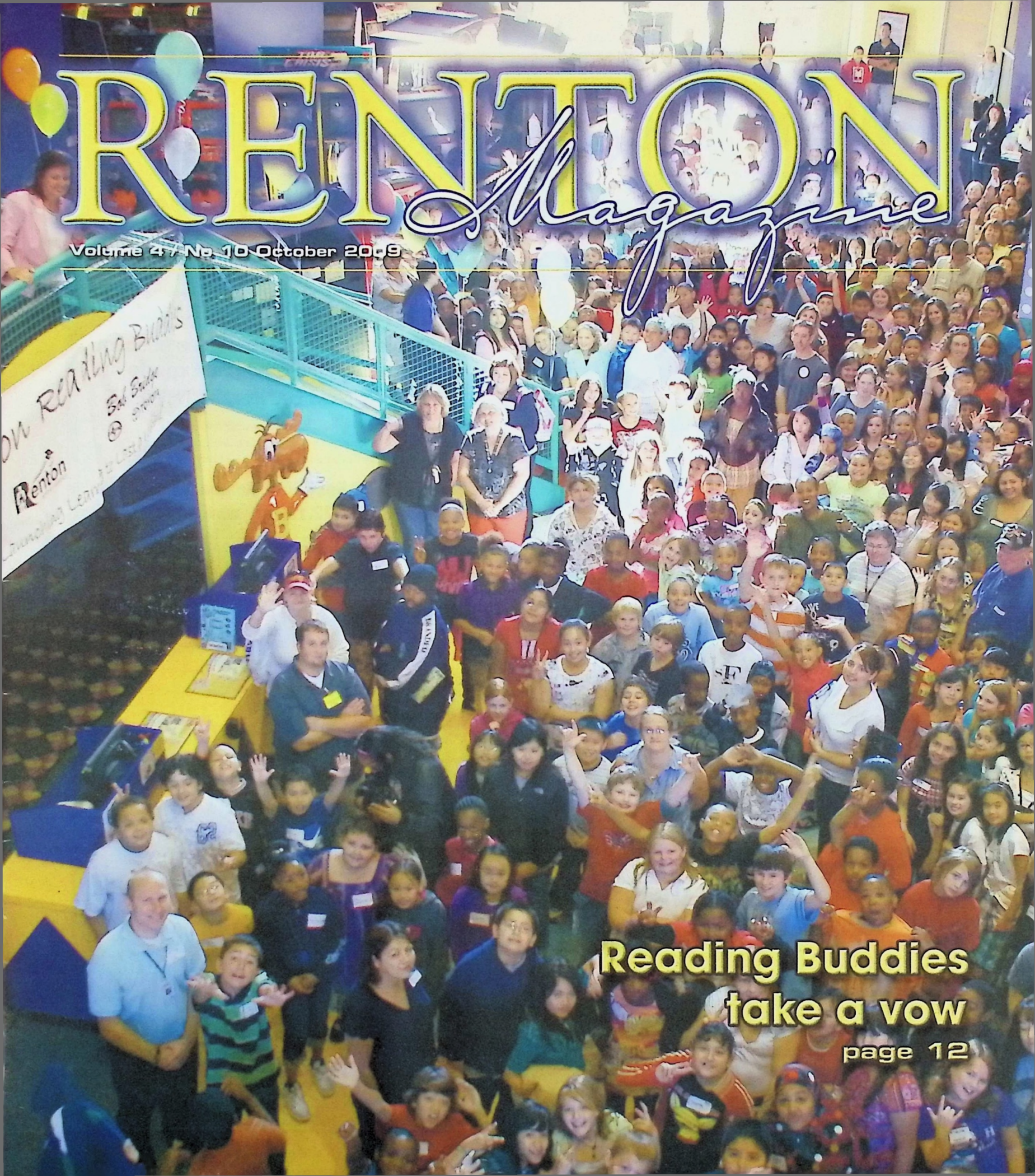




# RENTON Magazine

Volume 47 No. 10 October 2009

ON Reading Buddies  
Ed Sade  
Renton  
Learning Leaders

**Reading Buddies  
take a vow**

page 12



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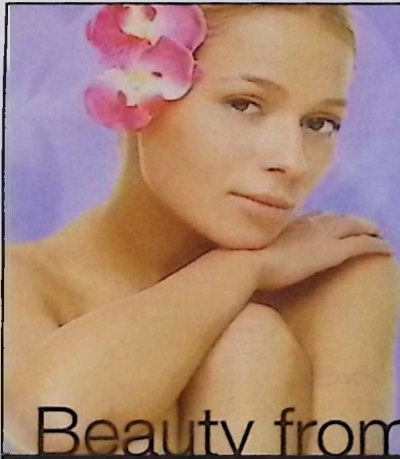
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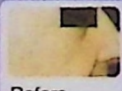
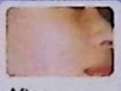
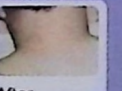
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**F**looding occupies our minds these days. Is it going to, or not?  
No one knows. So much depends on the intensity and timing of rainfall.

It's said there's a one in three chance that there could be some flooding. King County's action to move the Elections Division out of Renton has been heralded by some as proactive, and criticized by others as over-reacting and causing panic.

There's a balance between informing and alarming the public. I don't think we've yet found the balance. The terrible aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans plays in people's minds. But in no way does our current situation resemble that one.

The Howard Hanson Dam can hold the typical amount of rainfall, and officials are hopeful that a current project to fix the leaky abutment will work.

But permanent solutions to the dam and miles of levees are years, and many millions of dollars, away.

People are trying to figure out what to do. Flood insurance seems a good idea, especially since it takes 30 days for coverage to start. Having food and water on hand at home and work also makes sense in case one is stuck for a time.

Information is power. It helps us measure the scope of exposure and helps us protect ourselves.

Visit this website: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/safety/prepare.aspx> and follow links on flooding.



**Diana Kramer**  
PUBLISHER

Attend one of the upcoming informational meetings, and make a plan for your family and business. Make sure everyone in your family knows what to do, and each has a role to play. Don't assume that one key person will be available to lead the family. The team is stronger when everyone works together.

Government is scrambling to find solutions that will work right now. We are faced with a situation that we should have been working on for the past several years, but we deferred basic infrastructure maintenance and improvements. OK. Now we have to play catch-up.

Yes, there may be some flooding this year. It could be serious. But becoming informed and planning now will help mitigate the damages.

## RENTON Magazine

**VOL. 4 | ISSUE 10**

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*Renton Magazine* is mailed each month to homes in Renton, East Plateau and Fairwood. Total circulation is 18,000. Publisher retains the right to reject any advertising. Copyright 2009 Puget Sound Publishing Co. All rights reserved. Use or reproduction, in part or full, without written permission is prohibited. Back issues and single copies are \$3.00. Subscriptions are available for \$25 per year.

Puget Sound Publishing Co.  
15 South Grady Way, Suite 514  
Renton, WA 98057

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**cover:** Nearly 500 fourth and fifth graders streamed into the Family Fun Center in Tukwila in September for the grand kick-off to Renton's new Reading Buddies program. Superintendent Dr. Mary Alice Heuschel (top left) gets the kids revved up to help second graders. Another 500 students were expected later in the month. Photo by Diana Kramer.

## important phone #'s

**City Hall**  
425.430.6400

**Chamber of Commerce**  
425.226.4560

**Community Center**  
425.430.6700

**Fire Dept**  
(non emergency)  
425.430.7000

**Library (Main)**  
425.430.6610

**Library (Highlands)**  
425.430.6790

**Police Dept**  
(non emergency)  
425.430.7500

**Puget Sound Energy**  
1.888.225.5773

**Renton Community Foundation**  
425.264.0516

**Renton Magazine**  
425.271.9300

**Renton Museum**  
425.255.2330

**Senior Activity Center**  
425.430.6633

**Valley Medical Center**  
425.228.3450



# upcoming events



## october 10

### Business Expo and Harvest Festival

Celebrate fall at the Harvest Festival on the Plaza where you'll find vendors, food, entertainment, and fun for the whole family. Step inside the Spirit of Washington Event Center to see exhibits from more than 70 local businesses. The Renton Chamber of Commerce presents the Business Expo. The Plaza Group of Renton presents the Fall Harvest Festival.

Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Spirit of Washington Event Center  
And Plaza Park  
South 3rd and Burnett Ave. S.

Business Expo: 425-226-4560  
Harvest Festival: 425-228-1977

Admission: Free



## october 16-31

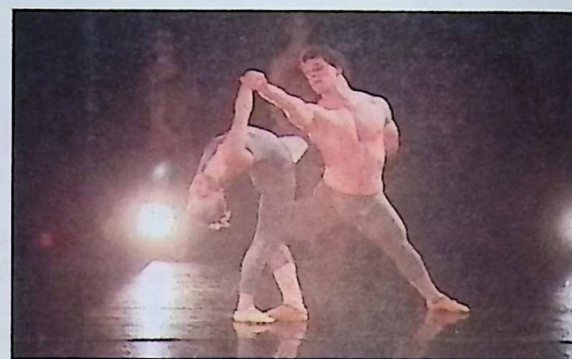
### 'The Woman in Black'

Renton Civic Theater presents a spine-tingler with an unusual framework. A lawyer hires an actor to tutor him in recounting to family and friends a story that has long troubled him concerning events that transpired on a dark and stormy night when he attended the funeral of an elderly recluse. There he caught sight of the woman in black, and anyone who lays eyes on her dies. Janet Cole-Hamilton makes her RCT directing debut.

Thursdays, 7:30 p.m.; Friday and  
Saturdays, 8 p.m.; Sunday matinees, 2 p.m.

Renton Civic Theater  
507 S. Third St. / 425-226-5529

Admission: \$25/adults; \$17/seniors  
and students



## october 17-18

### Young Choreographer's Showcase

Evergreen City Ballet presents a collection of new works by its performance division and company members. Pre-performance party Saturday evening includes wine and hors d'oeuvres. The program will be Evergreen's first in its new Lind Avenue facility.

Saturday, 7:30 p.m. (pre-show at 6:30 p.m.),  
Sunday, 1:30 p.m.

Evergreen City Ballet  
2230 Lind Ave. S.W., Ste. 109

[www.evergreencityballet.org](http://www.evergreencityballet.org)

Admission: \$37.50 (Saturday evening); Sunday  
show: \$30.75/adults; \$19.75/seniors;  
\$16.75/children



## october 24

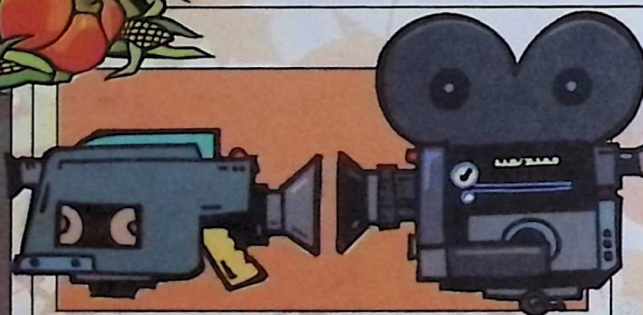
### Boo Carnival

Children ages 2 to 8 are welcome at the Renton Community Center for a spirited time. Children will be entertained by crafts, games, and inflatables. Don't forget your costume and a camera!

Saturday, 10 a.m.-noon

Renton Community Center  
1715 Maple Valley Highway  
425-430-6700

Admission: \$6 for carnival pass



## october 27

### Curvee Awards Gala

Renton's Film Frenzy, a 50-hour film-making competition that challenges aspiring cinematographers to produce a four-minute video using only Renton as a location, will host its second annual Curvee Awards Gala. The Gala will feature the screening of the top 10 films and awards will be presented. The "Curvee" award is designed by the glass artists of Uptown Glassworks and students from the Renton School District.

Tuesday, 7-9 p.m.

Renton IKEA Performing Arts Center  
400 S. 2nd St. / 425-430-6582

Admission: Free



## october 28 & 29

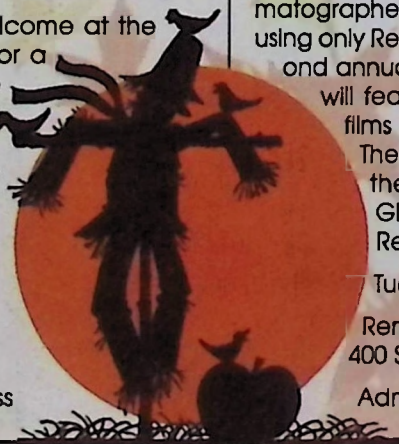
### Downtown Renton FilmWalk

Renton Film Frenzy films will be screened at downtown theaters, restaurants, and clubs. All ages are welcome. Four films will be screened at each location, with the director having the opportunity to present the film. A short question and answer period will follow at each location. 2009 FilmWalk locations may be found at [www.rentonfilmfrenzy.com](http://www.rentonfilmfrenzy.com).

Wednesday and Thursday, 7-8:30 p.m.

Locations online at [www.rentonfilmfrenzy.com](http://www.rentonfilmfrenzy.com)  
425-430-6582

Admission: Free





## upcoming events



### october 29

#### 2009 Citizen of the Year Awards Banquet

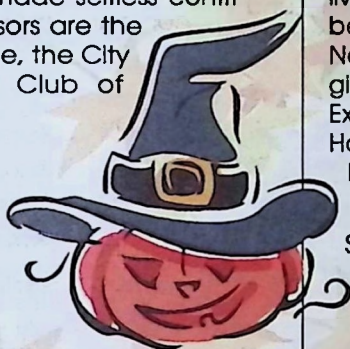
Outstanding Renton citizens nominated by their peers will be recognized at this gala event, which honors individuals who have made selfless contributions to Renton. Event sponsors are the Renton Chamber of Commerce, the City of Renton, and the Rotary Club of Renton.

Thursday, 5-9 p.m.

Renton Senior Activity Center  
211 Burnett Ave. N.

425-226-4560

Admission: \$30 per person



### october 31

#### Whispers in the Graveyard

According to Halloween lore, the ancient Celts believed that on Oct. 31 the boundary between the living and the deceased dissolves, and the dead become dangerous to the living. Wicked witch Naomi Baltuck and her apprentice daughter Bea will give us tips on how to survive this haunted day. Expect horror stories, witches, ghosts, and other Halloween attractions. Not for the faint of heart.

Renton History Museum encourages guests to arrive in costume. Audience is elementary through adult.

Saturday, 11 a.m.

Renton History Museum  
235 Mill Ave. S. / 425-255-2330

Admission: Free to RHM members

now  
playing

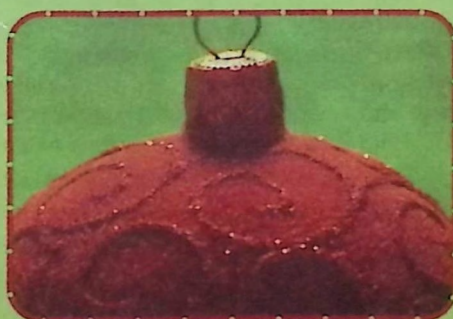
LEND ME A TENOR

OCTOBER 2-18

Valley Community Players' opening fall production is a farce that recollects a night in September 1934—the biggest in the history of the Cleveland Grand Opera Company. Tito Morelli, world famous tenor, is to perform Othello that evening but he soon winds up knocked out on tranquilizers and liquor. Company manager Saunders and his assistant Max find him, suspecting him dead. Max, an aspiring singer, steps in for Morelli. All goes well until Morelli wakes up and the rest is all laughs.

|                              |                       |                  |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Thursday, 7:30 p.m.;         | Carce Theatre         | \$15/adults;     |
| Friday and Saturday, 8 p.m.; | 1717 Maple Valley Hwy | \$14/seniors and |
| Sunday, 2 p.m.               | 425-430-6700          | students         |

save the date



### Hassle Free Holiday Bazaar

FRIDAY, NOV. 20, 11 A.M.-6 P.M.; SATURDAY, NOV. 21, 9 A.M.-5 P.M.

For two days, the Renton Community Center will be transformed into a holiday shopping market, with 100 vendors selling a variety of hand-crafted items. Food and refreshments will be available.

Renton Community Center  
1715 Maple Valley Highway

425-430-6700  
(Shirley or Jennifer)

Admission:  
Free

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# calendar of events

## HALLOWEEN FESTIVITIES

### **Downtown Storefront Scarecrows**

Thursday, Oct. 1 through Saturday, Oct. 31

Families are invited to stroll the streets of downtown Renton to enjoy scarecrows and festive fall decorations in business windows and storefronts.

Downtown Renton / 425-430-6700

Admission: Free

### **'Olde' Fashioned Halloween Party**

Saturday, Oct. 31, 1-4 p.m.

Parents and their children are welcome to downtown Renton businesses for safe tricks and treats. Look for signs in the windows and doorways of participating businesses. Continue the celebration at the Olde Fashioned Halloween Party in Main Street Square for activities, costume designing, games, and fun for families.

Main Street Square, 200 block of Main Avenue S.

425-255-6078 (Mary)

Admission: Free

## LOCAL ENTERTAINMENT

### **Murder Play (one-act)**

Sunday, Oct. 25 and Monday, Oct. 26, 7:30 p.m.

In the first of Renton Civic Theater's bonus productions for the 2009-2010 year, characters Peter and Robyn wake up in the morning after a dinner party at the home of their friends and employers, David and Jane Valentine. David appears to be dead, and Jane calmly announces she killed him. Is it murder or a practical joke?

Sunday and Monday, 7:30 p.m.

Renton Civic Theater, 507 S. Third St.

425-226-5529

Admission: \$15 per person, includes dessert

### **Rainier Symphony: Classical Concert One**

Saturday, Oct. 17, 7:30 p.m., Renton IKEA PAC

Sunday, Oct. 18, 3 p.m., Foster Performing Arts Center

Join the Rainier Symphony and conductor David Waltman for the first classical concert of the season. The performance will include the Stravinsky

"Firebird Suite" and Shostakovich Symphony No. 5.

Renton IKEA Performing Arts Center  
400 S. 2nd St.

Foster Performing Arts Center  
4242 S. 140th St. (Tukwila)

206-781-5618

Admission: \$15/adults; \$10/seniors, children 12 and under are free

### **Northwest Vocal Project**

Saturday, Oct. 3, 7 p.m.

This group of 30 talented young men presents an engrossing repertoire of styles ranging from gospel and jazz to a cappella and barbershop. One night only.

Renton IKEA Performing Arts Center  
400 S. 2nd St.

360-888-9551

Admission: \$9.99-\$25/adults; \$9.99-\$19.99/seniors; \$5/students

www.northwestvocalproject.com

### **StoryBook Theater presents Snow White**

Saturday, Oct. 24, 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.; Sunday, Oct. 25, 1 and 3 p.m.

StoryBook Theater, a theater group presenting 55-minute plays ideal for age 3 to 10, takes children on the adventure of Snow White and the seven dwarfs (played by three silly actors). No matter how hard she tries, poor Snow White can't seem to please the Queen. What can the dwarfs do to help keep Snow White safe and out of the Queen's way?

Carco Theatre, 1717 Maple Valley Highway

425-827-3123

Admission: \$9/general admission

### **Seattle Philharmonic Orchestra**

Sunday, Oct. 25, 3 p.m.

Allied Arts of Renton presents its annual concert featuring the Seattle Philharmonic Orchestra, an opportunity to enjoy a professional orchestra at low cost.

Renton IKEA Performing Arts Center  
400 S. 2nd St.

206-772-6528

Admission: \$8/adults; \$5/seniors; \$3/students under 18

## COMMUNITY EVENT

### **Renton Shredathon**

Saturday, Oct. 3, 9 a.m.-noon

Co-sponsors City of Renton, Renton Police Department, Sam's Club, and Iron Mountain present an opportunity for local residents to shred those unwanted but private documents. Residents are invited to bring up to five boxes containing paper documents. Donations of canned goods will be accepted for the Renton Food Bank.

Sam's Club parking lot, 901 S. Grady Way

425-430-7520

Fee: Free

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

### **Renton History Museum**

235 Mill Ave S.

425-255-2330

### **Mixed Beans Soup**

Saturday, Oct. 3, 11 a.m.

Karol Brown will present a multicultural and multigenerational event about beans, a nutritious staple in the diets of people around the world. Brown serves up a delicious helping of comfort stories with a pinch of nutrition education, spiced up with multicultural folktales, a sprinkle of poetry, and garnished with songs. For elementary through adult audiences.

Admission:

RHM members and 8 and under are free

### **Trial by Fork: Formal Victorian Dining Demystified**

Tuesday, Oct. 13, 5 p.m.

Historian Tames Alan brings to life the Victorian era when a formal dinner setting easily became a trial by fork. Tames will explain the mysteries of a formal 12-course Victorian dinner, from the menu and place setting to what dishes were served with each course. For high school through adult audiences.

Admission: RHM members free

### **Free Museum Tours**

Third Saturday of the month, 11 a.m.

Tours at the Renton History Museum are appro-

priate for elementary students through adult. No reservation is necessary, unless there are more than five people in the group. To reserve for larger parties, call the museum one day in advance.

Admission: Free

## SENIOR EVENTS

### **Renton Senior Activity Center**

211 Burnett Ave. N.

425-430-6633

### **Oktoberfest Dance**

Friday, Oct. 16, 2:45-4:30 p.m.

Renton Senior Activity Center invites seniors to dance, meet new friends, and welcome the new fall season. Appetizers will be available and The Good Times Band will entertain.

Admission: \$4

### **Happy Birthday 80 years and Older**

Wednesday, Oct. 21, 11:30 a.m.

If you're 80 or over, the Renton Senior Activity Center has a party just for you and your peers. Come sit at a decorated table, have some birthday cake, and meet some new friends in your age group. Guest sign-in is at the front desk.

Admission: \$3 (donation for lunch)

### **Halloween Luncheon**

Friday, Oct. 30, 11:15 a.m. (costume parade); 11:30 a.m. (lunch)

Here's a chance for fans of Halloween to dress up in their best costume and vie for a prize. Cupcakes will be available for dessert.

Admission: \$3 (donation for 60 and over); \$6 (charge under 60)

### **Holiday Craft Bazaar**

Saturday, Nov. 7, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Seniors will present a variety of their handmade crafts, music, and food for purchase. Those 50 and over can reserve a table for their crafts. Table locations will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. Table registration is ongoing.

Admission: Free

Table: \$10 per 6 foot table



## They just don't make 'em like they used to

I was privileged to officiate at the memorial service for Daisy Nelson. Daisy died just short of her 104th birthday. It was her body that gave out on her, not her mind. Her mind was sharp right up until a few days before her death. So sharp that she could remember the names of her five children, 18 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren and 14 great-great-grandchildren.

I want to share Daisy's story with you because I think it is so important that we learn from our elders so that we can pass on their wisdom to our children and our children's children. This is increasingly clear to me as I continue to bury a great generation of people.

Daisy clearly stood on three fundamental principles — faith, family and frugality. Daisy had faith that came out of the experience of tough times. She grew up in Michigan during a time of horse-drawn buggies and outdoor plumbing.

Eventually the family would move to North Dakota, where her little sister Gertie would join the family. Daisy would go on to graduate from high school and then on to teacher's college. She married Orvin Nelson on Feb. 15, 1927. They would bring five children into this world.

When the war broke out, the family picked up stakes in North Dakota, loaded up their 16-foot travel trailer with built-in bunks for the children and headed out to Renton with the hope of finding work. Orvin was a plasterer. That 16-foot trailer would serve as the family home.

This is the stuff that faith is built upon — the discovery that God will provide a way even when no way seems evident. Daisy had the kind of faith I like: She lived it, she didn't preach it. It gave her tremendous reassurance and the basic belief that no matter what she might face, God would see her through to the other side.



DAISY NELSON AND HER GREAT-GREAT GRANDAUGHTER

Orvin and Daisy would become charter members of Lakeridge Lutheran Church, where they celebrated their 25th and 50th wedding anniversaries. Orvin died in 1979.



Kirby Unti  
COLUMNIST

Family was the second principle that Daisy built her life on. Daisy knew that family is where we gain our identity, learn our values, and turn to in good times and bad. Daisy was the prime mover in seeing to it that the whole family gathered twice a year. August was the Nelson family picnic, and December was the lefse baking party. No excuses accepted.

Far too often families stop being families when the matriarch passes. It isn't always easy to be family, but Daisy knew down in the depth of her bones that difficulty makes the getting together that much more important.

Finally Daisy stood for frugality. Let's just say she could stretch a dollar. Daisy, like many in her generation, learned to be grateful for what she had rather than focusing on what she was going without. Her needs were simple and her expectations reasonable. Being frugal meant not only did she have enough to take care of her own, she always found a way to give away something extra to a person whose needs were greater than hers. Compassion and generosity often are first cousins of frugality.

My friends, take every opportunity you have to learn from your elders faith, family and frugality. It is hard to argue with 104 years of wisdom.

*Renton Magazine columnist Kirby Unti is pastor of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in the Renton Highlands.*

# ~~Small~~ Business

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\*Only available at the new Renton branch. Business Starter Pack credits are \$25 with one business checking account, \$50 with one business checking account and online banking or \$75 with one business checking account, online banking and bill pay. Limit of one credit per business and offer applies to new business account only. Promotion ends October 31, 2009.

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# Scarecrows, pumpkins and families populate fall harvest festival

BY DANA E. NEUTS

What do scarecrows, pumpkins and the Friends of King County Animal Control have in common? They will be a part of the eighth annual Fall Harvest Festival at the Piazza in Renton on Saturday, Oct. 10 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Organized by volunteers from Piazza Renton, a local nonprofit group, the event includes a mix of family-friendly activities and more than 40 merchant booths.

One popular activity is the festival's scarecrow decorating contest. Participants, including individuals and businesses, are invited to bring scarecrows to the festival for judging. To help participants gather ideas, McLendon Hardware hosts a free build-a-scarecrow workshop in September. Another favorite activity is the pumpkin decorating contest. Piazza Renton gets 300 pumpkins donated and puts together pumpkin decorating kits so children and families can create a fun fall masterpiece to take home.

Free to attendees, the annual festival gives local merchants, artists and crafters the opportunity to display their wares. Among this year's participants will be Marsha Stanley-Black with hand-knotted freshwater pearl jewelry, Stefeny Anderson with photography and jewelry, Friends of King County Animal Control, and Linda Hays with Forest Fairy.

Hays, who sells all-natural homemade breads and cookies, is participating in the fall festival for the second time. As a regular participant in the

## RENTON FALL HARVEST FESTIVAL

Piazza in Renton  
corner of 3rd and Burnell

Saturday, Oct. 10 / 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Free admission

Scarecrow contest, pumpkin decorating,  
merchants, arts, crafts and more

More info: [www.piazzarenton.com](http://www.piazzarenton.com)  
or call Meri England at 425-228-1977

## RENTON BUSINESS EXPO

Spirit of Washington Events Center  
233 Burnell Ave. S.

Saturday, Oct. 10 / 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Free admission

70-plus local businesses, giveaways  
and more

More info: [www.gorenton.com](http://www.gorenton.com)  
or call Kellie Jordan at  
425-226-4560

Renton Farmers' Market, Hays was invited to join the festival last year. She had such a good experience meeting different people and bartering with other vendors that she decided to try it again this year.

"It's a good crowd but different from the Farmers' Market," Hays says. "The crafters are a fun addition."

To complement the festival, the Renton Chamber of Commerce is hosting its annual business expo at the Spirit of Washington Event Center next door. With more than 70 chamber members participating, visitors can sign up for giveaways while learning about local businesses and organizations including First Financial Mortgage, Evergreen Place Retirement, Renton Technical College, The Lodge at Eagle Ridge, Vince's Coffee House and American Classic Homes.

For the third year, Sam's Club has agreed to be the expo's main sponsor.

"We're excited about it because it is a big event in the center of Renton. It brings small businesses together, and it shows that we're here to support small business," says Carlton Kohn, member marketing sales manager for Sam's Club. "Every year it gets better and better."

Jennifer Davis Hayes, community development program manager for the City of Renton, estimates that the combined events draw between 500 and 700 people each year.

"Events like this bring people downtown to explore and enjoy with their families and friends," Hayes says. "They get the opportunity to discover unique retailers, restaurants and other local businesses."



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Windermere



# A decade later, microchip reunites cat and owner

BY ANDREW FICKES

What can a microchip the size of a grain of rice do for a 16-year-old cat gone missing for 10 years?

Bring it back to its rightful owner, that's what.

When Dan Morris had a microchip injected into his Siamese cat named Pyewacket more than a decade ago, he never thought it would be the cat's ticket home. His soon-to-be-wife at the time had given the cat to him as a housewarming gift.

When the married couple moved to Renton, the cat hung with them for three weeks before it wandered off. Morris tried hard to find the cat, to no avail.

"I spent four to five months visiting shelters and vets," he says. "I had posters all over Newcastle and down into Renton."

Morris and his wife, Faina Zaslavsky, say it feels wonderful to have the cat returned to them.

"It's nice to get our family back together," says Morris.

They are grateful to Remzi Ateser, an animal lover with a big heart, along with wife Nayeli Ramos.

Ateser and Ramos, who had lost

their flamepoint Siamese, Ivory, to a fire two years ago, found Pyewacket in the 500 block of Wells Avenue. They found out later it was the cat's 16th birthday.

Pyewacket had emerged from the dark, and the couple fell in love with him instantly, giving him a name.

"He was Freddie to me," Ateser says. "My wife and I realized he was beyond slender. We ran back to our car to get food and water and fed him right there on the street."

Ateser took the Siamese to the Renton Animal Health Care Center on Rainier Avenue to have it examined. Vets performed blood tests, determined the cat had a hyperthyroid condition (causing it to lose weight), and prescribed medication for an injury to its nose, among other things.

"He was ill-kept, malnourished, and appeared dehydrated," says Erin Lowry, a licensed vet tech. "He also had severe periodontal disease and external parasites. He had had a hard life."

Ateser volunteered to cover the medical costs.

"This experience gave me faith in people again," says Lowry. "When you hear this story it renews your faith that there're good people out there. We see very sad things in our field, but this is a happy story."

Animal Health Care Center decided to scan the cat and discovered a microchip linked to Avid, a national microchip company. A call to their East coast office led



RENTON MAGAZINE / ANDREW FICKES

Dan Morris and Pyewacket. Microchips Cost \$25-\$85. Register your address with family clinic and national microchip database. Keep files updated if you move.

Lowry to a clinic in the Bellevue area. After hours of work, she finally was directed to Morris.

When Morris was told his cat had been found, he could not believe his ears. Very soon Ateser and his wife reunited Pyewacket with Morris and his wife.

"We were sad and happy for them at the same time," says Ateser. "We were ready to keep him, but it wasn't the right thing to do."

Morris is now enjoying the company of his cat. And Pyewacket is enjoying being home again. Morris says he knew it was Pyewacket by the visible cut on his right ear.

"He responds to Pyewacket," he says. "He's getting back to recovery."

The cat weighed 13.5 pounds when he was lost. He's now eight to nine pounds.

Now that Pyewacket is home, Morris is making sure the cat stays indoors.

"He's done being outside," he says.

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*Creating Beautiful Smiles.*

## Permanent home represents new era for Evergreen City Ballet

Everything is coming to the forefront to help us and to recognize that we bring to the community a high level of education and performance. We now have a very professional, state-of-the-art facility to educate our youth and to grow as an organization.

~ Kevin Kaiser, Evergreen City Ballet artistic director

BY DANA E. NEUTS

After spending the past three-and-a-half years in the old McLendon Hardware building, Evergreen City Ballet has a new home – a 7,600 square foot building in the Cedar River office complex at 2230 Lind Avenue Southwest. The new building features three studios, two of which join together to form a black box theater seating 125, office space, storage and a lobby area where parents can watch their children practice.

The search for a permanent home began earlier this year. Kevin Kaiser, artistic director, says they considered two other facilities prior to finding this location.

"It hit us right away that this was going to be the new home to Evergreen City Ballet," Kaiser remembers.

Owned by Tarragon, the office complex sits off Lind Avenue in a quiet, peaceful setting surrounded by wetlands. Complete with casual outdoor seating and fountain, Kaiser said the location was ideal for the professional ballet company. Kaiser and his team have spent the past seven months planning the design of the space and the move, which took place in late August. Evergreen City Ballet unveiled its new studios at a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house celebration the first week of September.

Andi Bryndza, ballet mistress, is excited about the new location which she describes as clean, finished and professional.

"The No. 1 thing is that the new studio is a much more welcoming space," she says. "It will better show families and the community the work we are doing."

Kaiser says the owner of the McLendon Hardware property was great to work with and understanding about the need for a move. The issue was the ballet company's inability to get a long-term lease to ensure stability.

"It worked well for us while we were there," Kaiser explains. "This facility, however, takes us to a whole new level with the city of Renton and surrounding areas."

As Kaiser, Bryndza and ECB board members and volunteers prepared for the move, they were overwhelmed with community support from the city, Wizards of the Coast, 4Culture, Sam's Club and other local organizations that contributed time, talent and funding to help ECB reach its goals.

"Everything is coming to the forefront to help us and to recognize that we bring to the community a high level of education and performance," Kaiser says. "We now have a very professional, state-of-the-art facility to educate our youth and to grow as an organization."

Evergreen City Ballet will celebrate its new studio with its Oct. 17-18 Young Choreographers Showcase, in which students and company members choreograph and plan the entire performance. Two shows are planned for the spring. More information is available on the Web site, [www.evergreencityballet.org](http://www.evergreencityballet.org).

While the majority of the project has been funded already, ECB is still looking for a sponsor to help pay for a retractable wall with an estimated cost of \$23,000. The wall will separate two of the ballet studios for daily use, but open during performances to transform the studios into a black box theater with the audience on one side and the stage on the other. Until a sponsor is found, the studios are separated with a heavy, fabric curtain. More information is available from Kaiser at 425-228-6800.



# From Hitler Youth to redemption:

## Renton novelist's journey from tempest to peace

BY DAVID SUFFIA

*I* first ran into Claus Hackenberger in a produce market in the Renton Highlands. We fell into conversation and discovered we are both writers. We also both had the same major heart operation - aortic valve replacement - he in his late 70s, me in my early 60s.

There the similarities ended and I learned about Claus Hackenberger's unusual life journey - from Hitler Youth member to German soldier, to post-war labor camp inmate, to spiritual redemption and life in the United States.

Now 82, a Renton resident and the author of three novels, Hackenberger was born in Germany. At 10, he joined the Hitler Youth organization, "because it was just understood that you belonged when you were a boy."

Hackenberger says German school children were indoctrinated into a belief in Hitler's infallibility, and boys were taught it was an honor to die for the dictator.

At 16 he was drafted into the German air defense system and stationed near Peenemunde, the site of Nazi Germany's top secret rocket and guided missile works. While there, "I shook hands with Wernher von Braun," the head of Hitler's rocket program and later to become the linchpin of the United States' post-war rocket program.

"I shot down an American bomber that was returning from the bombing of Stettin," Hackenberger recalls. "It had already been hit and was smoking. After I shot it down, I was very distraught. German cities were in ashes. That's when my belief in Hitler began to crack."

### Prisoner of war

He was 18 in 1945 when the war ended, and he was taken prisoner. He was taken to a prisoner-of-war camp at Bad Kreuznach, where "there were 70,000 kids like me. It was an infamous hunger camp, and the line of litters never stopped. They hardly fed us and I weighed 85 pounds when I was turned over to the French and taken to a work camp at Rennes ...

"The guards were Auschwitz survivors and they were angry at us and rightly so. They were kids just like us. At least they gave us tents to sleep in and food."

He says it was in the French camps that he learned of the horrors the Nazis had perpetrated.

"I didn't know about the Holocaust until someone brought a French newspaper into the camp that had pictures of bodies and the Nazi death camps."

Hackenberger worked at the camp in Rennes and another camp in France until he escaped on Christmas in 1947.

"I had been working in a coal mine and I buried myself in a coal car and escaped back to Germany."

Reunited with his family, Hackenberger says he had come to realize that Hitler, the Nazis and his country had "stolen my youth.



RENTON MAGAZINE / DAVID SUFFIA

Claus Hackenberger and his friend Littleman.

I've learned that without forgiveness  
you cannot make a new day, talk  
about love, or ever have peace.

~ Claus Hackenberger

They had poisoned and killed people. And I realized I didn't like Germans any more. Their attitudes didn't change after the war."

Hackenberger says he enrolled at the university in Darmstadt and earned degrees in engineering. A friend of his fiancée married an American soldier and immigrated to Tacoma. The friends offered to sponsor Hackenberger and his fiancée. They emigrated in 1956.

### New life in America

Hackenberger has worked as an engineer, including a stretch as vice president and general manager of Northern Line Machine and Engineering Company; 10 years in Alaska as a local government procurement officer; and on PACCAR's Superfund cleanup project in Renton.

"I moved to Renton 1980 because I didn't want to live in a big city," he says. "I wrote my first book, 'A Long Walk,' in 1998. It's autobiographical; it's about me and my life."

The book has sold about 4,000 copies, he says. A second book, "The River," and a third, "Search for Light," followed.

"I've learned that without forgiveness you cannot make a new day, talk about love, or ever have peace. It has helped me overcome alcoholism and anger in my life. I've learned to forgive, first forgive myself and then forgive everyone who ever hurt me, including my birth country that deceived me. I pray every morning for forgiveness."

Hackenberger's bright outlook on life, despite his past, has made him pretty well known in the Renton Highlands, where he has a positive word for just about everyone he meets. Almost no one passes him without a greeting.

"I paid my part of war reparations in a very personal way in the labor camps. I've learned that there is redemption in life if you seek it.

"I cannot preach enough that there is peace in sharing and helping others, with money, with smiles, with prayers."



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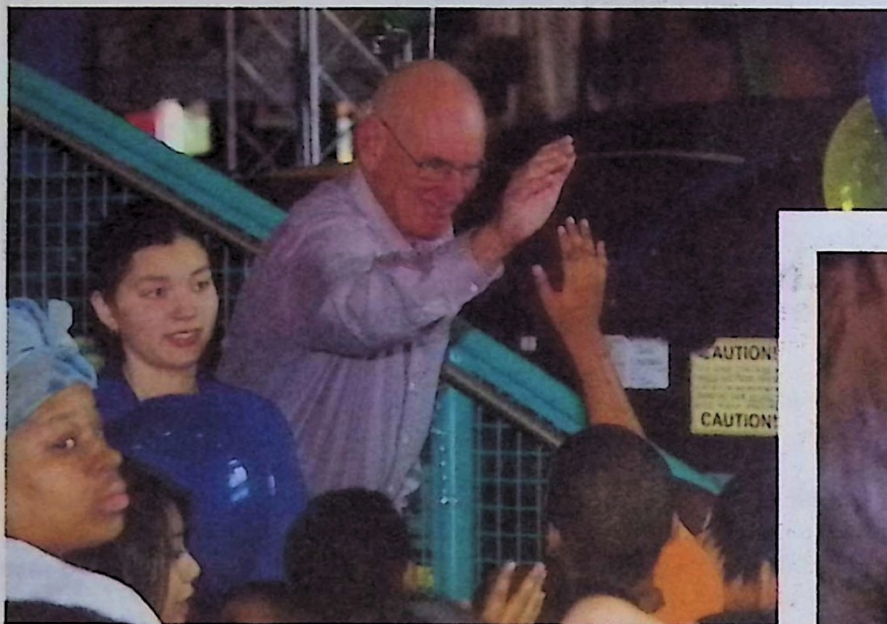
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# The Bridge to learning – kids

# Tutoria



BY ANDREW FICKES

## Reading buddies

Renton School District's Reading Buddies, a literacy program financed by Bob Bridge of Bob Bridge Toyota, got its kick-off in September when 1,000 fifth graders were given free access to the video games and attractions at the Family Fun Center in Tukwila.

Bridge's goal was to introduce students to the program plus give them a day they wouldn't soon forget.

Photos this page, above left: Bob Bridge reaches out to exchange high-fives with students they would help encourage their second-grade reading buddies. Photo by James B. (A) Photos of books are unpacked and ready for distribution. Photo by Randy Matheson. (Above) Reading buddies. Photo by Randy Matheson.

"When I was growing up, there were certain days that went into another and then there were defining days and over-the-top days," Bridge says. "I'm hopeful it'll be that kind of day for them. It's important to thank them in advance."

The district's Reading Buddies program will pair fifth graders and some fourth graders as reading buddies to second graders. The program's intent is to ensure second graders will be reading at grade level by the time they're in third grade. The program also gives second graders the

opportunity to look up to and learn how to be good.

"This idea came about from a granddaughter, who was such a fabulous reader, and the buddies program at her school," Bridge says.

A suggestion by Bridge was accepted by Renton School District Superintendent Mary Alice Heusch.



# Big kids



The students promised Bridge...  
mdam. (Left) Nearly 650 books  
buddies read to each other.

h graders and for fifth graders  
achers.

a year ago when I asked my  
fifth grade, how she became  
d she said it was the reading  
ool" in Grosse Point, Mich., says

to Renton school superintend-  
soon turned into a plan.



Appropriate books were identified. Bridge cut a check for \$8,000 to pay for approximately 650 books to be distributed among the grade schools.

Bridge wanted an exciting start to the program, so he enlisted the help of Family Fun Center general manager Rich Yee. Yee opened the eight-acre amusement park for two hours prior to opening to the public. Fifth graders had fun with laser tag, a virtual rollercoaster, and a 3D theater, among other attractions. Yee's donation equaled \$20,000. Bridge underwrote students' transportation to the fun center.

Jean Enersen of King 5 News presented a keynote speech to the fifth graders on the importance of literacy. Bridge spoke about the value of leadership.

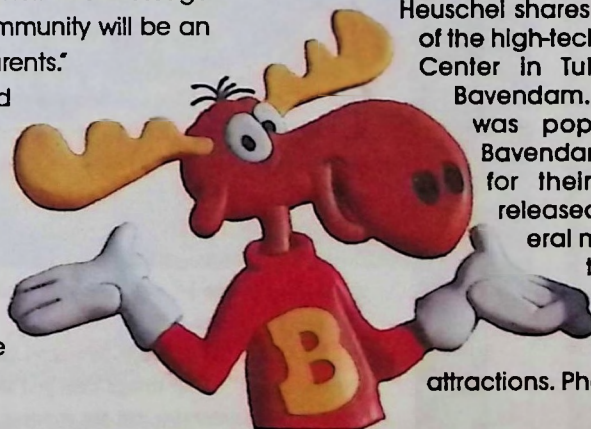
"Immediately we'll see an increase in students' reading and enjoyment of reading," says Heuschel. "The message about adults valuing literacy in the community will be an important message to students and parents."

Judy Busch, principal at Maplewood Heights Elementary, says she's excited for her fourth graders to have the experience of reading to the second graders.

"It develops an interest in reading in younger kids and exposes them to genres of literature that they may have not been normally exposed to."



Photos this page, from top: Dr. Mary Alice Heuschel shares in the excitement of one of the high-tech games at the Family Fun Center in Tukwila. Photo by James Bavendam. (Left) The Frog Hopper was popular. Photo by James Bavendam. (Above) Students wait for their bumper boats to be released. Family Fun Center general manager Rich Yee opened the park two hours early to accommodate the students, who were able to enjoy nearly all of the attractions. Photo by Diana Kramer.





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## running



RENTON MAGAZINE / SARAH ZUGSCHWERDT  
Runners Eileen Cabrera and Jeffrey Pena take on the Cedar River Trail in Renton.

**BY SARAH ZUGSCHWERDT**

There's a simple reason why Eileen Cabrera runs. "The sweat that you get from running is like no other; you feel refreshed, you feel rewarded."

The same goes for her running partner, Jeffrey Pena: "[It's] a natural high."

Runner P.J. Crowley has another reason: "It keeps you in shape ... when you are running you have to use your legs, your arms, your core, your everything." Crowley also enjoys running with friends, one of whom, Courtney Hall, adds another advantage, "You don't need a gym to go on a run. I just put my running shoes on and grab my dog."

Running, that once-natural childhood activity, can become intimidating once the word "workout" is attached to it. But according to many runners, enjoying all these benefits isn't as difficult as you might think. In fact, most well-versed runners are happy to share their knowledge in order to have you join their ranks.

Renton native Brian Van Houten, who recently organized the Renton Running Club, is one of them. Van Houten started running at age 14, when he was a soccer goalie and needed to stay in shape.

He didn't know much then – "I ran the first 10 days in soccer cleats!" – but things changed though the years as he discovered a natural talent for running, time-training with a

## When sweat is sweet

former Olympian with the goal of competing nationally.

Injuries ended his dream, and for a long time prevented any running at all. But yoga classes with his wife eventually healed him, and brought him back to the sport he loves.

"I'd done stretching before, but this was entirely different," he says. Van Houten now runs pain-free, and started the running club to find and teach others who might join him. While the club is still in its infancy, Van Houten says he hopes it will grow large enough to have runs on multiple days at multiple locations, and at all paces, including a walking group that his wife will "run."

Popular Renton locales include the Cedar River Trail, the Gene Coulon boardwalk, and local high school tracks or neighborhoods. In the spirit of exercising where you live, Van Houten also creates his own routes through downtown Renton.

To begin, Van Houten suggests a trip to a running specialty store such as the Balanced Athlete in downtown Kent, to find the right shoes. Store owner Eric Sach explains why: "Making sure that the shoe has the correct alignment and that it fits you properly is the biggest deterrent to getting injured."

"The next best thing is how you walk or how you run. There is a technique to it or a style that you want to move more toward; most people don't—that's why you develop knee problems or hip problems or shin problems ... [the] wrong shoe or technique or both."

A runner himself for over 33 years, Sach has avoided injury by practicing what he preaches. Would-be runners can listen to his sermons during his eight-week long "Learn to Run" courses that teach everything from proper attire (synthetics or wool—no cotton) to running technique and training plans. The store also hosts free runs for all levels, weekly Mon, Wed, and Fri at 5:30 a.m., Tuesday and Thursday at 6 p.m., and Sunday at 8 a.m.

### Tired of running alone?

Information about the recently-organized Renton Running Club is available from Brian Van Houten, 206-321-8153. Another group, called the Cedar River Runners, specifically runs the Cedar River Trail Saturday mornings at 7:25a.m., meeting at the Lake Wilderness Lodge in Maple Valley. More information is available from the Kent's Interurban Runner's newsletter on-line at [www.interurbanrunners.net](http://www.interurbanrunners.net).



# GARDEN

puts *water* to  
work in the  
loveliest way

BY KIM COLETTE

**W**aterworks Garden is exactly what the name implies – a garden that puts water to work. Storm water from over 50 acres of parking lots and roads filters through a series of ponds. When the water reaches the Springbrook Creek, it is successfully cleaned.

But what the garden does takes a backseat to what the garden is. It begins with the entrance, “The Knoll.” Large, tall boulders line the pathway as you walk in, leading you to a great viewpoint.

The winding trail is easy enough for young kids to walk and mothers to push strollers. Local lunch-time exercisers use the path to pump up their heart rate and enjoy some fresh air.

“I really enjoyed the walking trail. There is lots of stuff for the kids to see,” says Heather Ramos of Renton. The garden also reminded her of the places she would go while dating her husband.

“It’s a great place to walk and holds hands and



RENTON MAGAZINE / KIMBERLY COLETTE

Gabe Richardson and James Collette explore the grotto.

talk.”

Brittany Richardson of Renton took her 2-year-old son Gabe on a tour. He was able to walk much of it, often stopping to examine bugs and flowers. Brittany said she especially enjoyed the mosaic grotto, where she took pictures of Gabe tossing leaves and stones into the small ponds.

The grotto is a charming place to pause. As you wind down through trees, brush, ponds and flowers, the path opens up into a stone room. Floor and walls are a mosaic of stone and rocks. There are several small ponds and greenery from above spills out over the walls. A bench allows you to sit and ponder, and you feel transported.

The garden has been open since 1996, and the hours of operation are from dawn until dusk all year. Located off Monster Road in Renton, it is a little tucked back from view and marked by a small sign. Limited parking is available.

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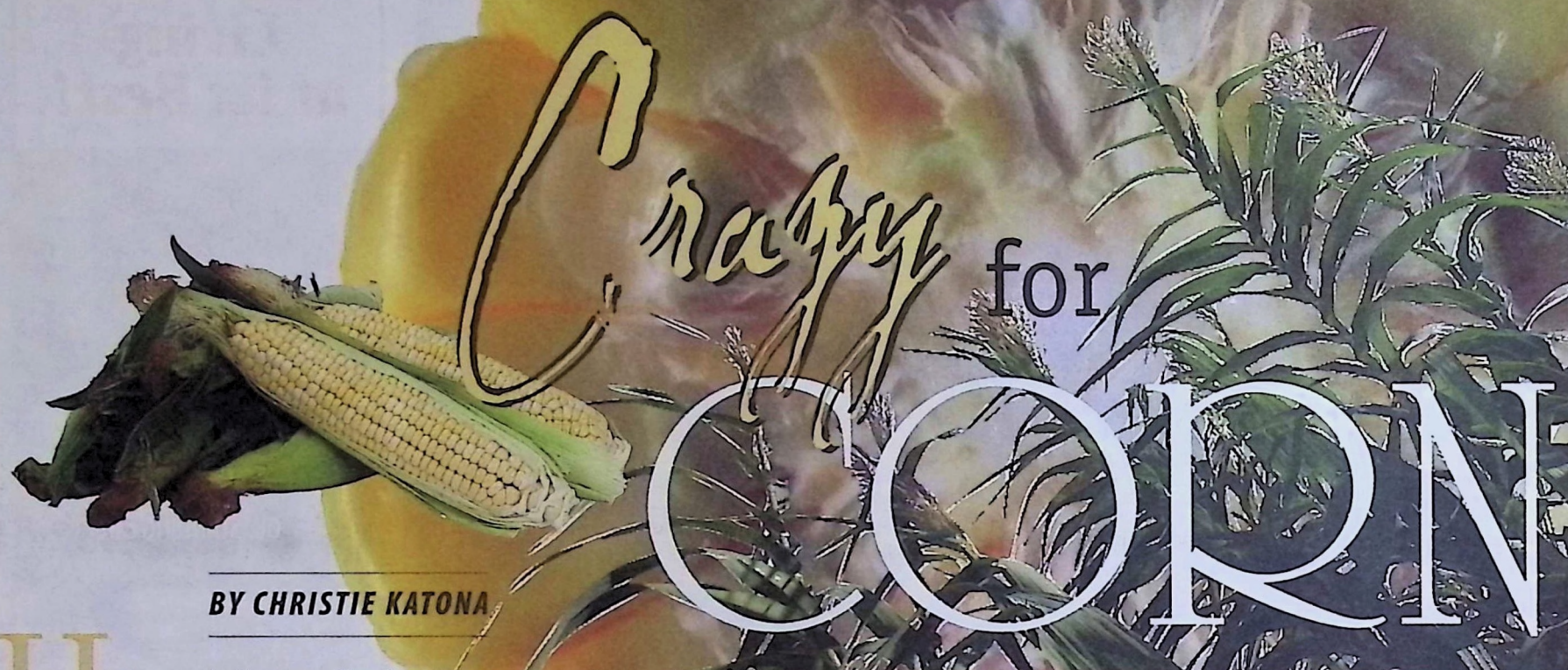
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BY CHRISTIE KATONA

History tells us that corn was first given to the European settlers by the Indians around 1779. Since that day, we have found dozens of ways to use this tasty vegetable: Popcorn, corn nuts, cornmeal, polenta, mush, grits, corn dogs, corn bread and tortillas, the list goes on and on.

Botanists have given us sweeter corn with longer stability before the sugar converts to starch. As wonderful as it is served simply with butter, here are some other ideas to try when corn is at its peak.



CHRISTIE KATONA

Christie Katona is the owner of Christie's Catering Inc. in Renton. She attended the Cordon Bleu in London, has authored many cookbooks, taught cooking classes for many years and worked as a restaurant consultant. More recipes and suggestions can be found at [www.Christies-Catering.com](http://www.Christies-Catering.com).

## Corn Salad with Basil Dressing

Serves 6

Feel free to substitute cilantro for the basil or add a red or yellow peppers if you wish.

### you will need

3 cups fresh corn kernels  
5 medium tomatoes, halved, seeded and diced  
2/3 cup finely chopped red onions

### dressing

1/4 cup olive oil  
1/4 cup chopped fresh basil  
2 tbs. white wine vinegar  
1 tbs. lime juice  
1 clove garlic, minced  
1 tsp. honey  
Salt and pepper to taste

### directions

Place vegetables in a small bowl. Combine dressing in a food processor or blender. Just before serving, toss vegetables with dressing.

## Fresh Corn Quesadillas

Serves 4

These are good for a snack or as an accompaniment to grilled flank steak or tortilla chicken soup.

### you will need

1 1/2 cups grated Monterey Jack or Pepperjack cheese  
1 cup fresh or frozen corn  
2 tbs. mayonnaise  
2 green onions, thinly sliced  
2 tbs. chopped fresh cilantro  
1 tbs. chopped canned chipotle chile (optional)  
2 tbs. vegetable oil  
4 - 8 inch corn tortillas

### directions

In a bowl, stir together the cheese, corn, mayonnaise and seasonings. Spread half of the filling over two tortillas. Top with remaining tortillas. Heat oil in a large skillet or ridged grill pan, cook quesadillas over moderate heat for two minutes or until light golden brown and cheese is melted, turn over and continue cooking until both sides are golden brown. Remove to a cutting board and cut into wedges to serve.



## Herbed Corn and Couscous Serves 4

This makes a nice side dish with pork, fish or chicken.  
You can also serve it as a vegetarian entrée.

### you will need

2 cups fresh corn kernels  
2 tbs. butter  
1 1/2 cups chicken stock  
1 cup couscous  
3 tbs. minced fresh chives  
3 tbs. minced fresh parsley  
Salt and pepper to taste

### directions

In a heavy sauce pan, cook the corn in the melted butter over moderately high heat, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the chicken stock and bring to a boil. Stir in the couscous and remove the pan from the heat. Cover and let stand for five minutes. Fluff couscous with a fork and stir in the chives and parsley. Add salt and pepper to taste.



## Corn and Bacon Hotcakes Makes 12 pancakes, Serves 4

Packed with flavor, these can be served with hot maple syrup. You can make them ahead and freeze them, then just pop in the toaster for busy mornings.

### you will need

|                       |                                                  |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 1 cup yellow cornmeal | 1 cup fresh corn, scraped from the ear plus pulp |
| 1/2 cup flour         | 2 eggs                                           |
| 1 tbs. sugar          | 3/4 cup buttermilk                               |
| 2 tsp. baking powder  | 2 tbs. melted butter                             |
| 1/2 tsp. salt         | 6 slices crisp, cooked bacon, crumbled           |

### directions

Whisk together the dry ingredients in a bowl. In another bowl, combine the corn, eggs, buttermilk and melted butter. Add to the dry ingredients and stir until just combined. Let stand 10 minutes. Add the crumbled bacon. Heat a griddle or skillet over moderate heat until very hot, brush with oil. Cook the hotcakes using 1/4 cup batter for each one, until golden, about 1 minute. Flip and continue cooking on other side. Remove to a heated platter and keep warm as other hotcakes are cooked. Serve with maple syrup.

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## pet care

# You mean my dog can get the flu, too?

BY DR. KATHLEEN CONNELL

With all the focus on H1N1 flu in people, pet owners should know influenza can also strike dogs.

Canine influenza is caused by a Type A influenza H3N8 virus. This contagious respiratory disease affects dogs, not humans. The designation, H3N8, describes different proteins on the virus' surface.

This canine influenza began as an unusual respiratory disease outbreak in 2004 among racing greyhounds in Florida. The causative virus was identified by Dr. Cynda Crawford, University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine, and Dr. Edward J. Dubovi, Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine, in 2005.

This recently-emerged viral strain in dogs originally affected horses. Flu viruses constantly change and mutate. H3N8 jumped from horses to dogs and has now spread nationwide.

Canine influenza is easily transmitted from dog to dog through direct contact with respiratory secretions from infected dogs. The virus is also passed along when a dog has contact with objects contaminated with infectious secretions. Interestingly, people can unwittingly transmit the virus after contact with infected dogs if they don't change contaminated clothing or wash their hands.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HENRY MOORE JR., BCU/WSU

Your dog's nose is one organ affected by canine influenza.

H3N8 symptoms include coughing, sneezing, runny nose, fever, lethargy and loss of appetite. Dogs can display a range of illness, though. Just like in people, the most vulnerable are the very young, the very old and any dogs already compromised by existing illness or medical conditions.

About 80 percent of infected dogs will have a mild form of influenza. Approximately 20 percent will not show any signs of illness. Among infected dogs, 10 to 20 percent may progress to more severe forms of respiratory infection, such as pneumonia. A small number, estimated at up to five percent of all infected dogs could die from complications.

If you suspect your dog may have canine influenza, contact your veterinarian to schedule an examination. Your veterinarian can have your dog's blood or respiratory secretions tested by a diagnostic laboratory.

There is no "magic bullet" for treatment of this influenza. Generally your veterinarian will recommend supportive care, and your dog will mount a natural immune response. Medication and fluids may be used to make your dog more comfortable. Secondary bacterial infections, like pneumonia, can be treated with broad-spectrum antibiotics.

A vaccine for canine influenza of 2004 is available. It reduces shedding of the virus and decreases signs of illness. No side effects have been reported. A veterinarian vaccinates your dog with two doses, two to four weeks apart. An annual booster is recommended.

As with any influenza, good infection control practices and optimal health are a must. Check with your veterinarian about the risk of canine influenza to your dogs.

*Dr. Kathleen Connell, DVM, owns and operates Foxglove Consulting in Olympia.*



# Contemplating the Zen of moss

BY ELAINE ANDERSON

*G*azing at a lush carpet of rich green moss is a soothing experience. Moss beckons you to take off your shoes and walk on its cool surface. But moss can be kind of spooky, too. Think about the mossy arms reaching for you as you walk through the trees in the Hoh Rain Forest. People with lawns sometimes find moss unsettling. More on that later.

Mosses are among the simplest and oldest of all land plants. They came into being around 450 million years ago, and there are now 15,000 recognized species.

Moss has been beloved by gardeners for hundreds of years, and they include it in the landscape both for its beauty and for its usefulness. The Japanese have used moss in gardens

with exquisite effect. Zen Buddhist monks who lived a thousand years ago wrote of the mosses that grew in their temple gardens. How well the serenity of moss must have matched the contemplative nature of their lives!

Landscape mosses are practical, too. They are wonderful groundcovers, protecting soil on slopes from eroding during severe weather. They are compact and repel weeds. If moss dries out and turns brown, just throw some water over it, and voila, it's green and lovely once again. And, deer don't eat it.

So, what's not to like about moss? Moss is considered a weed when it's found in a lawn. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are spent each year on chemicals to remove moss from lawns. This is not money well spent!

The reason moss grows in lawns is that conditions favor it and not grass. The only effective way to rid a lawn of moss is to improve drainage



in the mossy area and/or increase the amount of sunlight the area receives. If you kill it and neglect to make these changes, moss will regrow; the chemical-applying, money-wasting cycle will begin all over again.

Why not succumb to the beauty of moss and have a whole lawn of it instead of grass? You won't need to mow, and you'll use less than one percent of the 10,000 gallons of water you use each year to keep your lawn green. It's easy to see why replacing grass with moss is fast becoming a landscaping trend. It's a green solution in more ways than one.

Elaine Anderson is the Washington State University Extension coordinator for the King County Master Gardener Program. The program, funded by King County and WSU, provides free, environmentally friendly gardening advice to home gardeners. For answers to your questions about moss and other gardening topics, call the Master Gardener Phone Clinic at 206-296-3440.

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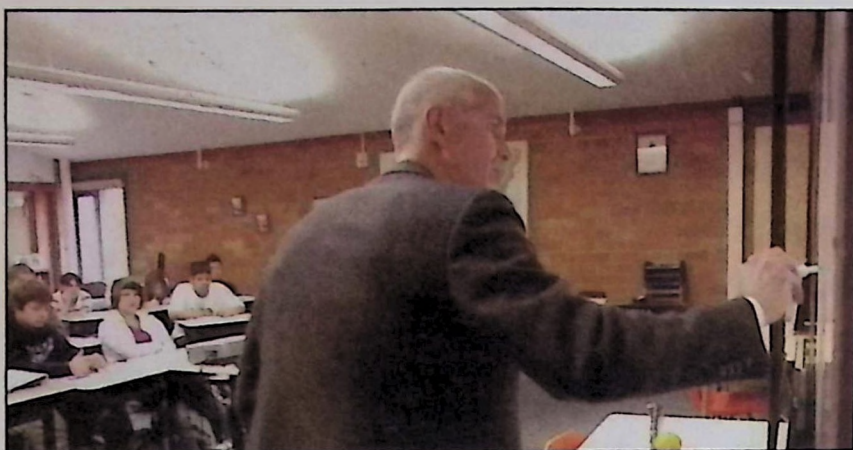


PHOTO COURTESY OF RANDY MATHESON

Jim Jones is a first-year world history teacher at Lindbergh High School following 24 years as a personal injury defense attorney.



PHOTO COURTESY OF RANDY MATHESON

Lynda Walls, with 30 years in education, has returned to the Renton School District after teaching five years in China and Thailand.

# New Teachers *bring a world of experience*

**BY ANDREW FICKES**

At least two of the approximately 50 new teachers hired by Renton School District this year were coming home again.

Former attorney Jim Jones came home to a profession that has called to him for more than 20 years; Lynda Walls returned to the district

where she began her 30-year career in education.

Jones, who teaches five classes of world history at Lindbergh High School, decided that at age 49, it was time for him to revisit the satisfaction he experienced while a student at Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

"I had the opportunity to tutor the athletic department at Baylor," he says. "I got to see ... first-hand what the lack of education can produce; a lot of these athletes were run through the schools based on their athletic ability. To work with them and see them graduate was very rewarding."

Walls is teaching special education at Dimmitt Middle School after five years of teaching children of politicians and embassy people in China and Thailand. What she loves is finding the one thing that helps a child succeed.

"Some of these kids are in here for social skills, so we're working on positive behaviors," she says. "I like to incorporate a lot of positive reinforcement, so that they use this positive reinforcement to help them decide what goals to work on."

For 10 years, Jones was a business partner in the Dallas law firm Jones, Carr, McGoldrick, specializing in personal injury defense.

"These were very heart-wrenching cases where bad things happened to really good people," he says. "A lot of the nurses I'd defend hadn't done anything wrong. These were very caring people, and to help them understand that they didn't do anything wrong was very rewarding. It was always good to fight the fight."

From his experiences traveling the world, to owning a business, to witnessing the Democratic Convention last August, Jones says he's confident he'll make a difference at Lindbergh.

"What I can bring to these students is a set of life skills that I think can help them no matter what they do," Jones says. "For example, I can teach them preparation and the value of planning and the value of organization, and, hopefully, being a little older will help me as a teacher."

"Renton School District was extremely high on my list because of the diversity of the community," he says. "I'll be able to interact with kids from all sorts of backgrounds and that's really exciting. And there is an amazing support system in place [for teachers] at the Renton School District."

Walls first taught special education in the 1980s in the Renton School District at Lakeridge Elementary and what was then Honey Dew Elementary.

While teaching upwards of 60 students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, she plans to work with mentors from the Communities in Schools mentor program.

"I would like the mentors to come to the classroom to teach social skills," she says. "With the eighth graders, I'd like to see them go out to various work places and learn goal-setting responsibilities."

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# Merchant family served generations of shoppers

BY ELIZABETH P.  
STEWART

The recent opening of the specialty store, Uwajimaya, reminds us of the unimaginable wealth of food choices we have today compared to 100 years ago. In the early 1900s, Renton shoppers could choose among the Tonkin Brothers General Merchandise and a few others. If customers could not find what they needed in one of these stores, packed with merchandise, they were out of luck.

The Tonkin family story was not much different than that of many present-day immigrants. In 1867 James Tonkin arrived in Illinois, a Cornwall coal miner looking for opportunity. By 1882 he had settled his family in Renton, where he mined coal before setting up a general merchandise shop to cater to fellow miners. He strategically located his store at Walla Walla and Williams in the midst of saloons and boarding houses; today it is the site of Tonkin Park. So close to the mine entrance, James Tonkin's store was ideally situated to supply workers' very basic needs.

In 1885, twenty-year-old Josiah – or "Si," as he was known – started clerking in his father's store. He and his half-brother William soon opened an adjoining store. After their father's death in 1905, Si continued the family legacy. In 1915 Si moved to Third and Williams, Renton's burgeoning downtown.

According to one observer, Si stocked "a good line of staple and



COURTESY OF RENTON HISTORY MUSEUM

William Tonkin serves a customer in Tonkin Bros. General Merchandise, ca. 1900. (No. 41.0592 (detail), Renton History Museum).

fancy groceries, flour and feed, and [the store] commands a large patronage, owing to his sound business methods, his honorable dealing and his uniform courtesy and accommodation."

Tonkin Grocery continued to prosper, and in 1933 he opened a newly constructed store at 709 Third, "one of the most modern merchandising establishments in the entire district."

But the little grocery's days were numbered. Not only were shoppers deeply affected by the Great Depression, but the market was more divided. Italian immigrants had started opening specialty shops in the 1910s to serve the culinary needs of their compatriots, not unlike today's small tiendas catering to Latin American immigrants.

Most importantly, Skaggs Safeway, a national grocery chain, arrived in 1929, changing the grocery landscape. Si Tonkin was 71 when he collapsed in 1936 after closing his store for the day, leaving his son Wesley to carry on. Soon a shopping innovation called "supermarkets" – giant self-serve food markets – made it impossible for small family food stores to compete. After 64 years of Tonkin Groceries, in 1948 Wesley closed the store and opened Tonkin Men's Wear.

For more Renton food stories, visit the Renton History Museum's exhibit, "Sustaining A City." Elizabeth P. Stewart is the Director of the Renton History Museum, [info@rentonhistory.org](mailto:info@rentonhistory.org), 425-255-2330.

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# Calm down, Roger! And relax in the barber's chair

BY DAVID SUFFIA

**T**he old man takes a seat, and Mary Fitch greets him by name: "How is your wife doing, Don?"

As he tells that his wife is recovering well from a stroke, Mary gently slides a large apron around his neck and begins to glide an electric razor up the back of the man's head, neatly shearing off his gray hair.

"My wife had a stroke at 4 a.m. and fell down in the kitchen," the old man tells a stranger waiting for the next open seat at the barber shop. "Our two dogs barked like crazy and woke me to come help her. If they hadn't, she'd have died."

"She's doing so much better now, she's off shopping at the mall today," he adds with a chuckle.

"We're kind of like bartenders," Mary says. "Our customers tell us their life histories. We know their health problems, their kids' problems, their job problems, things they probably don't tell other people."

"What happens in the barber shop stays in the barber shop, even the complaints about spouses," she

adds.

Mary and her daughter Gina Olson run Fairwood Hair Care, in the Fairwood neighborhood. It's an old-fashioned barber shop, where mostly guys come to get a haircut, not a style.

"It was kind of tough for me when I started. I met some reluctance from men who expected the barber to be a man, not a woman," Gina says. "Some guys would poke their head in and ask, 'Where's the real barber?' But we got through it. Mom and I know how men's hair should look, and our customers appreciate it."

Fairwood Hair Care was started in 1985 by Mary's husband, C.G. He was a barber for a long time, including a stint as a Navy barber. Mary went to barber school and joined him, continuing on when he hung up the clippers.

"My daughter will graduate from high school and barber school this summer, and she'll join us as the third generation barber in this shop," Gina says.

Many of their customers are now second and third generation, guys they have given monikers like Flat Top Mike, Logger Dan and Asphalt John. The nick-



RENTON MAGAZINE / DAVID SUFFIA

Mary Fitch, seated, and Gina Olson are the mother-daughter barbers who run Fairwood Hair Care, a longtime fixture in the Fairwood neighborhood.

names and stories roll out easily.

"This little 4-year-old boy came in with his father one day and was playing on the floor with our box of toys while they

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RENTON MAGAZINE / DAVID SUFFIA

Ron Birley of Renton gets a trim from Mary Fitch at Fairwood Hair Care. 'If it looks good to you, it looks good to me,' he says when she's done.

waited for an open chair," Mary recalls. "He'd shout, 'Calm down, Roger!' every few minutes while he was pushing toy trucks around. Finally, I asked his dad who Roger was.

"The dad was kind of embarrassed but admitted, 'Roger is my boss.' Apparently the boss would telephone to vent about a problem on the job and the dad would tell him, 'Calm down, Roger!'"

Then there was a little kid who kept staring intently at Mary's reflection in the mirror. When she asked him if every-

thing was OK, he said, "You look really cute, as cute as the little pug dog I saw at the soccer field today."

And there was the Metro bus driver who told Mary and Gina that she was pulling her bus away from the curb when a woman came running up the street hollering, "Wait, wait! I like your hair style. Where do you get it cut?"

"Lots of stories here are funny. Some aren't so much," Gina says. "We've had women suffering from cancer and the medications come in to have their heads shaved."

"One customer brought his wife in, and we all cried while we shaved her head," Mary adds.

"It really is a lot like being a bartender. We develop relationships with people," Gina says. Some of them can get kind of tense."

"Some wives get really upset if we don't cut their husbands' hair like they want it," Mary says. "We've had wives send a picture along with their husbands showing exactly what they want. We've had wives even come into the shop in the middle of the haircut to make sure we're doing it right.

"And we have mothers come in and cry when their sons get their first haircut. We understand," Gina says.

What's the toughest job they get?

"Comb-overs; no contest," the two women say in unison, referring to balding men who grow their hair long on one side and comb it over

the bald spot on top. "Sometimes it's hard to keep a straight face. And sometimes it's hard to even cut it, because there's so much hair spray on it to keep it in place."

Haircuts cost \$8 when the shop opened in 1985. Today they are \$16, not so bad when you consider inflation over 24 years. Most of their customers leave a tip, usually a few dollars, but much better around Christmas. One man left a \$100 Christmas tip. Others bring in cookies, candy and other presents.

Hair styles have changed, from long to short to long again, and the two barbers keep up with the changes.

"We really have loyal customers. Some keep coming here even after they've moved away from the area," Gina says. "Mom and I had a contest to see whose customer came the farthest. One man lives in England and stops by for a haircut when he's here on business. Another man lives in Dubai and stops by when he's in town."

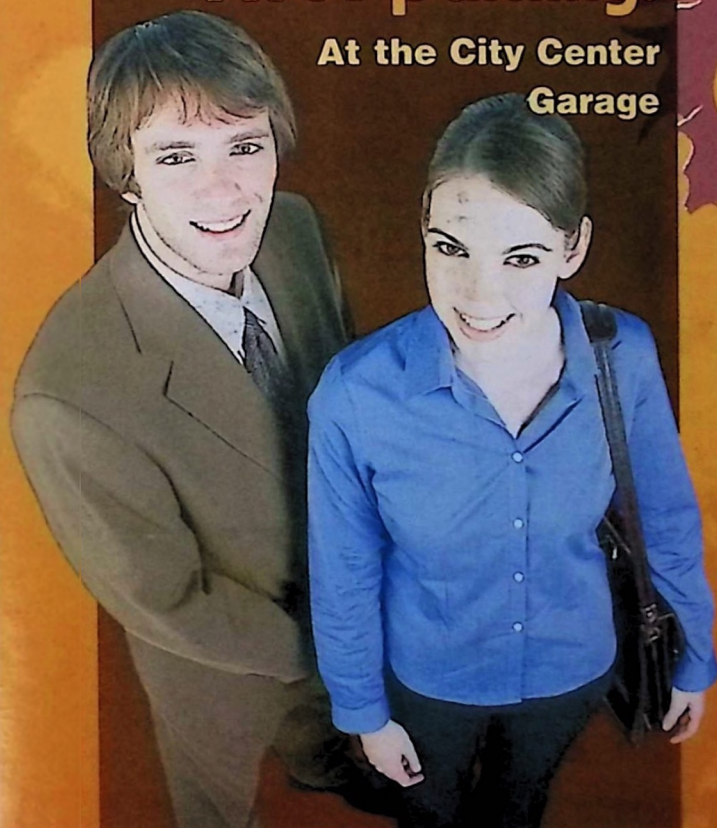
When the young son of a University of Washington doctor sat down in the barber's chair, Mary asked him what kind of cut he wanted.

"Just give me the best you've got!" the lad said confidently.

And that's what he got, the best haircut \$16 can buy, just like every other customer at Fairwood Hair Care.

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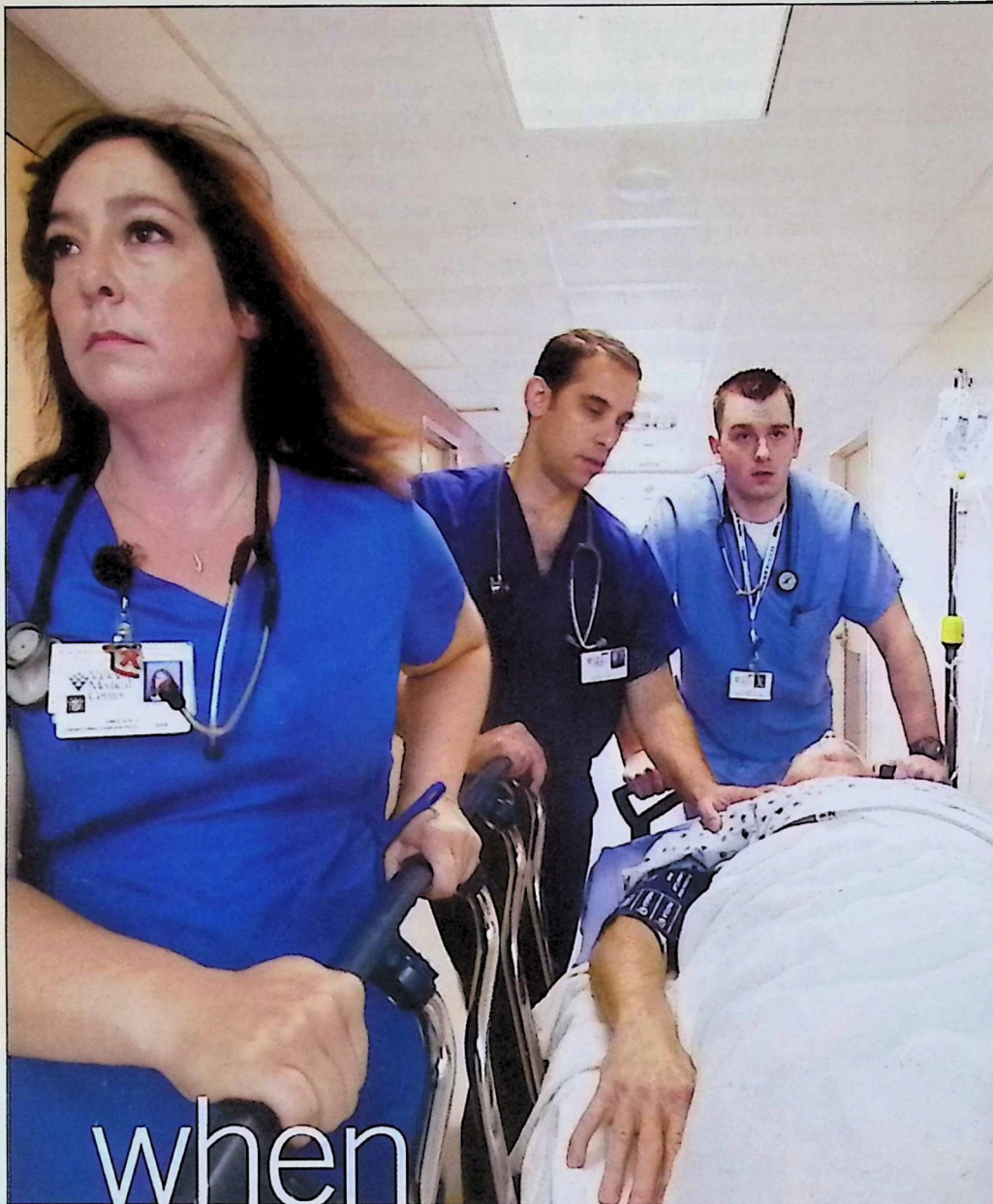
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