famed female flower flicker is now Marx Gildersleve, in union with the designing dynamo grandson of none other than Groucho Marx! The wedding was beautiful just imagine the flowers—James, Pike Place Flower Co., did the entire rehearsal dinner for 50 people AT HIS HOUSE, preparing, cooking, serving he said he was doing dishes for days! The happy couple then flew to sunny honeymoon in Hawaii.

The Chowder Bandit now has a reported TWO blue rubber bands holding his apron on now. (Do you know who it is? Those who do say AYE! If not go to Pike Place Chowder, in the Post Alley Building.) Hint: There is writing on his truck.

[Tried and] Trudy & Lenora's Barbershop, Stewart House, still stands empty. If the floors of the one of Seattle's five oldest barbershops could talk... just think of the hair. And the gossip, the Market misses Sir Sergio! The Stewart House's Boxer Bob had to get Loren to give him a ride all the way down to Sergio Scissor-Hand's new location on Elliot and Blanchard...but may be returning!!! What about "Bear of the Market Contest?!!" Both Pike Place Fish Co. and the Soundview Cafe have a "BEAR." Can there be two? Or is it time to have a jell-o wrestling competition (or something) to establish an [official] Alpha-BEAR of the Market.

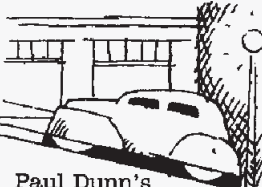
About.com named literary local libation lover Ronald Holden's collection of online culinary dispatches one of the Internet's Top 10 Food Blogs. Holden, a frequently spotted face in the Market, recently reviewed Le Pichet, Place Pigalle, Café Yarmarka and Maximillien's. Read him online at: www.cornichon.org or see his column in the Belltown Messenger.

Speaking of liberal libations, several parties

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TALK ABOUT PARKS

While we watched the seasons change through the windows of our City Hall conference room, the group came to really understand the downtown parks and



Paul Dunn's Post Alley Passages

public spaces situation, and to craft an inspiring vision to realize the tremendous opportunity before us.

Excerpt from Acknowledgments of the Seattle

Downtown Parks & Public Spaces Task Force (draft) Report: Downtown Parks Renaissance: a strategy to revitalize Seattle's public spaces.

Mayor Greg Nickels has a Downtown Parks Initiative to augment his City Center Strategy (see Passages, Sept. '05). The draft Renaissance Report issued this January is the first tangible sign of its existence. A nine-person task force comprised of three city staff, two Downtown Seattle Association (DSA) employees and four citizens was formed early last year. Four additional people, two each from parks and DSA, staffed two support committees.

The dichotomy between the affectless writing of this report which calls for a Renaissance (a fancy word for revival) puts a great strain on the elasticity of the English language. The report is written in a neutral, dead-verb style, like a narrative Power Point. It is laced with tentativeness. Denny Park, Seattle's first park, occupies two city blocks, yet the Task Force authors or its writers were not certain if the park administration building and parking lot took up one quarter or one half of the park. One wonders; why not measure?

The draft report has three main parts: Executive Summary; Introduction & Task Force Charge (which details the Recommendations); and Attachment A: an overview of Downtown Destination Parks, Neighborhood Parks, and Small Public Spaces and Beauty Spots. Attachment A, a catalogue of all downtown parks, contains the only hard data in this report, even though its thumbnail descriptions are subjective and often inaccurate.

"Victor Steinbrueck Park: Improvement Needs and Opportunities: The park needs to be better integrated into the Pike Place Market, to serve as a complement to the bustling Market experience. The park would benefit from the formation of a partnership between the city and Pike Place Market Development and Preservation Authority."

Is the Task Force unaware that the park is within the Pike Place Market Historical District and there exists a partnership with the Market Historical Commission? Later in the paragraph it asks for additional sidewalk seating and "removal of current impediments to outdoor Cutters Restaurant seating". This solicitation for Cutters reveals no one told the Task Force that a Cutters' request to the Historical Commission for signage two inches into the park space was denied several years

ago.

The public toilet is inside the park, not "adjacent" to it. The Task Force asserts "it does not work and should be replaced with better-situated and more functional restrooms." The toilet works fine for those who use it and all of us in the Market would welcome more functional restrooms, as soon as the Task Force can find the money and location to "better situate" them.

The Task Force (draft) Report writers tell us they reviewed the September 2002 Downtown Strategy Committee report on Downtown Parks. Here is that document's assessment of Steinbrueck Park's Character: *Positives* Most recognized park in Seattle, clean, improved public perception, frequent gathering spot, favorite of tourists. *Negatives* Segregation of uses, park well worn with heavy use, inconsistent use of materials when benches/tables replaced, maintained by DPR (parks) but changes require Pike Market Historical Commission approval.

This kind of contra perception of a park we know casts doubt on the observations and recommendations the Task Force makes for the other 22 parks and beauty spots downtown. Some of their problem may have arisen from a lack of data. They say they visited all parks at least once and it is a safe assumption that some of the DSA and city employees actually use downtown parks. However, twice in different sections of the report it is asserted that "most parks sit relatively unused" and "downtown parks are underused assets". What baseline data exists to measure a park's use or under use? The thumbnail color pictures placed on all pages of the report belie the assertion of under use. The pictures show parks occupied actively by all kinds of people.

The full document is available online at: (<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/projects/downtown.asp>). The report makes three clunky Recommendations, which we assume are also only drafts. The three are:

1. Foster a Downtown Parks Renaissance Through a New Partnership between the City and the Downtown Community.
2. Implement a Coordinated, Citywide Action Plan to Improve Downtown Parks.
3. Develop a Multi-Year Funding Plan for Investments in Park Improvements and Operations.

One Open House at City Hall and two public meetings in January have been the total public opportunity to express opinions and comment on the work of the Task Force. Surely, written comments will be accepted. But, how many public ideas will be incorporated into the Final Report of the Task Force is unknown.

If this Downtown Parks Initiative is crafted to support the Mayor's Civic Center Strategy it needs more work before the Draft status is upgraded to Final. This version will add little luster to his vision of a livable downtown with parks and open space. More than words and conditional outcomes of coordination, improvement, or planning are required to make our parks as good as they can be in this wonderful setting, Seattle.

Paul Dunn can be contacted at:
fessdunn@aol.com

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Gary G Goedecke

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:
Marie Ary, Paul Dunn, Larry Fosberg,
Anne Harvey, Megan Lee, John Livingston,
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