

# RENTON *Magazine*

Volume 1 / No 2 December 2006

\$2.00

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PIAZZA

CITY OF RENTON  
2000

**Cover:**

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# KING and BUNNYS

## A P P L I A N C E S



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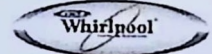
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†Wash up to 9 lbs.

shown with optional 15.5" pedestal

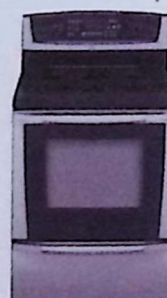
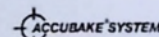


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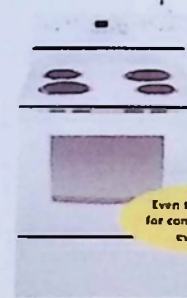
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**Saturday**  
9am - 6pm

**Sunday**  
Noon - 5pm

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**R**enton is truly enjoying the good life these days. As the city that literally created the blueprint for providing quality customer service to the development community, Renton continues to enjoy the benefits by maintaining this philosophy. A new shopping and entertainment village, including new housing opportunities, is beginning to sprout on surplus Boeing property. The Seahawks will soon call Renton their home, as will the regional branch of the Federal Reserve Bank. And millions have been spent on downtown redevelopment with much more expected in the near future.

Glenn Pascall, a regional economist and regular columnist for the Puget Sound Business Journal, was the keynote speaker at the recent Economic Forecast Luncheon sponsored by the Renton Chamber of Commerce. Pascall noted that much of

Renton's success is due to the community working together to meet its challenges and take advantage of new opportunities.

"If Renton can shape the future in the same spirit of shared goals and practical solutions it has demonstrated throughout its history, the future appears bright indeed," he said.

\* \* \*

We want to thank all our readers who took the time to share their thoughts about our new publication. Some of the comments appear on page 8.

"What a pleasure to receive your new magazine," a reader wrote. "It's a welcome



**Denis Law**  
PUBLISHER

change, especially during election time, to read of people who have no ax to grind. This issue introduced us to great Rentonites. How nice to celebrate those people, and to hear about many of our citizens who do so much good for their fellow citizens."

There are many great stories to be shared from this community, which is our goal each month. In this edition you'll read about Randy Rockhill, a former Renton school teacher, talented musician, former city council member, and at nearly 90 years of age, still an active volunteer. You will also read about Joe and Loretta Starkovich, two of the Huskies' biggest fans, and Jordon Bolden, a talented 14-year-old student from Nelsen Middle School, with a voice that can thrill any audience.

We hope you enjoy our second edition.

## RENTON Magazine

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### cover:

The holiday season will kick off with the Clam Lights Ceremony and the Holiday Tree Lighting in Piazza Park. See page 4 for details / Photos by Gary Palmer / Artwork by Kerri Ladines.

## important phone #'s

**City Hall**  
425.430.6400

**Community Center**  
425.430.6700

**Fire Dept**  
(non emergency)  
425.430.7000

**Police Dept**  
(non emergency)  
425.430.7500

**Golf Course**  
(Maplewood)  
425.430.6800

**Library (Main)**  
425.430.6610

**Library (Highlands)**  
425.430.6790

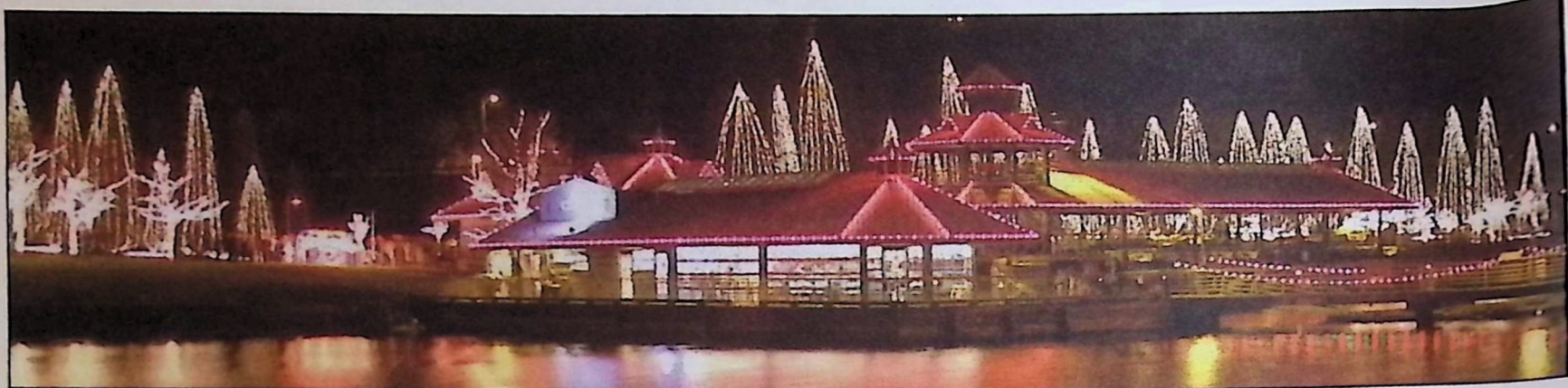
**Senior Activity Center**  
425.430.6633

**Renton Chamber**  
425.226.4560

**Renton Museum**  
425.255.2330

**Valley Medical Center**  
425.228.3450





PHOTOS BY GARY PALMER

## clam lights / holiday tree lighting

Beginning in December the City of Renton will be all lit up for the holidays. Start your holiday season off with an evening of entertainment, holiday spirit, and stunning visual effects with the Clam Lights on Dec. 1. Clam Lights are open for viewing through Jan. 1, and entice your Christmas senses with the Holiday Tree Lighting event at The Plaza on Dec. 2. This program features a line-up of local musicians and singers, a visit from Santa, and refreshments.

### december 1

#### Clam Lights

425.430.6700

Coulon Park / 6:30pm

Admission: Free

### december 2

#### Piazza

#### Holiday Tree Lighting

Piazza Park / 5pm - 7pm

Admission: Free



### december 2

#### Rainier Yacht Club's Parade of Boats

Saturday at 7:30pm

425.228.6800

Gene Coulon Beach Park  
710 S. 2nd St.

Admission: Free



### december 9

#### The Real Toy Story: Folk Toys & Whistles from Around the World

11am

425.255.2330

Renton History Museum  
235 Mill Avenue S.

Admission: Under 8 - Free



### december 9

#### Breakfast With Santa

9am & 12pm

425.255.2330

Renton History Museum  
235 Mill Avenue South

Admission: Under 8 - Free



### december 9

#### Rainier Symphony Holiday Concert

Dec. 9 at 7:30pm

206-781-5618

IKEA Performing Arts Center  
400 S. 2nd St.

Tickets: \$17/general and \$12  
student/senior



now playing



## IKEA Performing Arts Center Tingstad and Rumbel

**January 12 at 7 pm**

This is a rare and unique combination of instruments. A sound which is unusual and unexpected. Eric Tingstad has a distinctive guitar technique that harkens from a Segovian tradition combined with his creative finger-style picking and acoustic amplification design. Nancy Rumbel is one of the few performers in the world on double ocarina, oboe and English horn. Relax after the holidays with the beautiful music of Tingstad and Rumbel.

### IKEA Performing Arts Center

400 S. 2nd St.

Admission: \$22/adult, \$20/seniors and students, \$24 at the door  
424-204-3455 / [www.ikeapac.org](http://www.ikeapac.org)

### Ensemble Ballet Theatre The Nutcracker

Dec. 2 at 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 3 at 2:30 p.m.  
400 S. 2nd St.

Admission: \$12/adults and \$8/students and seniors  
425-432-9685

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

### Evergreen City Ballet The Nutcracker

The Nutcracker beautifully intertwines Christmas and dance as it should be. Complete with dancing snowflakes, a magical Christmas tree, and visions of Sugarplums. Be entranced yet again with the sweet dreams and warmth of this seasonal tradition and experience the real Nutcracker, a timeless favorite of the Evergreen City Ballet.

Dec. 22 at 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 23 at 1:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

400 S. 2nd St.

Tickets: \$30/adult, \$25/senior and \$20/students  
425-204-3455

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

### Renton City Concert Band

Come enjoy the Renton City Concert Band's annual holiday concert. Directed by Mike Simpson, this community-founded band has quickly become a key part of Renton's culture. The band includes 11 original members from when it was founded in 1986.

Dec. 7 at 7:30 p.m.

400 S. 2nd St.

Tickets: \$7/adults and \$5/students and seniors  
425-204-3455

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



## Renton Civic Theater

### Deck the Halls with the Broads of Broadway

Sing and laugh along with us as the Deck the Halls with the Broads of Broadway salutes Christmas through the holiday season. This tribute to women of Broadway will be a present you'll carry all season!

**December 1 - December 17**

507 S. 3rd St.

Admission: \$20/adult and \$15/students and seniors  
425-226-5529

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

## Carco Theatre

### Renton Youth Symphony Orchestra

**December 16 at 3pm**

Enjoy this talented group of young musicians as they perform unabridged classical compositions reminiscent of the season.

1717 Maple Valley Highway

Admission: \$7/adults and \$5/students and seniors  
425-430-6706

[www.ci.renton.wa.us/commser/rec/carco.htm](http://www.ci.renton.wa.us/commser/rec/carco.htm)



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# calendar of events

## ENTERTAINMENT

### \*\*HOLIDAY AUCTION\*\* Everything that Sparkles

It's time once again to make room on your holiday schedule for the Chamber's yearly gala event! This year's auctioneer is Evening Magazine, John Curley, who is sure to have a night of fun and surprises in store! Promote your business by donating an item or service, call 425-226-4560 for more information.

Thursday, Dec. 7, 5 p.m.

Spirit of Washington Event Center,  
3rd Street and Burnett Ave. S., Renton  
Presenting Sponsor: King and Bunnys  
Appliances

Gold Sponsor: Kaye Smith, SECO  
Development, and Waste Management  
To register, visit [www.gorenton.com](http://www.gorenton.com)

### Canine Candy Cane 5k Fun Run and Walk

Sunday, Dec. 3 at 9 a.m.

This run/walk will start at the Renton  
Community Center and travel along the  
Cedar River Trail before looping back to  
the Community Center. Competitive  
runners, fun runners, walkers, junior  
athletes, families (with or without  
dogs) are all invited to be part of the  
run/walk. Free after-race pictures with  
Santa will also be available.

Renton Community Center  
1715 Maple Valley Highway

425-430-6700

[www.ci.renton.wa.us/commserv/rec/cc.htm](http://www.ci.renton.wa.us/commserv/rec/cc.htm)

\$20 on race day

### Parade of Boats

Saturday, Dec. 2 at 7:30 p.m.

Coulon Beach Park

The Rainier Yacht Club's lighted boat  
parade makes its annual appearance at  
Coulon Beach Park.

Admission: Free

### The Real Toy Story: Folk Toys and Whistles from Around the World

Saturday, Dec. 9, 11 a.m.

Allan Hirsch dramatizes the real "Toy

Story." Children will have the opportunity to see, hear, and try for themselves a selection of unusual historic toys. For children 5 and older through adult.

Renton History Museum

235 Mill Avenue S.

425-255-2330

Children 8 and under are free

### Breakfast With Santa

Dec. 9 at 9 a.m. and Noon

Admission: \$6, on sale now

Children ages 2 to 12, along with parents and grandparents, are invited to join us for a special Saturday "Breakfast with Santa." Enjoy breakfast, entertainment, and a visit and photo with Santa Claus. Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

Renton Senior Activity Center

211 Burnett Ave.

425-430-6633

[www.ci.renton.wa.us/commserv/rec/nrctr.htm](http://www.ci.renton.wa.us/commserv/rec/nrctr.htm)

### Rainier Symphony Holiday Concert

Dec. 9 at 7:30 p.m.

Ron and Roxanna Patterson, violin and viola, will perform Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante on a program that includes your favorite holiday and Viennese classics.

IKEA Performing Arts Center

400 S. 2nd St.

Tickets: \$17/general and \$12 student/senior

206-781-5618

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

### The Lakeshore Holiday Benefit Concert

Dec. 10 at 3 p.m.

The Lakeshore will hold a concert benefiting The Hope Chest, a non-profit organization. The organization's mission is to help those in our community have a better life by supplying household items and furniture free of charge. All donations from the benefit concert will be used to support a local family through The Hope Chest.

11448 Rainier Ave. S.

206-772-1200

[www.eracare.com](http://www.eracare.com)

### Eastside Dance Theatre Nutcracker

Dec. 16 and 17 at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m.

\$14/adults - \$10/students and seniors

IKEA Performing Arts Center

400 S. 2nd St.

425-204-3455

Tickets available at [www.east-sidedancetheatre.org](http://www.east-sidedancetheatre.org)

## SCHOOL EVENTS

### Renton Park Elementary Holiday Show

Monday, Dec. 4 at 7 p.m.

IKEA Performing Arts Center

400 S. 2nd St.

425-204-3455

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

### Renton High School Winter Band Concert

Dec. 5 at 7 p.m.

IKEA Performing Arts Center

400 S. 2nd St.

425-204-3455

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

### Nelsen Middle School Winter Concert, 6th grade

Dec. 7 at 7 p.m.

2403 Jones Ave. S.

425-204-3000

[www.renton.wednet.edu/nelsen/default.html](http://www.renton.wednet.edu/nelsen/default.html)

### Renton High School Winter Orchestra Concert

Dec. 11 at 7:30 p.m.

IKEA Performing Arts Center

400 S. 2nd St.

425-204-3455

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

### Nelsen Middle School Winter Concert, 7th grade

Dec. 12 at 7:30 p.m.

2403 Jones Ave. S.

425-204-3000

[www.renton.wednet.edu/nelsen/default.html](http://www.renton.wednet.edu/nelsen/default.html)

### McKnight Middle School Winter Concert

Dec. 12 at 7 p.m.

1200 Edmonds Ave. NE

425-204-3600

[www.renton.wednet.edu/mcknight/default.html](http://www.renton.wednet.edu/mcknight/default.html)

### Bryn Mawr Elementary School Winter Concert

Dec. 14 at 6:30 p.m.

8212 S. 118th St., Seattle

[www.renton.wednet.edu/brynmawr/default.html](http://www.renton.wednet.edu/brynmawr/default.html)

### Nelsen Middle School Winter Concert, 8th grade

Dec. 14 at 7:30 p.m.

2403 Jones Ave. S.

425-204-3000

[www.renton.wednet.edu/nelsen/default.html](http://www.renton.wednet.edu/nelsen/default.html)

### Renton High School Winter Choir Concert

Dec. 14 at 7:30 p.m.

IKEA Performing Arts Center

400 S. 2nd St.

425-204-3455

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

## SENIOR EVENTS

### Renton Senior Center

#### Holiday Luncheon

Put on your festive holiday attire and join us for our annual Holiday Luncheon. Listen to festive music as you dine with your friends. The meal will be served at 11:30 a.m., Dec. 14.

\$3 (60 and up), \$5.75 (under 60)

#### Jingle Bell Romp Dance

The Holidays are upon us, so what better way to celebrate than coming to our Jingle Bell Romp! Wear your holiday attire (and maybe a bell or two) to this festive evening. We'll have strawberry waffles and sausage to eat, and then enjoy the music of the Quartet of Four.

Dinner will be served. Tickets must be purchased by Dec. 13.

Dec. 15 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Admission: \$6

211 Burnett Ave.

425-430-6633

[www.ci.renton.wa.us/commserv/rec/nrctr.htm](http://www.ci.renton.wa.us/commserv/rec/nrctr.htm)

## THEATER CLASSES

### Carco Theatre Kindercompany Heartsongs

Wednesdays Nov. 29 through Dec. 20

For ages 4 through 6. Heartwarming poetry pieces will conclude this engaging class for acting beginners.

## WINE TASTING

### The Red House

Join us every Wednesday of the year from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. for wine tastings from different wineries and regions all over the world. Buy a full flight of wine as well as food for just \$15.

Dec. 6

Cabernet Wines

Dec. 13

Cavatappi Wines

Dec. 20

Renwood Winery

410 Burnett Avenue South

425-226-2666

[www.redhousebeerandwine.com](http://www.redhousebeerandwine.com)

## HOLIDAY PARTIES

### Renton History Museum Holiday Party

Please join volunteers, members, staff and trustees for dessert and coffee at our Annual Holiday Celebration. Learn about the museum's plans for 2007 and get a preview of Evergreen City Ballet's The Nutcracker.

Dec. 12 from 3 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Carco Theatre

1717 Maple Valley Highway

425-255-2330 for reservations

Admission: Free for members; a \$15 donation suggested for non-members



## Violets spur memories of mother's generosity

I have a soft spot in my heart for African violets. Whenever I see one in full bloom, it reminds me of my mother.

Her name was Angela. She was born in a poor Italian mountain village near the French border. There was no running water, no electricity and not much to eat. Education lasted only until the second grade and then it was off to the mountainside to watch over the sheep.

When she came to this country, she spoke not a word of English. When she saw a sign in the window of a Renton restaurant that advertised "Pie," she got excited because that's how her childhood best friend's first name was spelled and she thought surely the café was owned by another Italian immi-

grant.

Over the years, she learned the English language, became a proud American citizen and became well-

known in Renton for her hand-made ravioli and her kindness.

I remember once as a child finding a dirty hobo in our back yard. He had ridden a boxcar into Renton on the old railroad tracks that used to run next to Burnett Avenue. He asked if he could do some work around the house in exchange for some food.



David Suffia  
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Instead of shooing the bum away as many others might have done, my mother let him chop some wood that didn't really need chopping. Then she fed him a meal of fried chicken and ravioli, topped off with some home-made apple pie.

I sat on the back porch steps and watched the hobo down the last of the food and he turned and said, "Kid, your mama is a real angel."

She was. She always seemed to be helping people that other folks wouldn't. She never forgot what it was like to be poor and hungry as a child or to be shunned as an adult because her accent made her different.

A couple of years before she died at age 90, she gave me a couple of her African violets for a new home I'd

bought. She had plenty to spare. She was always raising those little purple, white and pink flowers. She could stick a leaf from one plant into a little pot and in a short time it would be grown up and spitting out more flowers.

Try as I might for two years, despite plenty of advice from Mama, I could never get those African violets to bloom. They grew plenty of healthy green leaves, but never a flower.

In one of those inexplicable mysteries of life, when I came home from the hospital after her death, I found both plants in full bloom, as if to say that her passing hadn't gone unnoticed.

That was 14 years ago, and I still can't pass by an African violet in full bloom without getting a lump in my throat.

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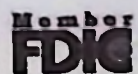
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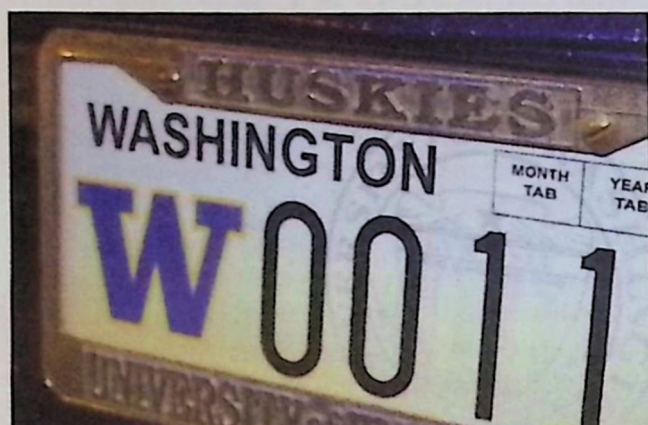


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# Joe and Loretta love the color purple



BY DAVID SUFFIA

Purple isn't a color to Loretta and Joe Starkovich. It's a way of life.

There is a purple University of Washington mailbox at the front door. There is a Husky flag flying from the roof of their apartment. Both their cars are purple. Loretta's Camaro has the first personalized UW license plate issued, W 0011A.

The sofas in their living room are purple. They wear Husky sweatshirts and purple Husky slippers. Loretta's eyeglasses have purple-tinted lenses with Ws in the frames, and her lipstick is purple.

The couple is only slightly more fanatic about Husky football than they are about Renton High School football and basketball, and attending their church. Loretta wears purple every day, except the days she attend Renton High games, when she goes for red and white.

"We go to all the Renton High School football and basketball games, and all the UW home and away football games," Loretta says.

And they mean almost all. They have followed the Huskies around the country to bowl games and regularly attend spring practice, picture days and team banquets.

"I think we've missed one game in 12 years, when Joe's mother was dying," Loretta recalls. "We've been to Michigan, Texas, Notre Dame, you name it."

"Loretta was born here in Renton," Joe says. "She graduated from Renton High in 1952. I grew up in Puyallup and moved here in 1959. We go to some of the Puyallup games but we go to all of the Renton games."

The Starkoviches, both 72, are retired from Boeing, where Loretta worked as a secretary and was known as "The Purple Lady."

"We have no kids, so this is our vice," Loretta explains of their passion for the local teams.

She developed the passion early. Her father died in a coal mine accident when she was four months old. Her mother never remarried, but her uncle took her to all kinds of sporting events as a child.

"Life is short," says Loretta, who is a cancer survivor. "You



RENTON MAGAZINE / David Nelson

Loretta and Joe Starkovich's passion for the Huskies has colored their lives purple.

You might as well enjoy today. Money doesn't do you or anyone else any good when you're dead.

~ Loretta Starkovich

might as well enjoy today. Money doesn't do you or anyone else any good when you're dead."

The couple has lived in the same North Renton apartment for 43 years. They were the first to move in when it was new and never left. Of course, there are Husky flags, stuffed animals, signed footballs and mementos everywhere.

While they have no children of their own, they dote on nephews and nieces and are part of an extended Italian-American family. Loretta's maiden name was Delaurenti.

"Since we have no children, we indulge ourselves with these sports teams," she says.

"Loretta gets on the computer and always manages to find us discount air fares and hotel rooms, so it's not so expensive," Joe says.

However, the Huskies and Indians aren't their only regular passions. They attend Renton's St. Anthony's Catholic Church, or other churches when they're on the road.

"Joe has missed only two Sundays since 1956. I've missed a few more only because I was recovering from cancer."

When she went to the hospital, they had a purple robe waiting for her, and one of her nurses was the mother of Husky quarterback Carl Bonnell.

The couple also is passionate about supporting education. They are board members of Renton High School Excellence in Education and donate time and money in support of local schools. They also volunteer for Renton River Days.

Joe and Loretta do lament what they say is declining adult participation in high school sports.

"People don't attend like they used to," she says. "There used to be long lines waiting to get into the high school games. Now we can show up five minutes before the whistle and still sit on the 50-yard-line."

That's okay. As long as the Indians and Huskies are playing, they will have Loretta and Joe cheering them on.



# All kids are our kids

I have worked on the same corner across from McKnight Middle School for the past 26 years. I have seen a lot of kids cut across the church parking lot coming and going to school. I could count on one hand the number of fights I have had to break up and there have been even fewer acts of vandalism. McKnight has not always enjoyed the excellent reputation it has today but from my vantage point there has always been a great group of kids.



**Kirby Unti**  
COLUMNIST

When you discover a great group kids you also discover a lot of adults who care. It is the reason why on curriculum night, band concerts, plays, or open house the parking lot is overflowing and you have to get there early if you want to get a good seat. Every child needs at least one adult in life who is there to cheer him on.

What breaks my heart is I know that this is not true for every child. In fact there are two kids who immediately come to mind for me. They grew up not far from the church. They were two of the cutest kids you ever wanted to see. When they were little their eyes would twinkle and their smiles would melt you. They frequently wandered over to the church and we always were delighted if they could join in. They knew whenever there was an event with food or cookies. They would show up to cash in and often went home with their pockets full.

I don't know their whole story but I know things at home were not always good. Mom and dad split up. Drugs, alcohol and violence were taking their toll. Sometimes there would be long times when we wouldn't see them because they had gone to live with other relatives. When I did see them I would see them early in the morning and late at night, too late for a child to be out.

The older they became the tougher they got. That beautiful innocence was taken from them daily. We had to keep an eye on them when they were at church. They were not only coming for the cook-

ies; they were coming to steal food, magic markers, the coffee money and anything else they could slip out the door.

When they were little kids we all welcomed them. They were the kind of kids you just wanted to take home with you, but as they grew older it was harder and harder to care for them and easier and easier to want to wring their necks. It wasn't long before they became well known to the police department and as you might predict they struggled to do well in school.

I kick myself for not caring more when they were little, wondering if there was some way I could have intervened, gotten more help for the family. I kick myself that I allowed myself to get ticked off at them. I barked at them, knowing their behavior was a cry for help. These kids were raising themselves and quite frankly didn't stand a chance. They needed at least one adult who would not shoo them away. They needed the very best combination of clear boundaries and a lot of love and affirmation.

Renton is very fortunate to have a gathering of community leaders that includes members of the school district, City of Renton, Valley Medical Center, business leaders, faith community, nonprofits and concerned citizens who have joined together to promote what is called 40 Assets. 40 Assets is a nationwide initiative that recognizes that the world has changed and that every kid needs the support that many of us who now have grey hair just naturally received when we were growing up. 40 Assets is a great reminder that "all kids are our kids."

Renton excels in caring for children of all ages but we know we can do a better job and are committed to it. You will be hearing more about 40 Assets in the year to come. In the meantime we all run across children in our lives who can benefit greatly from an additional dose of love. Reach out beyond your own and find some way to make a difference in the life a child in our community. Do it before it is too late.

*Kirby Unti is pastor of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, in the Renton Highlands, and a regular columnist for the Renton Magazine.*

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RENTON MAGAZINE / Denis Law

Seasonal decorations are organized by color and style at Cugini Florists. Employees start pulling out Christmas decorations in late October.

## Cugini Florists goes all out for the holiday season

**BY ANDREW FICKES**

**I**f you go by Cugini Florists on South Third Street in downtown Renton this time of year, you can enjoy a winter wonderland scene, one of the best holiday displays in the area.

"Our store never looks more gorgeous than during the Christmas season," says Bill Gaw, co-owner of Cugini Florists. "It's got a lot of pizzazz this time of year."

The florist shop decorates lavishly for most holidays, but Christmas is special. Gaw, his wife Sharon Landes, and their staff begin transforming the 1,800-square-foot sales floor with Christmas decorations weeks before the holiday.

Gaw really gets into the spirit of the holidays, whether it's Mother's Day, Valentine's Day or Thanksgiving. For

Christmas he wore a colorful Christmas themed tie.

"I look forward to Christmas because it gets new people in the store and it's a great marketing tool," he says.

The Christmas season technically starts in January for Cugini Florists, a year ahead. The company places its first orders for inventory in January, trying to look ahead at what trends will be popular later in the year. Most everything for the following year will be purchased by May, with last-minute shopping done in August.

"We'll usually do eight to nine display groups with anywhere from 15 to 50 items in each group," says Gaw. "A lot of the displays that we do are color-themed."

Gaw said his store is unusual in terms of its early start in decorating and its plethora of non-floral gift items.

"We're in the top 10 percent of florists in the country based on dollar volume. Our

gift inventory is three to four times larger than most floral shops."

Cugini Florists calls its gift items, "Where Christmas Memories Begin." Gaw said his store carries high-quality products. Much of what they sell is passed on by customers to their loved ones. They become mementos in a way, he says.

"Christmas to Cugini Florists is making a lot of people happy," Gaw says. "Underline 'a lot.'"

Gaw says the store receives its first shipment of poinsettias the week before Thanksgiving. During last Christmas season, Cugini Florists sold 500 arrangements of fresh cut flowers and 200 poinsettias. Gaw said he expects to reach at least 600 for this Christmas season.

"We've had fairly consistent sales increases since 9-11," he says. "People started caring for one another. It grounded

**CUGINI** - next page





## CUGINI

from page 10

people and brought them home. We can send a physical manifestation of that love 1,000 miles away."

Gaw and his wife Sharon share between them 70-plus years of experience in the floral industry. They have owned Cugini Florists since 1984, after purchasing it from Dario Cugini. They purchased the property from Clinton Betz in 1992. Betz owned Betz Floral in the building from 1947 to 1973.

The Cugini family purchased the property and renamed it Cugini Florists in 1973. Prior to that time Dario and his family ran Cugini Florists in Auburn.

To educate themselves about the trends in the Christmas gift industry, Gaw and Landes attend major showrooms in Seattle and large gift shows in January and August. They buy the bulk of their products from local companies and gift shows. Most of the products are made in China or the Orient, Gaw says.

"Most trends that we pick up on start in California, go to the East Coast and work their way to us," Landes says. "Sometimes it takes a couple of years for it to reach Renton."



RENTON MAGAZINE / Denis Low

Owners Sharon Landes and Bill Gaw.

Landes first started in the floral industry at age 16. She worked at Phillips Flowers in Chicago for many years. It's where she met Bill. Landes always looks forward to Christmas at the store.

"It should be an enchanting shopping experience for customers," she says.

Landes is a local Martha Stewart of sorts. She feels it's important that Cugini

Florists set up Christmas displays in such a way that teaches customers how the displays could look in their own homes. This is why Landes is very careful picking the colors and items each year for their store. She says from time to time she has gotten it wrong.

This year aquamarine is in for Christmas in most of the country. But def-

initely not here, Landes said.

"People here in Renton go for more of the traditional items," she says. "Aquamarine would work better in warmer places like California."

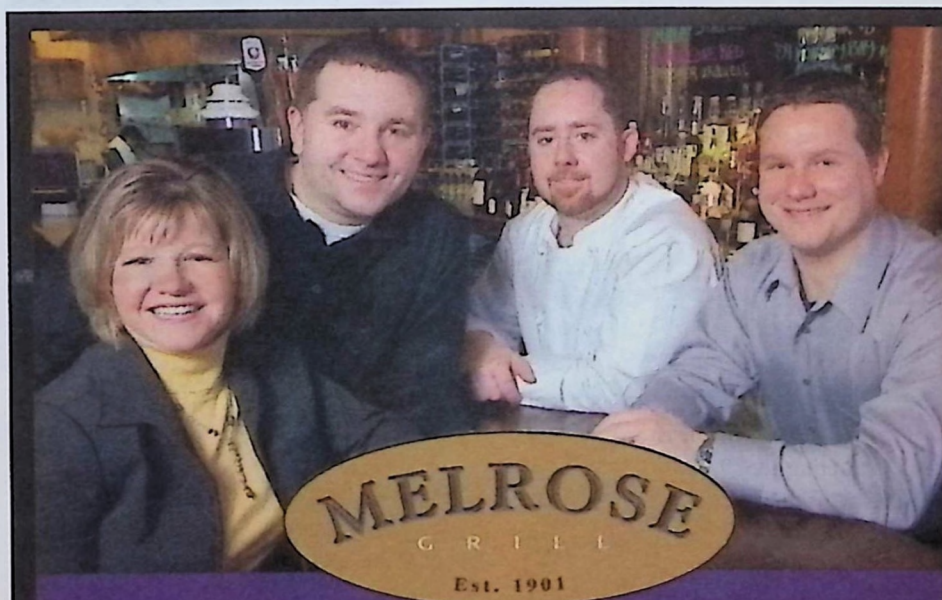
More often than not, though, Cugini Florists gets it right each year with its assortment of ornaments and other Christmas items. Ninety percent of its customers are within 10 to 15 miles of the store. However, people have come from as far north as Everett and from out-of-state.

"People will visit their relatives here in Renton and time it just right to be here when our sales start," Gaw says.

Besides customers, the store also has received praise from others. The Renton Chamber of Commerce honored the store with its Shop Renton Business Excellence Award in 2006 and its Customer Focus Award in 2002. It has ranked in Teleflora's Top 500 list for more than 10 years, in terms of its sending volume.

Since 1973, Cugini Florists' mission has been to provide service, quality and "something extra." Their festive outpouring to the community during the holiday season is a testament to that.

"We've always gone with a quality product and have tried to sell it at the best value," Gaw says.



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## A tale of two service clubs

### Kiwanians focus on kids and community

BY MANNY FRISHBERG

For some, noon is the best of times for a meeting. For others, it's the worst of times, which is why Renton has two active Kiwanis clubs.

The city has had a Kiwanis presence since 1929, just 14 years after the first Kiwanis Club was founded in Detroit, Michigan. But some people who were interested in joining found the lunch-hour meetings less than ideal. So, a number of years ago a morning club that meets week-

ly at 7:27 a.m. was formed to take up the slack.

Asked to explain their mission, Kiwanians from both groups refer to the international organization's mission statement, adopted in October, 2004: "Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to changing the world one child and one community at a time."

At first it was about business people coming together to exchange services, but almost from the beginning there was a sense of community service that appealed to the men who were joining. Even before that first club

received its state charter, club members were giving out Christmas baskets to the poor.

Larry Wood, the treasurer of the Renton Kiwanis Club (informally known as the noon club) says the biggest change he has seen in the more than 40 years he has been involved was opening membership to women in the mid-1980s.

His wife, Dorothy, the current club secretary, joined eight years ago. "That was the biggest change, I guess, that the clubs have had since I've been around," says Wood. "They've made excellent members, very good officers and

members of the clubs."

"I'm a relatively new person to Kiwanis," says Bob Gagnier, president of Kiwanis of Renton. "They like to get new blood like me involved. Community service has always been something I've been interested in, as part of my philosophy of life of giving back to the community."

Gagnier has served twice as a board member of the local Chamber of Commerce and continues to serve on the board of the YMCA and say, "I just think community service is something that's important for everybody to consider."

"We bring in interesting speakers about three out of four weeks each month. So we learn a lot about what's happening in our community from these different people that we invite. But I think the greatest aspect is seeing the reaction of kids that

KIWANIS ~ next page



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RENTON MAGAZINE / David Nelson

Renton area Kiwanis Club presidents - Pat Auten and Bob Gagnier (holding hot dogs) are joined by Renton High School Key Club members at the city of Renton Bazaar.

## KIWANIS from page 12

we invite in to tell us what a difference we're making in their lives.

"Each week when I hand out our agendas, at the bottom I put a line that says, 'One can make a difference.' We try to highlight the fact that even an individual person, whether be it an adult or a child, can make a difference, just in the way that they conduct themselves, and that they give back to their community in one fashion or another."

While the two groups have separate memberships and officers, they share the same commitment to community service and often cooperate in joint ventures for fundraising and programs. For the past four years the clubs have cooperated on their major annual fundraiser, a golf tournament held in the spring, with each club taking the lead in alternate years.

Next year, says Pat Auten, Kiwanis of Greater Renton president, the event will be held on May 7. She says the tourney usually raises in excess of \$10,000 which the clubs share.

Both clubs also have their own food booths at Renton River Days, where they sell hot dogs, drinks and other snack foods on the Thursday Kids' Day.

They each administer a number of scholarship programs, including \$1,000 scholarships awarded to students from the three Renton School District high schools and from Renton Technical College, and they each distribute food baskets and Mothers Day flowers at the senior center.

In addition, the noon group, the Kiwanis Club of Renton, provides a scholarship to Pacific Northwest Law Enforcement Camp. They also sponsor an annual Christmas party for elementary school students and the Renton Park and

Recreation Hip Hopp'n Egg Hunt in the spring.

Both clubs are active supporters of the Salvation Army and the Renton food and clothing banks. Between them they sponsor Key Clubs at Renton's three high schools. The noon group sponsors one at Lindbergh, the morning group takes Hazen, and they combine forces at Renton High School.

Auten says the Key Clubs count as one of their most important functions "because that is working with young people to learn about community service and to develop leadership skills." The teenagers put together Thanksgiving food baskets for families in need every year, she says, and this year her club is contributing \$500 in Safeway gift certificates to aid in that project.

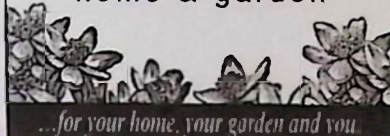
"This past September we honored 12 Renton citizens with the Everyday Hero Award," says Dorothy Wood. Among the honorees was Maria Federici, who came back from a horrific accident in 2004 to begin training guide dogs with her mother, Robin Abel.

### Meeting days and times/ Contact information

*Kiwanis Club of Greater Renton, the morning group, holds meetings Thursdays at 7:27 a.m. in the Culinaire Room on the Renton Technical College campus, 3000 N.E. 4th St. The noon group, Kiwanis Club of Renton, meets Tuesdays at noon at La Hacienda Restaurant, 881 S. 3rd St. For more information about attending a meeting or joining one of the clubs, contact their presidents: Pat Auten, for the Greater Renton Kiwanis, 425-255-1406. Bob Gagnier, Kiwanis of Renton, at First Savings Bank of Renton, 425-255-4400.*

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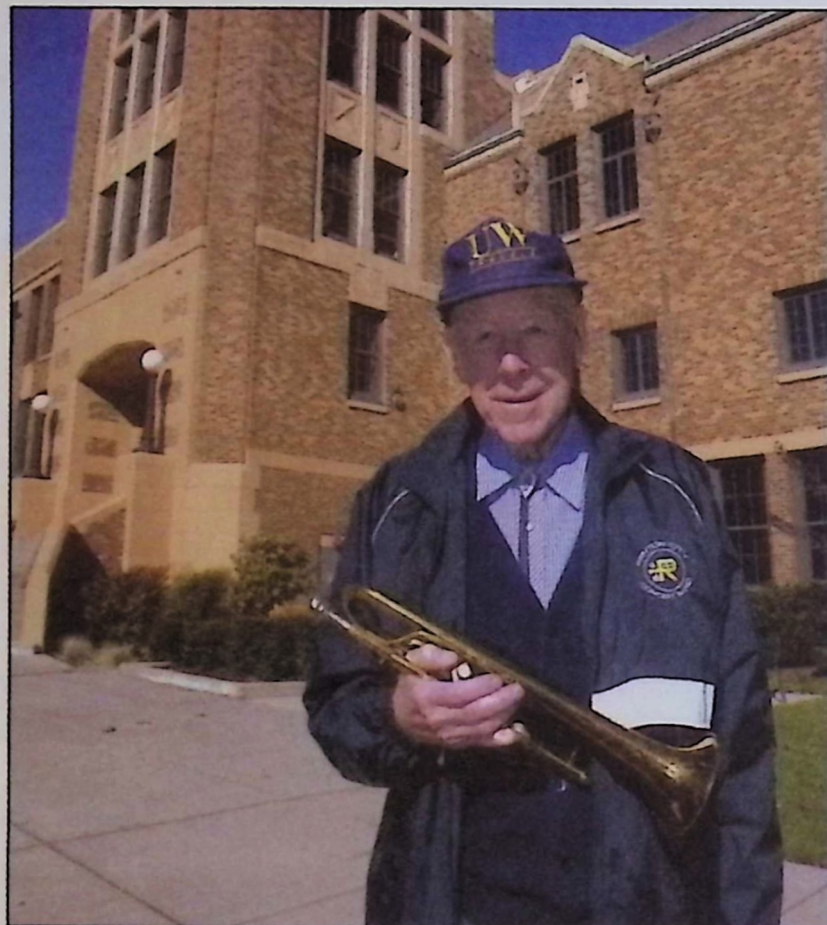
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## Randy Rockhill's still performing after all these years



RENTON MAGAZINE / David Nelson

Randy Rockhill and his cornet. He's played since the sixth grade.

### BY ANDREW FICKES

*A*t age 89, Randy Rockhill is sure about one thing. If you don't have music in your life, you've missed a lot.

The former Renton High School band director and school administrator still has the chops to play his cornet in the Renton City Concert Band, the community band he helped found in 1984. He's the oldest member by about 40 years, putting in a half-hour practice every four to five days and practicing Thursday nights with the full band.

"I'm lucky to be able to play in the band still," he says. "If I don't practice then I can't play my part. I really can't anyway. I'm getting a little old for this."

As a young boy in the mid-1920s, Rockhill listened to the big band tunes of Benny Goodman and others on the fami-

ly's newly purchased radio.

He was born in 1917 in Tacoma. His mother and brother both played piano. His other brother purchased a trumpet with the intent to perform in a dance band. Rockhill began monkeying around with his brother's trumpet and in the sixth grade began taking lessons. Since that day, music has opened doors for him.

"Everything good that's happened to me has happened through music," he says. "I met my wife through music. She played harp in the University of Washington band and that's where I met her. I made my living through music through teaching, and from the late 1930s to the mid-1950s I did a great deal of professional playing."

Rockhill started his job as band director of the Renton High School band the day after Labor Day in the fall of 1939. Prior to his first day of work, Rockhill spent his summer in Europe with a college dance band performing on a cruise liner.

Everything good that's happened to me has happened through music.

~ Randy Rockhill

Fortunately, they were able to return to America five days before World War II started. The ship returned to New York filled to capacity and they got stories to tell their grandkids.

Rockhill felt very fortunate to get a job at Renton High School.

"It was the end of the Depression in 1939. Teaching jobs were scarce," he says. "Renton was one of the better jobs. I never expected to get Renton. I started out at \$1,440 per year. A lot of beginning teachers went out at \$1,200 a year and some even as low as \$900 a year."

Between the late 1930s to the mid-1950s, Rockhill was an integral part of the Seattle music scene.

"Wherever they needed a trumpet player, I played, whether it was the Seattle Symphony or a Chinese gambling joint," he says. "At one time I had three programs a week of live music playing on the radio stations. I played three and a half seasons with the Seattle Symphony. And I think I played in every major dance band in the Seattle area."

"When I came to Renton I was playing Saturday nights at The Spanish Castle on Highway 99," he says. "That's where the parents of the kids that I was teaching would be dancing. Playing there on Friday and Saturday nights, I made more money than I did teaching their kids all week. That's where I first learned that society pays more to be entertained than to be educated."

Rockhill and his wife Willa today live above the I-405 S-curves. Their home, where they've lived since 1955, affords them a spectacular view of the city and Lake Washington. When the couple first arrived in Renton, the town's population was 4,000. Renton High School, which was a combined junior and senior high school at the time, served 700 students.

"Pretty soon you knew everybody and everybody knew you," Rockhill says.

Through 34 years teaching in the

Renton School District, Rockhill did a lot in shaping the music department shared between the three high schools and junior highs. For 30 of those 34 years he served as the supervisor of the music department.

"I was fortunate in that I formed one of the best music departments in the state," he says. "I hired top people."

From the mid 1970s until 1980, Rockhill finished his career managing the Washington State Cultural Enrichment Program. His offices were at Seattle Center. After retiring in 1980, he served on the Renton City Council until 1984. Following that, he formed the Renton City Concert Band with four other local musicians.

The group today is a 60-piece band that includes current and former music teachers and professional performers. At one time, more than a dozen of the members were former Rockhill students.

"These days I just play for my own amusement," he says. "I haven't had enough nerve to take any money for playing my horn for 25 years, at least."

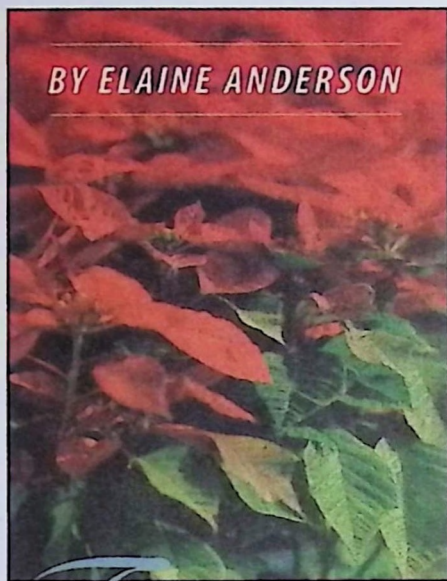
These days Rockhill is still active in the Renton Civil Service and the Renton Rotary Club. He's the oldest member in the Renton Rotary, joining it in 1945. Each meeting he leads the group in singing God Bless America.

Rockhill and his wife attend matinees of the Seattle Symphony. He likes to watch the symphony so he can remember how an instrument is really supposed to be played. Today's music doesn't thrill him like the big band music of his youth.

"I don't understand what they call music nowadays," he says. "I have absolutely no understanding of some of this stuff where you have to screech and use a mike. I still believe I like acoustical music. You create the sound either with your voice or with an instrument. You can use amplification if necessary. But using amplification just for the sense of amplification is for the birds."



BY ELAINE ANDERSON



*F*or much of the world, December hosts the most important holiday of the year. Centuries ago, the winter solstice fell on December 25. The date marked the longest night of the year, a bleak, dark time. But, the longest night of the year also held the promise of longer days and the return of

## Season's symbols: Evergreen means life

the sun, and this was a reason for joyful celebration.

The celebration of Christmas incorporates elements from different religions and beliefs. Some of the most recognizable symbols of Christmas are plants. It's impossible to think of Christmas without envisioning a Christmas tree, and for hundreds of years people have been bringing these trees into their homes. The custom originated in the Germanic countries where the festival trees were evergreen, living and green when all other plant life seemed dead.

The ancient Egyptians also marked the winter solstice and the return of lengthening days by bringing greenery into their homes, but they decorated with date palms.

Today, we purchase our Christmas trees from tree farms, whose beginnings we can trace to the time of the Depression

when sales of trees for landscaping were practically nonexistent. Nursery owners cut the conifers and sold them as Christmas trees. If you purchase a cultivated tree to decorate your home this month, chances are 9 out of 10 that you will purchase either a Scotch pine (the most popular), Douglas fir, noble fir, white pine, balsam fir or white spruce.

Other greenery that symbolizes the season includes holly and mistletoe. Long ago, with its glossy green leaves and bright red berries, holly represented life amidst the cold and white landscapes of Europe, and it, too, was used to decorate homes. The Pilgrims are credited with bringing the custom of decorating with holly to the United States.

And, then there's mistletoe. This plant has been considered magical, mysterious, and sacred since the time of the Druids. Like the conifer and the holly, its ever-

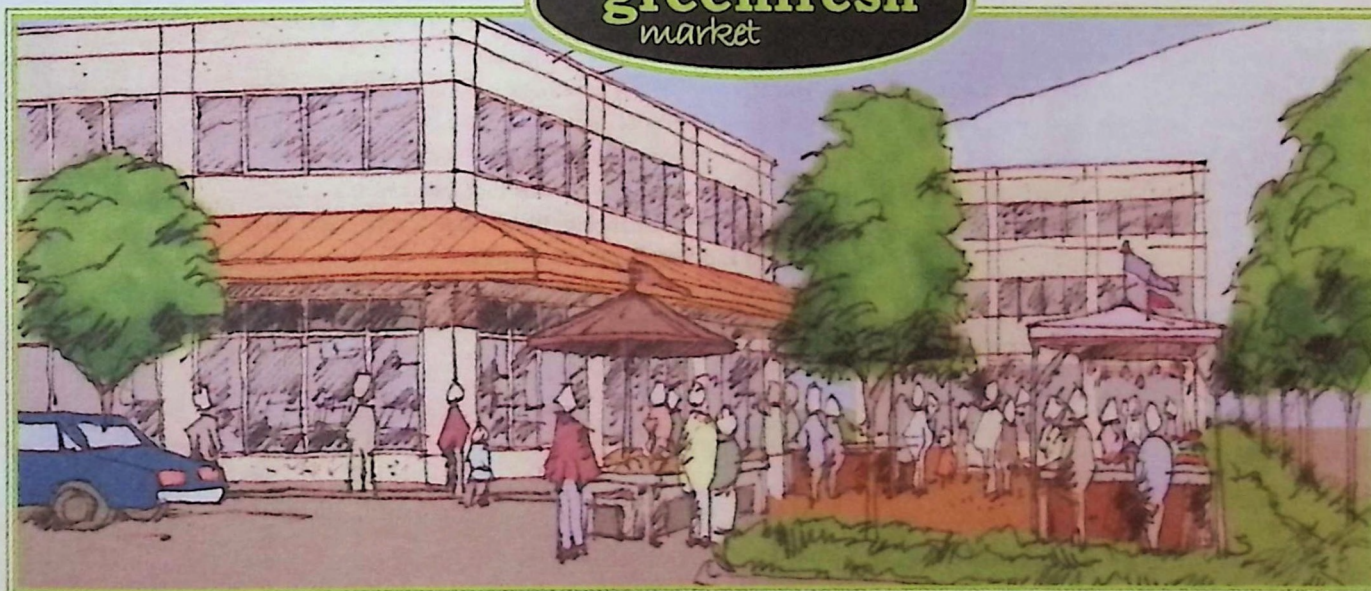
green leaves were considered to symbolize life, and decorating with mistletoe was also part of midwinter celebrations. As for the custom of kissing under the mistletoe, there are many explanations for the origin of this practice.

The poinsettia, with its vivid colors of red and green, is a plant associated with the holiday season that is not centuries old. Next month I'll explain how to keep your poinsettia plants alive from this Christmas to next Christmas.

*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 gardening questions, call the Master Gardener Phone Clinic at 206-296-3440.*

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## Jordon Bolden is singing his way to New York City

BY ANDREW FICKES

Seattle Supersonics fans will get to enjoy a young talent from Renton this week when Jordon Bolden performs the national anthem before the game at the Key Arena December 1.

The team invited him to return after impressing them with his singing at a recent Seattle Storm game.

Jordon Bolden has the chops and vocal range of a seasoned performer. At Nelsen Middle School's fall concert, he led the choir in the Hallelujah Chorus like a pro, closing out the show and garnering overwhelming applause.

But at age 12 and in the seventh grade, Jordon is nowhere close to being egotistical and pompous. In fact, he's downright humble and takes everything in stride.

"We've raised him to be humble," says his mother, Mary Ellen Bolden. "We've never allowed him to be pompous or allowed him to say 'I'm all that.'"

"When people tell me I've done a good job, I say 'thank you,'" says Jordon.

"Kids want to be around him, because he's a good kid," says his mother.

At age 1, Jordon was known to carry a tune, follow notes and dance. At age 2, Mary Ellen and Jordon's dad Anthony got Jordon connected with the music minister, Paul Thomas, at Martin Luther King Memorial Baptist Church. At age 2, he led his first song at church.



RENTON MAGAZINE / David Nelson

Jordon Bolden led his first song at age 2. He's a frequent performer.

"He saw the Sound of Music at age 2 and it became his favorite movie. He can sing most every song to all the popular musicals," says Mary Ellen. "At age 10, he said he was going to leave us and go to Julliard in New York City. He's never come to us and said he wants to be a doctor or a fireman. He's never changed his mind."

Today, the straight A student has his eye on the ball.

"I see myself doing Broadway," says Jordon. "I'm thinking about going to Cornish College of the Arts in Seattle for two years and then going on to Julliard in New York City. I'd like to start that after high school."

During this past year, Jordon had the opportunity to visit New York City twice during the course of four months. In win-

ning at Seattle's Showtime at the Apollo, Jordon won a trip to New York City to appear on the Apollo Theater stage as a "Star of Tomorrow." It was his first appearance on television.

Later, he went to New York City as part of the S.H.A.D.E.S. All City Youth Choir and won in the Best Youth Choir category as part of the McDonald's Gospelfest.

"In 20 years, I see myself in New York City," says Jordon. "It's my home. There's just something about it. It's busy there. There are lots of people."

While Jordon is very good at keeping on top of his homework, he's also disciplined at studying the choreography and vocal styles of some of his favorite performers like Beyonce and Usher. He's a perfectionist, he admits.

"I can be pretty hard on myself," he says. "I sometimes get mad at my voice, if it doesn't sound right."

Jordon says his influences vary from hip-hop to gospel, from inspirational to rhythm and blues. He says he especially loves to perform musical theater, which is a combination of dance, singing and acting. Jordon's vocal ability covers soprano, alto and tenor. He has been in many theatrical groups including Missoula's Children Theater and Langston Hughes Teen Summer Musical.

"He grabs the Seattle P-I every Friday morning and checks it for auditions at local theater groups," says Mary Ellen. "All the theater groups have his resume, so he's connected that way."

Jordon is very active in his church. He is the youth director of the AGAPE Youth Gospel Choir and is also a lead singer and soloist in the group. He teaches three-part harmony and syncopation, as well as choreography. The group performs all over Western Washington.

Jordan has a two-song demo. He plans to cut a full length CD at the beginning of the year.

"It'll be a mix between hip-hop, inspirational, gospel and R and B," says Jordon. "I'd like to cover things that kids go through and parents don't understand."

His first single "Just a Kid" has had 300 hits since it first went on My Space, a website popular among many performers.

"He's been blessed through church and community events," says Mary Ellen. "People want him around."



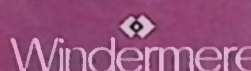
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# Renton School District good news announcements

## **Talbot Hill's MicroSociety article published**

Sheryl Dunton, Talbot Hill Elementary Principal, had an article about the school's MicroSociety program published in a recent edition of Educational Leadership magazine. The article titled "Building a MicroSociety: Elementary school students connect learning to life in this hands-on program," is a four-page spread on the school's award-winning program and its influence on student achievement.

## **Fifth grader moves up to national semifinals**

Miriam Lewis, a Tiffany Park Elementary School fifth-grader, is a national semifinalist in the elementary division of the annual literary event Student Science Fiction and Fantasy Contest sponsored by World Science Fiction Society. Miriam was encouraged to enter her story, titled "The Stolen Emerald," by Corrie Freiwaldt, her literacy teacher. Nearly 750 entries were received for this year's contest. Miriam is one of only 16 elementary school semifinalists and the only participant from Washington State to be selected.

## **Renton alumni offer mini-grants**

Renton High School's alumni organization, the Excellence in Education Foundation, is providing mini-grants to enhance educational offerings for Renton High students. The mini grants will assist in helping students in geometry, American studies, the Link program, AP chemistry, government, speech and debate, dance class, and math WASL preparation.

## **Parents of special need students get free night out**

Parents of children with special needs are getting a special treat

from the staff at Hillcrest Early Childhood Center. The staff is offering parents a free night out as part of the annual "Preschool Parents Night Out" on Friday, Dec. 1.

## **Students sing anthem at Seahawks game**

Kayle Whitmore, daughter of Pam La Follette, attendance secretary at Hazelwood Elementary School, recently accompanied other singers in the National Anthem at the Seattle Seahawks nationally-televised Monday Night Football game. Kayle is a sixth grade student at the Northwest School for Hearing Impaired Children.

## **City installs traffic lights at area schools**

Students at several elementary schools are safer now thanks to the close working relationship between the City of Renton and the school district. The city recently completed work to heighten awareness of drivers and make the streets safer in school zones around the Highlands, Kenneydale, Sierra Heights and Talbot Hill elementary schools. The city installed new signs that include blinking lights to help drivers observe a law to slow down to 20 miles an hour when students are present. The signs are activated 30 minutes before the start of school and again at dismissal time.

## **State officials honor 54 Tiffany Park readers**

Fifty-four Tiffany Park Elementary School students received a special certificate of recognition from Governor Christine Gregoire, Superintendent of Public Instruction Terry Bergeson and state librarian Jan Walsh for successfully completing their goals for summer reading programs. Last school year, Tiffany Park students were encouraged to participate in sum-

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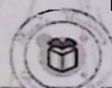
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## Show your assets, Renton!— Building the community's heart

Backers hope program  
will build relationships  
among ages, cultures

**BY MARJORIE ROMMEL**

Let's say a group of teenage boys strolls through your neighborhood, dressed in skater pants, baggy tee shirts, and baseball caps turned backward. Do you avert your eyes, maybe even go inside and shut the door? Or do you greet the boys, and learn their names, who they are and what interests them?

Show Your Assets Renton! aims to encourage not just interaction but relationships between Renton residents of all ages and cultures. The community-wide initiative is modeled on the Minneapolis-based Search Institute's 40 Assets mission to acknowledge, value and respect young people for their individual talents and gifts. Locally it's working to engage youth, and everyone else in the community, in working together to make Renton a better place to grow up, learn, work, and live.

It's a shift in community attitude whose time has come, according to local Realtor and Renton School Board director Marcie Maxwell, and Cindy Haba-Korn, parent and vice president of the Kenndale Neighborhood Association.

The 40 Assets under discussion are developmental assets such as family, neighborhood, and religious community support, and adult role models. In light of those assets, the Search Institute promotes setting boundaries and expectations, and providing opportunities for constructive use of time, so that youth are allowed, and encouraged, to become healthy, happy, thoughtful, passionate, purposeful, confident and successful well-adjusted students and adults.

Renton already has many of the 40 assets, Maxwell said, not least of those is a caring community where children and youth are valued, supported and empowered.

"We're working with many, many

partners, including the Chamber of Commerce and its member businesses, schools, churches, the YMCA, the hospital, civic organizations, and youth groups such as those in the high school," Maxwell said.

"We are working to build awareness of the 40 Assets, and identify and celebrate the assets we have. Everyone in our community can help youth become healthy, successful, responsible citizens."

It's important, she said, to realize schools and parents can't do it alone. Together with neighbors and community organizations, congregations and businesses, "some really great things can happen." Less than two years into the project, the 40 Assets are working their way into neighborhood newsletters and onto flashing reader board signs throughout the community.

In his book "All Kids Are Our Kids," Search Institute founder Peter Benson urges support for youth as a daily enterprise. "We really believe that," Haba-Korn said. "Do you know the kids on your block? Do you know their names? If not, there's no time like the present to get involved."

"The energy is really building," Maxwell enthused. "We're ready to put these concepts into action."

As its first action strategy, the group has started a contest for children ages 8 to 18, providing prizes for the best expression of any one of those 40 Assets. For details, watch the Show Your Assets Renton! Web site, [www.showyourasset-renton.org](http://www.showyourasset-renton.org).

Organizers, parents and community members meet monthly to share ideas and discuss strategies. The next meeting date, time and place haven't been set, but those who are interested are encouraged to contact Maxwell, at [Marcie@marciemaxwell.com](mailto:Marcie@marciemaxwell.com), or 425-466-8000, for more information.



**MARCIE  
MAXWELL**

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**www.RTC.edu**



## GOOD NEWS

from page 17

mer reading programs offered by King County and City of Renton libraries. The names of the students who completed their reading goals were announced to the entire school, and the students received the certificate and a \$5 dollar gift certificate to Borders Bookstore.

## Hazen High stacks fast

Hazen High School's Sport Stacking Team recently took part in the first-ever World Sport Stacking Association's Stack Up Event to kick off the 2006 Guinness World Records Week. Team Hazen stacked various pyramids in prescribed patterns at lightning speed for at least 30 minutes. Thousands of stackers from across the country contributed their sport stacking

skills to the event that Guinness World Records billed as the "World's Largest Sport Stacking Event."

## Lindbergh student receives scholarship

Lindbergh High School senior Amanda Brennan has been awarded a Silver Regents Scholarship from Washington State

University worth \$8,000. Amanda was awarded the scholarship based on academic strength, leadership, and community, cultural and extracurricular involvement.

*These Good News Announcements are prepared by the Renton School District Community Relations department. Contributions made be offered by contacting Randy Matheson at 425-204-2345 or at [randy.matheson@renton.wednet.edu](mailto:randy.matheson@renton.wednet.edu).*

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RENTON MAGAZINE / David Nelson

Captain Terry Masango's family history is linked to the Salvation Army. He was born into abject poverty in Zimbabwe.

## Food bank's new leader traveled long road to Renton

**BY MANNY FRISHBERG**

**T**erry Masango has come a long way to take the leadership of the food bank and community center on South Tobin Street, halfway around the globe from his family home in Harare, Zimbabwe.

His current position as a captain in the Salvation Army is a far cry from the abject poverty he experienced as the son of an alcoholic father. And though he came here by way of Australia, Spokane and Southern California, spiritually his journey has been a straight line.

"I'm a fifth generation Salvationist," he says. "My great-great grandparents

were some of the first Salvation Army converts. My grandparents were Salvation Army officers like I am. Due to the care of the Salvation Army people I met every Sunday at church, I was able to rise above the oppressing forces of poverty and ghetto life."

After high school Masango went to work at a bank for six years to help support his sister and three brothers.

"But," he says, "the more I worked at the bank, the more I realized I wanted to be in the ministry and be able to change people's lives like mine had been changed by the people who assisted me when I was growing up."

So, after getting married seven years ago, he and his wife moved to Australia to attend a Salvation Army school. Part of that training, he says, included coming to

America. In 2000 he was offered a job in Spokane as the assistant of the Salvation Army officer there, where they stayed for four years. During that time he and his wife, Rutendo, had their first child, a girl, now 5 years old.

"In Spokane I worked with the church in building up a youth group and young adult groups, which comprised a lot of young people who didn't have their lives in order," Masango says. "We were able to see almost all of them go to college and most of them are doing very well, even years later."

Following two years in Southern California, in late June Capt. Masango (in the Salvation Army system local programs' executive directors are captains) moved his family to Western Washington to run the Salvation Army's local commu-

nity center and Renton Rotary Food Bank, as well as being its minister.

Operating out of the one-year-old facility, he has emphasized the dignity of the nearly 1,000 clients they serve. Rather than giving people a basket of food, he says each person is provided a shopping cart and, along with a volunteer, they go from table to table, where items are grouped by categories – grains, produce, canned goods and so forth – picking out what they want.

The center is also home to a Boy Scout troop and a Sunbeam program (similar to the Girl Scouts) on Wednesdays, a free medical clinic operated in conjunction with the Rotary Club on Saturday mornings, and Sunday school and church services where, he says, "I get to do one of the things I love most, and that's to preach."

## The Salvation Army's year-round mission is families in need

The Salvation Army is making an extended effort this holiday season to bring hope to local families in need and frustrated by the harsh realities of making ends meet.

Traditionally, The Salvation Army's bell ringers in Renton help generate a large degree of local support for programs community wide. The organization this year faces financial challenges as it strives to meet the growing local need.

"It is important for residents of Renton to be aware of those families right here who face the prospect of a most difficult Christmas season, struggling even to meet their basic necessities," says Captain Terry Masango of The Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army is dedicated to its people-serving ministry not only during the holiday season, but year round.

"Although The Salvation Army's visibility is more

heightened during the holidays, we want everyone to know our programs are ongoing," says Masango. "We all need to come together to revitalize and strengthen the core of our local community by offering support to those needy families and individuals in any way we can."

*For more information about Christmas programs and events planned by The Salvation Army, call Captain Terry Masango at 425-255-5974.*



# readers comments

We received a number of letters, phone calls and emails from our readers who enjoyed the first edition of *Renton Magazine*. Here are a few comments we received:

It's AWESOME - just beautiful!  
Many congrats!

★ *Sonja Mejeander*

What a great and perfect front cover for your Inaugural Issue! Congratulations! I think you've got a hit on your hands.

★ *Jay Covington*

Congratulations on a great magazine!

★ *Mike Hardy, DDS*

Outstanding first edition. I like your concept of GOOD NEWS.

★ *Russ Price*

I absolutely love it! What a great idea, something more lifestyle oriented. This is exactly what this city needs. Keep em coming!

★ *Larry Cutting, Broker  
American Classic Homes Real Estate*

I have to tell you that I am so very impressed with your new *Renton Magazine*. It really is a wonderful showcase for Renton. I can't tell you enough how impressed and excited I am about this new opportunity for Renton. Way to Go!

★ *Erin Iverson  
Communities In Schools of Renton*

What a great idea for a new magazine. It truly is getting depressing reading about all the "bad" news. I, too, grew up in this community as my children did, and we have many wonderful opportunities right here in our community. Thank you for bringing this new publication to our community.

★ *Sharon Moats*

Your first edition of *Renton Magazine* is awesome. Congratulations. I love the cover.

★ *Sabrina Mirante*

What a great publication. It is so

refreshing to see all the GOOD that a community has to offer.

★ *Ric and Dianne Jacobson*

What a delightful publication and a real collector's item! All the beautiful color photos portray such a happy city. The articles are so "user friendly." I thank you.

★ *Gloria Gamba*

I just received a copy of *Renton Magazine* and have finished reading it from cover to cover! Wonderful! We really need your positive approach added to our lives.

Thank you for the wonderful article about Cori Simmons. As president of the Fred Hancock Unit 19 American Legion Auxiliary of Renton, I cannot tell you how thrilled and proud we are to have been given the opportunity to send Cori to Central Washington University for a week of intense training in government at the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State.

For Cori to have gone on to The American Legion Auxiliary Girls Nation in Washington, D.C. makes us feel we are doing the correct thing in all our many hours of dedicated volunteer service.

We need help in sending these young people. We have sent as many as 14 girls in one year from our local high schools at a cost of approximately \$250 each.

We need the parents of these wonderful young ladies to know about our program. As much as we try to get the information into the schools for the Juniors each year, it seems many of them never hear of us. So, thanks again for this lovely article.

I will look forward to all your future issues. Thanks for your good work.

★ *Loma Taylor  
Renton American Legion  
Auxiliary President*

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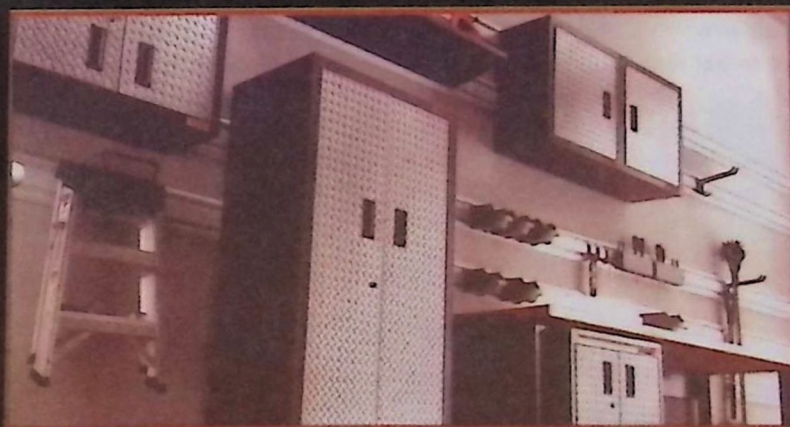
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RENTON MAGAZINE / David Neslon

Jerene Battisti captivates children with her storytelling.

## Tell us a story, Mrs. Battisti

BY ANDREW FICKES

"Mrs. Battisti, I can read!"

Jerene Battisti loves to hear those words coming from excited youngsters rushing to her side. The words are a testament to her faith in the power of storytelling.

For the past 14 years, Battisti has been the Renton Public Library's children's librarian and storyteller. Over the years, she has transformed the library's chil-

dren's department into a world-class program, adding her own personal touch and flavor.

In 2003, 2004 and 2005, Battisti received awards from a local newspaper, recognizing her as the Best Storyteller in Renton. She said it was a great feeling.

Battisti decorates the library for holidays, with spiders, pumpkins and a scarecrow for Halloween; Thanksgiving themes in November, and so on.

"With all the decorations and all the reality that you see around the room, those are all things that I have purchased because I want it to have a warm and wel-

coming atmosphere," she says. "I want this place to be like a family's living room. I want them to feel comfortable to come in here and spend time and find things that are of interest to them in a very wide variety."

The children's department, Battisti says, serves children from infancy up to age 14.

"At my preschool story times, which are offered three times a week, I usually have between 50 and 80 children plus 30 to 50 adults," she says. "When I've done special programs, like Harry Potter, I've had as many as 250 children. It really varies depending on what I'm doing."

The power of storytelling first struck Battisti while getting her masters degree in library science at the University of Washington. While her intent was to become a law librarian, she decided on a whim to take a course in children's literature.

"One person changed my life and she was Mae Benne, the professor of children's literature at the University of Washington," she says. "On the first day

of class, she walked into the room and she turned around and showed us a book called 'Thy Friend, Obadiah' by Brinton Turkle.

"She read us that story and it was as if a bolt of lightning struck me. I left the room; I went down to the University Bookstore; I bought that book; and I thought, 'this is what I want to do.' And I never looked back. I'm very grateful to her."

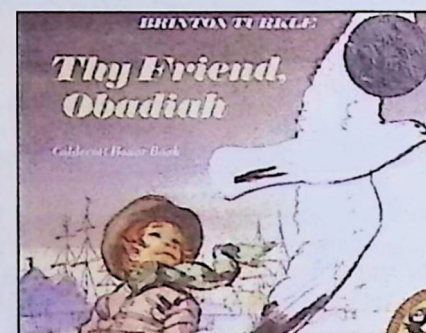
After graduating in 1969, Battisti became a storyteller for downtown Baltimore's Enoch Pratt Free Library.

"They served a huge intercity population and my job was to go out into the schools and tell

stories," she says. "It was a wonderful experience and it really taught me a lot about the power of story."

She later served as librarian for St. James School in Kent from 1984 to 1987. From 1990 to 1993, she acted as the children's librarian for the Pierce County Library System.

In 1993 her husband spotted an ad for



**LIBRARY** - next page

### Weekly Storytimes for Fall 2006

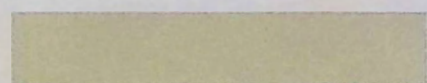


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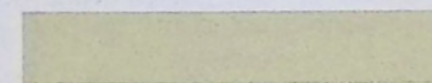
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## LIBRARY

from page 22

a new children's librarian at the Renton Public Library. Battisti applied and was hired.

"The director at the time said he wanted me to completely revitalize the children's program and I had his support for anything I wanted to do," she says. "It was really exciting to be handed an opportunity to do that."

Battisti said she instantly felt at home at the library. After all, she grew up in Renton, graduating from Renton High School in 1963. Battisti attended school with the children of the architects who built the library spanning Cedar River in 1964.

To many, having a library over a river might be seen as a disadvantage. Battisti, however, has taken the library's innovative design to her advantage.

"When you build a library over a river, your space is finite," she says. "We don't have meeting rooms, so all the programming that I do is done right here in the middle of the children's department. Having it out here instead of being shut away somewhere in a separate room I feel is a great marketing tool. Almost all libraries today do all their programming behind closed doors, which is very sad."

The age groups that Battisti reads to are varied. They range from babes in arms and kids on laps to 10-year-olds. And the way Battisti reads to these kids is something she's practiced over and over again. It's a combination of nuances like body language and voice levels and clothing.

"There are a lot of nuances like making animal noises," she says. "I'm very fond of 'moo.' The kids love all animal noises. It's a way to capture their attention. Being dramatic helps them to be engaged with the story."

Battisti is a kid at heart, which frankly is what's required for the job. Talking to her, with her jubilant laughter and infectious smile, I begin to understand her genuine love for storytelling. It makes me want to pick up a book and start reading.

"The only way to get better at it is to tell stories over and over and over again," she says. "The most important thing about storytelling is you must love the story. It has to speak to you first. And not every story is going to speak to every person in the same way. That's kind of the richness of our profession. There's a variety of ways to tell."

# Fairwood Library reopens to patrons

The Fairwood Library of the King County Library System has re-opened after a remodeling. Changes to the branch include an expanded children's area, a more visible teen area, upgraded computers, a brighter color palette and heavily padded carpeting for a much quieter sound.

"We're hoping that people will enjoy the new look as much

as they enjoyed the old one," said Karen Hardiman, head librarian of the Fairwood Library.

The library opened in 1986. Close to 26,000 people frequent the library per month. Julie Wallace, community relations director for KCLS, said there would be no grand opening ceremony. The library, 17009 140th SE, closed for remodeling on Nov. 6.

## December Events ...at Fairwood Library

### Erwilian Holiday Concert

Erwilian is an acoustic instrumental ensemble based in Covington, offering a unique blend of traditional and modern music. Enjoy holiday tunes to brighten up a cold, dark evening. Dec. 7 at 7 p.m.

### Dickens Carolers

Over the past 25 years, The Dickens Carolers has become a tradition, bringing the joy of the season to thousands each year. Dec. 12 at 7 p.m.

### The Mousecracker

Enjoy this delightful puppet presentation of Tchaikovsky's holiday classic. For ages 5 and up. Dec. 20 at 7 p.m.

## ...at Renton Library

### Holiday Bilingual Storytime

Songs and stories in Spanish and English will be performed by Helen Pacheco. This event is for all families. Refreshments will be served. Dec. 11 at 7 p.m. Admission: Free

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RENTON MAGAZINE / David Nelson

Charlie Conner keeps fit and healthy by doing what he loves: building things.

## Conner Homes breaks ground on lakefront site

**BY ANDREW FICKES**

**W**hen Charlie Conner lived in Renton in the 1960s and 1970s, he was kidded by his out-of-town peers for living here. Renton then was a blue-collar town and less affluent, with Pacific Car and Foundry and Boeing being the major employers.

Today, Renton's affluence is up and Conner is making the most of what Renton has become. Conner Homes Company, a Bellevue-based builder of upscale residential real estate in the Central Puget Sound region, recently purchased 22.3 acres along the eastern shore of Lake Washington in Renton known as the Barbee Mill site.

Conner, the president and owner of

Conner Homes, is planning to build 114 homes on the site ranging from \$800,000 to \$3 million per home. Seventy percent of the homes will have waterfront property on May Creek, a community pond or Lake Washington. The development will include a pavilion building and community dock.

"We selected The Barbee Mill site for its uniqueness," he says. "It's the last piece of property near Lake Washington to build on. It has great transportation access to I-405, Renton Airport and Sea-Tac Airport, and the lake as an amenity. Lake Washington Boulevard is a great amenity in itself for jogging and cycling."

Until 2005, the Barbee Mill site housed the last operating lumber mill in King County. The site got its name in 1945 after local entrepreneur Alex Cugini, Sr., purchased the property. At its production peak, the mill turned out more than 100,000 board-feet of lumber a day

for local homebuilding or export to Japan.

But as impressive as is the Barbee Mill site's past and its future, the man behind the vision is equally impressive.

While working on a finance degree at the University of Washington in the late 1970s, Charlie Conner was already charging ahead with life. During the last quarter of his senior year he selected a site and began building a home. He worked on it five days a week while still in school, married the week after graduation, and moved right in with his new bride.

"My mother wasn't too happy with me," he says. "My school work suffered a little bit because of construction."

Conner actually got his construction career started long before college. Beginning in the sixth grade, he worked summers at his father's construction business, Conner Development Company. He started out as a laborer and

later as a finish carpenter. When he started full-time with his dad's company in 1978, he was hired as a superintendent of construction.

Bill Conner, Charlie's father, began building homes in 1959 with his brother John. In 1964, the two split and Bill formed Conner Development Company. Since 1959 the company has built 4,000 single-family homes, multi-family homes, and condominiums.

Charlie Conner became president and owner of the company in 1995 and changed the name to Conner Homes Company.

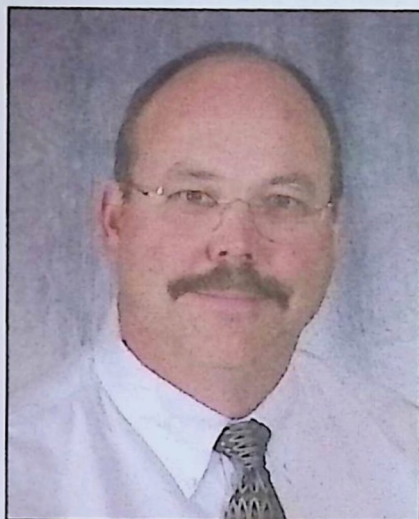
Since then, Conner has played a major role in the company's charitable work. Conner Homes recently built a 14,000-square-foot home in Renton for Vision House, a non-profit organization that helps single mothers and their children.

The company also built the

**CONNER** - next page



# Choosing the right veterinarian is important



**CHARLIE POWELL**

**F**or most of us, pets are part of the family. It's important to choose a veterinarian who can serve you and your pets well. For animals, the importance is obvious. Less obvious is the value the right choice brings to your peace of mind.

Probably the best way to find your pets' next doctor is to visit some veterinary offices. A quality veterinary prac-

tice should be clean and comfortable for people and animals. Parking should accommodate easy access for you and your pets. The staff should be attentive and well-organized. Consumer research begins at the front desk.

Virtually all practices require appointments. Ask about their appointment times. Do they have a cancellation policy? Are they open evenings or weekends or other times that don't force you to take time off work?

Another good question to ask is how the practice expects payment. Will they accept checks, debit cards, cash, or a third-party insurance plan? This is very important. Many consumer disputes arise because people didn't ask about payment before receiving services.

There are misunderstandings about emergency services too. Veterinarians are not held to the same legal standards as physicians. Most after-hours emergency care requires a significant payment before treatment is initiated. Veterinarians are not required to accept any patient on demand nor provide any service if they have not initiated care. Once care begins, however, a veterinarian is compelled to continue or refer the patient on to additional care.

A good practice typically has more than one veterinarian and a

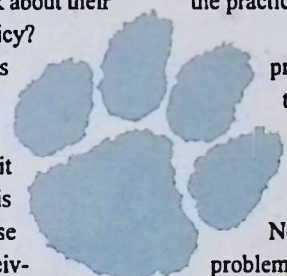
complement of technicians and office staff. Both veterinarians and staff should be caring, calm, competent, and courteous.

Does your animal have behavior problems that might require dog and cat entrances and cages to be in separate areas? If so, ask the practice how they handle that situation.

Ask if the practice does routine lab work, surgical procedures, and medical imaging in-house. It might be that the procedures your animal needs are referred out to other practices. If so, the travel and inconvenience may not fit your schedule.

Finally, does your pet need specialty services? Not all practices are capable of managing every medical problem that arrives at their door. You can find a specialist by calling the Washington State Veterinary Medical Association at 425-454-8381 or [www.wsvma.org](http://www.wsvma.org) or the Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine at 509-335-7073 or [www.vetmed.wsu.edu](http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu).

*Charlie Powell is the public information director for the Washington State Veterinary Medical Association and the senior public information officer for the Washington State University College of Veterinary Medicine.*



## CONNER from page 24

Snoqualmie Valley Children's Center at the western edge of North Bend.

Conner had been a board member and president of King and Snohomish County Master Builders Association for some time. He's also lobbied continuously for cost-effective housing.

"I've lobbied against anything that I think is unfair and that raises the cost of housing without providing benefit to the buyer," he says. "I care from a philosophical standpoint."

Today, Conner lives on Mercer Island. However, that will soon change. He is building a new home on property just south of the Barbee Mill site and moving back to Renton.

"I'll be moving into that home early next year," he says. "I'll be happy sending tax money to a city that appreciates it and will use it wisely."

"Renton is a good place to do business in, period," he says. "You have a place that lives up to its mission statement. It's one of the few cities that we work in that actually seems interested in keeping things moving along. The City of Renton is more facilitating to development."

Conner Homes has built homes in the Renton Highlands and is currently developing more homes in the Laurel Hill and Shy Creek developments in Renton.

Conner said he stays healthy by doing what he loves.

"I enjoy building things," he says. "Why go to the gym when you can work hard at something and be productive and get the same exercise."

Conner has two daughters, Alison and Madeline. Both attend Santa Clara University in California. Conner says he's sure at least one of them will be the future president of his company.

## Japanese sister city visit registration open

The City of Renton has opened registration for those community leaders and residents interested in joining the next sister city delegation visit to Nishiwaki, Japan, in April of next year.

The trip is expected to last one week. Past delegations have included members from the Renton School District, City of Renton, mayor and council members, service clubs, and Renton citizens. Delegates will tour attractions and sightsee around Nishiwaki and surrounding cities.

Delegates will be responsible for their own expenses, though many prefer home-stay accommodations in Nishiwaki making the travel arrangements more affordable. Renton's Sister City relationship with Nishiwaki began in 1969.

All delegate participation must be confirmed by January 15. For more information, meeting schedule, or to become part of the delegation, please call Sonja Mejlaender at 425-430-6514. Visit the Nishiwaki Sister City web page at [www.rentonwa.gov](http://www.rentonwa.gov).





**CHEF JOHN FISHER**

John Fisher, award-winning chef and instructor in the Culinary Arts Department of Renton Technical College, has an interesting dish to serve that will warm these Northwest days. This is a favorite of Chef Fishers and one he used in an American Culinary Federation Competition.

## Sauteed Blue Stripe Bass and Steamed Saffron Mussels on Warm Fingerling Potato Salad

### Creamed Leeks and Fennel

### Spring Asparagus Spears

### Peppadue Pepper Avocado and Calamata Oline Salsa

|             |                                                                                     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2.5lb       | One Blue Striped Bass                                                               |
| 20 ea       | Mussels Mediterranean                                                               |
| .5 lb       | Leeks                                                                               |
| fronds 4 ea | 1/4lb Fennel bulb                                                                   |
| 2 oz        | Peppadue peppers                                                                    |
| .5 ea       | Avocado                                                                             |
| 2 oz        | Calamata olives                                                                     |
| .5 lb       | Fingerling potatoes                                                                 |
| 1.5oz       | Serrano Ham                                                                         |
| 2 ea        | Shallots                                                                            |
| 1 tsp       | Porcini powder                                                                      |
| 1.5Tbsp     | Kosher salt, fresh ground                                                           |
| 1 Tbsp      | Black pepper, fresh grind                                                           |
| 1.5oz       | Pear vinegar                                                                        |
| 2 oz        | Olive Oil, infused with garlic thyme pinch & bloomed in 1 cup of white wine Saffron |
| 2 Tbsp      | Garlic                                                                              |
| 1 Tbsp      | White Balsamic Vinegar                                                              |
| 1 Tbsp      | Tarragon                                                                            |
| 6 oz        | Heavy cream                                                                         |
| 2 oz        | White port                                                                          |
| 2 Tbsp      | Chives                                                                              |
| 1 rib       | Celery                                                                              |
| 1 tsp       | Truffle oil                                                                         |
| 3 oz        | Whole butter                                                                        |
| 12          | Asparagus spears                                                                    |

Blue Stripe Sea Bass – Bone filet and portion, dust in porcini powder and salt and pepper.

Saute the bass, deglaze with white wine port then add the peppadue peppers, calamata olives and avocado, season with pear vinegar and salt and pepper.

Penn Cove Mussels – de-beard mussels, steam in white wine and fish stock with saffron. Then shell the mussels and set aside in butter, reduce the broth to a light glaze then add the mussels back in.

Warm fingerling potato and fennel salad – steam potatoes and fennel and add onion, celery, garlic salt and pepper to taste; sprinkle with pear vinegar then add the Serrano ham, add a few drops of truffle oil.

Start leeks by cutting small, dice then soft sweating, sauté until two thirds done. Add the cream; simmer very slowly till cream is absorbed. Add the tarragon, season with salt and pepper.

Crispy fried fennel frond – mix flour and corn starch to a light slurry, season and fry the fronds till crisp.

Clean the asparagus and simmer. Add butter, salt and pepper.

Center the leeks and tuck close to the warm potato salad. Place 5 mussels around the center of the plate along with the sauce. Place the bass filet on top at an angle, top with the salsa. Place asparagus next to the leeks. Garnish with one fennel frond. Serves 4

## Kennydale Lions Club

2nd and 4th Mondays at 7 p.m.

Kennydale Memorial Hall, 2424 NE 27th St.

Contact: Paul Wold, secretary, (425) 226-3672

## Fairwood Lions Club

1st and 3rd Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

Golden Peacock Restaurant, 14412 SE Petrovsky Rd.

Contact: Phil Johnson, president, (425) 227-6315

## Greater Renton Kiwanis Club

Every Thursday at 7:27 a.m.

Renton Technical College, 3000 NE 4th St.

Contact: Jon Pozega, secretary, (425) 235-2463

## Renton Kiwanis

Every Tuesday at noon

La Hacienda Restaurant, 811 S. 3rd St.

Contact: Dorothy Wood, secretary, (425) 226-2996

## Renton Rotary

Every Thursday at noon

Maplewood Golf Club, 4050 Maple Valley Hwy.

Contact: Andee Jorgensen, secretary, (425) 255-4161

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

## Fraternal Order of Eagles 1722

2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. (Men);  
1st and 3rd Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. (Women)

Eagles Lodge,  
220 Wells Ave. S.

Contact: Mike O'Conner, secretary, (425) 226-1721

## Soroptimist International of Renton

1st and 3rd Tuesday at noon

Salvation Army, 720 S. Tobin

Contact: Judy Craig, president, (425) 255-3210

## Veterans of Foreign Wars-Renton Post 1263

1st Thursday at 7 p.m. (Ladies Aux.);  
2nd Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. (Men's Aux.)

VFW, 416 Burnett Ave. S.

Contact: Cheryl Burkhardt, ladies auxiliary secretary, (425) 255-9010



## scenes around town



### Record rains and floods leave tons of debris

Steve Maxwell begins the task of removing tons of logs and other debris that clogged the shoreline in front of his lake-front home in Kenndale. Record-breaking rainfall and flooding from the Cedar River in November dumped tons of debris into Lake Washington.



### Huskies outnumber Cougars

The three walkers on the popular Interface statue at Gene Coulon Park were dressed in Husky and Cougar outfits during the Nov. 18 Apple Cup. The statue takes on a new look for nearly every major event and holiday during the year.



### Renton Municipal Airport entry updated

A monument from the City of Renton, honoring aviation pioneer Clayton L. "Scotty" Scott, is a prominent part of a new entryway under construction at the Renton Municipal Airport.



### Valley Medical Center provides flu shots

Audrey Sells, 80, is one of approximately 5,000 seniors receiving a flu shot this season thanks to the Golden Care program at Valley Medical Center. The Golden Care Program consists of 20,000 senior members who receive a host of special services including assistance with insurance and reimbursement issues.



### Dr. Gary Kohlwes receives Service Award

Local residents and community leaders gathered Nov. 3, for the 3rd Annual RAYS4HOPE (Renton Area Youth and Family Services) dinner and auction at Maplewood Greens. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Distinguished Service Award to Dr. Gary Kohlwes.





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**Candlewood Ridge**  
\$ 379,950

New composition roof is on the way! Hardwood floors in living & dining rooms. Livingroom has brick fireplace. Kitchen enjoys vaulted ceiling with skylight, open counter bar to dining room with loads of storage. Dining room with slider to brand new cedar deck. Guest bath is remodeled with skylight, tile, new white cabs, new fixtures. Master has vaulted ceiling, warm cranberry color & cream accent chair-rail. Remodeled master bath. Family room with fireplace. Newer carpets. Walk to park/trails. Elegance & charm!



**Renton Highlands Charming**  
\$ 326,950

Charming 3 bedroom, 1 bath-with easy potential for another 1/2 bath. New carpet, vinyl, bath-room, kitchen, and lighting. Well maintained and move in ready! Huge separate family room w/ fireplace. Patio-1/2 covered, possible sport court.



**Fairwood Golf Course Condo**  
\$ 155,000

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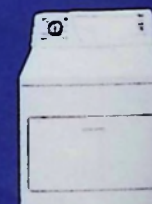
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