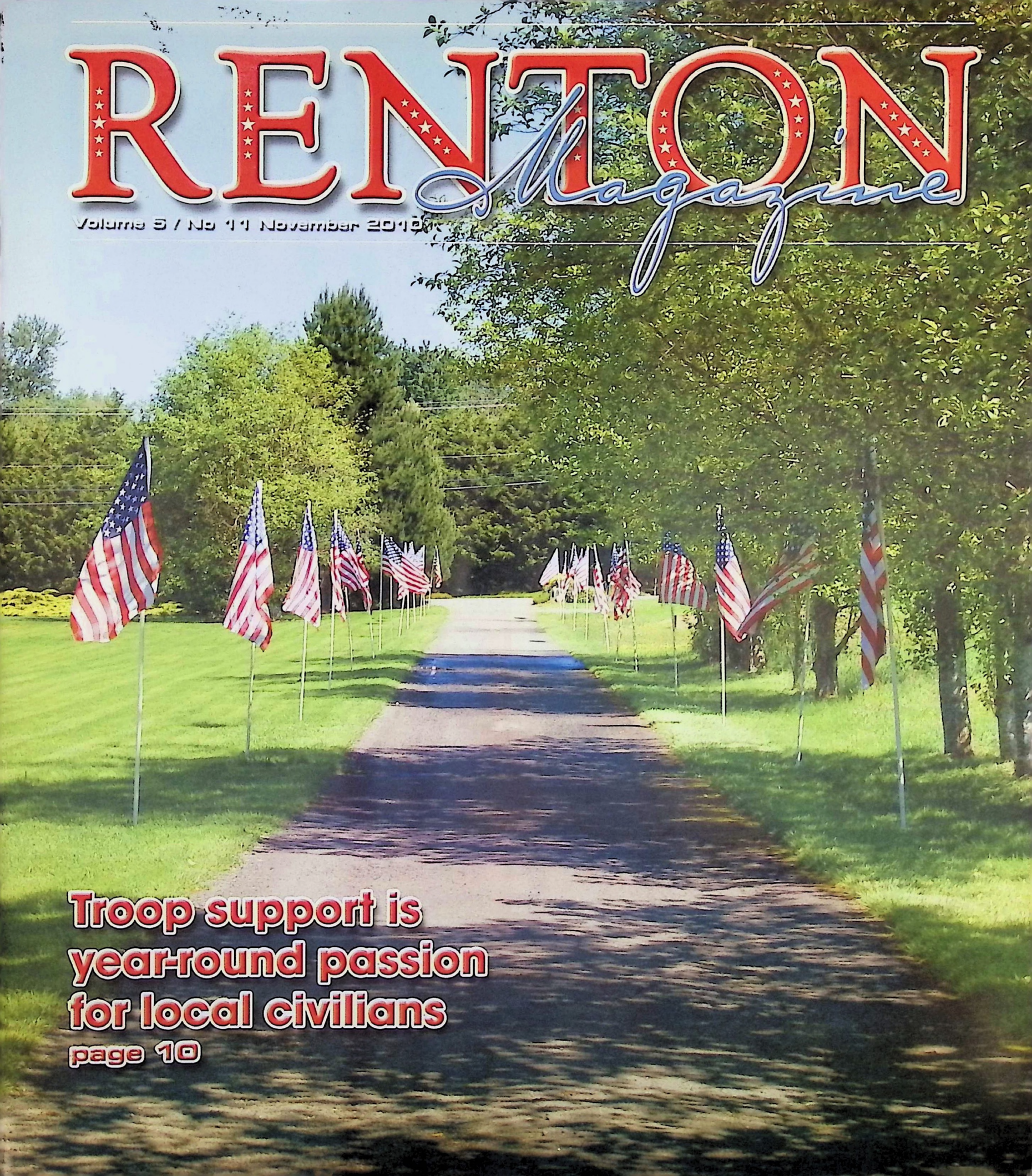


RENTON *Magazine*

Volume 5 / No 11 November 2012

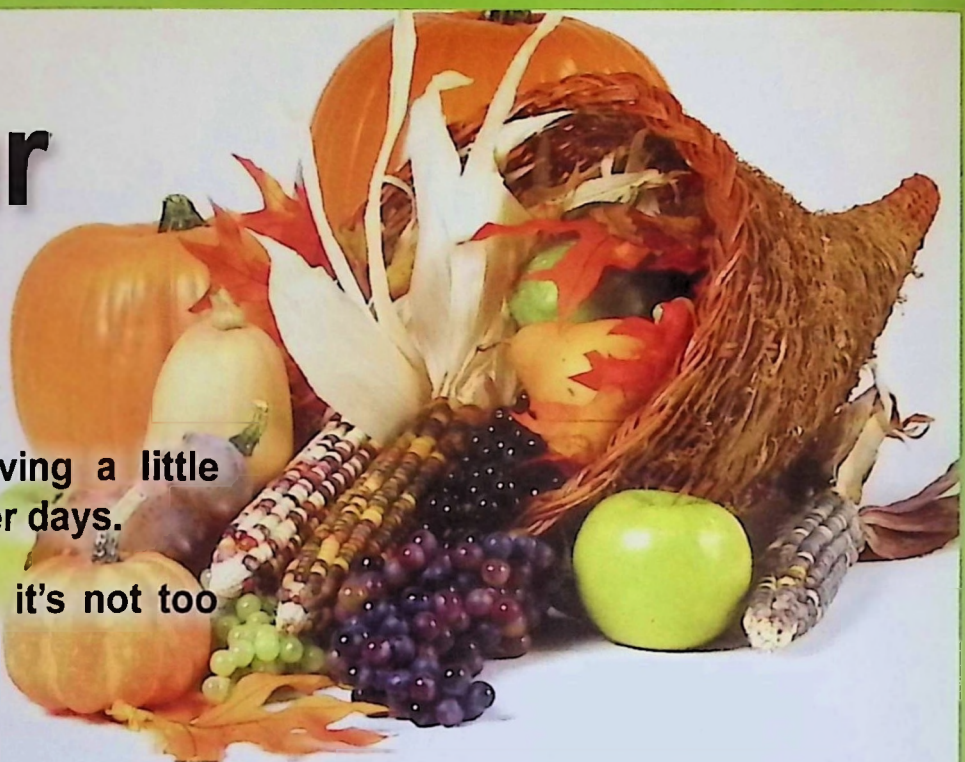


**Troop support is
year-round passion
for local civilians**
page 10

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What are you thankful for this holiday season?

I'm thankful that voting is nearly over because I am sick of the negative ads that paint "the opponent" as someone who is either too stupid or crooked to lead. It's disgusting. But I digress.

I'm thankful for my family and my general good health. I'm thankful my horse didn't break my foot when she startled and landed on me yesterday. I was wearing my oh-so-fashionable steel-toed boots. She's a cutie, but she still weighs 1,300 pounds.

I'm also thankful for the opportunities to work with many of you in building a stronger community. Strong communities have many components – good schools, transparent leadership, general civility, a vibrant economy, and people who are willing and able to step up and volunteer for the greater good.

Although the elections are shouting for our

attention, there's a quiet kind of voting that happens throughout the year. We vote every time we buy a product or service, or choose where to eat.

In any city there are ubiquitous chain coffee shops, restaurants and big box stores. There's nothing wrong with chain stores. But they do create a homogenous experience driven by corporate choices, committees and focus groups.

What makes our community unique is the local flavor provided by local restaurants and shops. Shops that reflect the personality and tastes of each owner. It's what tourists make an effort to find when they visit.



Diana Kramer
PUBLISHER

These are the people who sponsor youth sports teams, contribute items for auctions and underwrite local volunteer initiatives.

Times are tough for all of us, including shop owners. Many of these entrepreneurs are sustained only by the hope that they'll have a good holiday season. If they don't, some will quietly close their doors. On any given day, the best that some can say is, "I'm still here." When we shop there, we are voting for a more diverse, vibrant community.

Long-term, I don't think we make good choices when compelled by guilt. Feeling guilty never really made me give up fried chicken. But choosing to live a healthier lifestyle encouraged me to make better choices, which included roasted chicken.

This year, I'm choosing to support our local merchants and restaurateurs because it actually creates the kind of community I enjoy. I will do my small part to support the vibrant community that gives us so much. Please join me.

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425.271.9300

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cover:

Veterans Day is observed in different ways, but for Diane and Blaine Anderson, each day is Support Our Troops day. Flags line the drive to their home. Several times each year, they welcome friends and volunteers to their barn to pack up thousands of gift bags to be shipped to active-duty soldiers. The next pack-out is Nov. 13 and all are welcome. Photo by James Bavendam. See story on page 10.

important phone #'s

City Hall
425.430.6400

Chamber of Commerce
425.226.4560

Community Center
425.430.6700

Fire Dept
(non emergency)
425.430.7000

Renton Library
425.226.6043

Renton Highlands Library
425.277.1831

Police Dept
(non emergency)
425.430.7500

Puget Sound Energy
1.888.225.5773

Renton Community Foundation
425.264.0516

Renton Magazine
425.271.9300

Renton Museum
425.255.2330

Senior Activity Center
425.430.6633

Valley Medical Center
425.228.3450



N O V E M B E R 6 ANNUAL VETERANS DAY PARADE

Auburn is designated by the Veterans Day National Committee and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as a regional site for celebration of Veterans Day 2010. Auburn has hosted the Veterans Day Parade since 1965. Now in its 45th year, the parade is honoring the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). Largest of its kind west of the Mississippi, the parade boasts almost 200 units, including over 25 marching bands, military vehicles, veterans' units, honor guards and more.

Main Street ★ Downtown Auburn ★ Saturday, 11 a.m.



November 6 & 7 *Little Red*

Can man (or little girl) and wolf be friends, even when they're starving? Little Red and any number of strangers try to find Grandmother's house in this Story Book Theater production for young audiences.

Carco Theatre
1717 S.E. Maple Valley Highway

Saturday,
11a.m. and 1 p.m.

Sunday,
11 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Admission: \$9 or \$7.50 per seat for groups of 10 or more

877- 827- 1100
www.storybooktheater.org



NOVEMBER 11 *Renton Piazza* ANNUAL DINNER & AUCTION

Proceeds from this annual event benefit the Renton Piazza and Renton Community Foundation. The evening includes food, silent and live auctions, raffles and games. Reservations required.

Thursday, 6- 9p.m.

Spirit of Washington Event Center
3rd and Burnett
(downtown Renton)

Reservations: Jim Medzegian,
206-772-1016

Admission: \$60 per person



November 13 *erwillian quintet* IN CONCERT

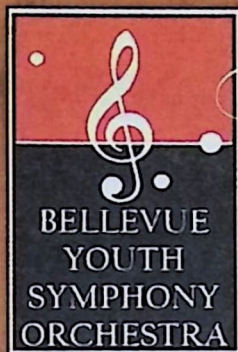
An evening of music from medieval to Beatles, with a holiday theme.

Saturday, 7:30-9:45 p.m.
Carco Theatre

1717 S.E. Maple Valley Highway

Admission: Adults \$12,
Seniors/students \$10

www.brownpapertickets.com



November 13

Bellevue Youth Symphony Orchestra

Young musicians perform in this season's first showcase concerts.

Saturday, 3:30 and 7 p.m.

Ikea Performing Arts Center
400 S. 2nd St.

Admission: \$15/Adult, \$12/Senior and Child
www.byso.org



NOVEMBER 15 – DECEMBER 17

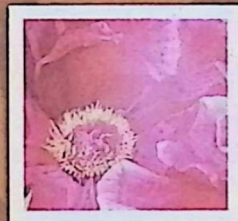
Shirley Rudolf Art Exhibit

Renton Municipal Arts Commission hosts artist Shirley Rudolf with an opportunity to meet the artist on Friday, Dec. 17, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Carco Theatre
1717 SE Maple Valley Highway

Monday – Friday,
9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Admission: Free
www.shirleyrudolf.com



November 19 & 20

Hassle Free Holiday Bazaar

Over 100 vendors will be on hand to present a wide variety of hand-crafted items for holiday decorating and giving. Food and refreshments will also be available.

Friday, 11a.m.-6 p.m. / Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Renton Community Center
1715 S.E. Maple Valley Highway
425-430-6700 / Admission: Free



December
3-18

PLAID TIDINGS HOLIDAY EDITION OF FOREVER PLAID

Plaid Tidings is the best of Forever Plaid, filled with Christmas standards that have all been "Plaid-erized." The goal – to put a little harmony into a discordant world.

Renton Civic Theatre
507 S. 3rd St. Renton

425-226-5529

Admission:
\$25/\$20 senior and student

save the date

calendar of events

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

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

Coastal Salish Basket Weaving

Saturday, Nov. 13, 11a.m.-noon

Weaver Harvest Moon delves into the history of Native American basket weaving, explaining the rituals of gathering materials and the place of skilled basket weavers within traditional society. Each basket is an expressive vehicle of the weaver, embodying her traditions and spiritual aspirations. The presentation is enhanced by examples of traditional baskets.

Admission: Free with museum admission

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS/EVENTS

Alphabet Adventures

Wednesdays, Nov. 10-Dec. 15, 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Through stories and crafts, children ages 3 to 5 will learn a couple letters of the alphabet each week. Each class will recap what we have learned and each new session picks up where we left off. A supply fee of \$6 is paid to instructor.

Renton Community Center
1715 S.E. Maple Valley Hwy.

425-430-6700

Admission: \$45 resident, \$54 nonresident

Messy Makers

Mondays, Nov. 1-Dec. 13, 11:30 a.m.-noon

Ages 2 to 5 (with adult). Tiny fingers, ages 2 to 5, will have fun exploring paint, glue, glitter, feathers and more. Participants are advised to dress for a mess. Supply fee of \$20 paid to instructor.

No class November 22.

Highlands Neighborhood Center
3000 N.E. 16th St.

Admission: \$18 resident, \$22 nonresident

Letters to Santa

Monday, Nov. 15-Friday, Dec. 10

The City of Renton Recreation Division has made arrangements with the North Pole to accept mail for delivery to Santa's staff. Children will receive a personalized letter from Santa. Children are

encouraged to tell Santa about some of their favorite memories of the past year and the No. 1 gift they are asking for this year. Children's names and addresses must be included for return delivery. Letters may be dropped off in person or mailed to:

Renton Community Center C/O Letters to Santa
1715 SE Maple Valley Highway, Renton 98057

Art and Design Workshop

Friday, Nov. 12, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Youngsters Ages 6 to 10 will design greeting cards and stationery, look into and paint kaleidoscope designs, and draw fruity patterns. Students will work with watercolor, pastel and acrylic paint. Participants will need to bring a smock or apron, lunch, snack and water bottle. All art materials are provided.

North Highlands Neighborhood Center
3000 N.E. 16th St.

425-430-6700

Admission: \$46 resident, \$55 nonresident

Pacific Science Center Trip

Friday, Nov. 12, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Students ages 11 to 15 can spend this school holiday visiting the new exhibit, "Mindbender Mansion." It's a quirky place full of puzzles, brain-teasers, and interactive challenges. The latest Imax movie also will be available. Space is limited, so early registration is advised as well as spending money for lunch and snacks.

Meet at North Highlands Neighborhood Center.
3000 N.E. 16th St.

425-430-6700

Admission: \$20 resident, \$24 nonresident

FITNESS

Oh, My Aching Back!

Thursday, Nov. 4, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Orthopedic surgeon Christopher Howe will explain common back pain triggers, how to avoid them and what to do when pain persists.

Valley Medical Center,
Medical Arts Center, first floor
400 S. 43rd Street

Call to register: 425-656-INFO (4636)

www.valleymed.org/events

Beginning Level Alignment Yoga

Saturdays, Nov. 6-Dec. 18, 9:15-10:15 a.m.

This class is for those who are new to yoga or for those who want to maintain a solid foundation of all the basic poses. All ages are welcome. Participants are asked to bring a yoga mat.

Renton Community Center
1715 S.E. Maple Valley Hwy.

425-430-6700

Admission: \$68 resident, \$82 nonresident

Intro to Group Fitness

Mondays, Nov. 1 - Dec. 20, 7:40 - 8:40 p.m.

This is a potpourri of group exercise for anyone who hasn't taken a structured aerobic class or for those looking to boost their current workout regimens. Instructor Tien Mai will introduce yoga, pilates, kickboxing, step aerobics and strength training. All levels are welcome. Drop-ins are welcome for \$7.

Renton Community Center
1715 S.E. Maple Valley Hwy.

425-430-6700

Admission: \$34 resident, \$41 nonresident

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Contingency Planning Workshop

Tuesday and Wednesday, Nov. 9 and 10, 2-6 p.m.

For ages 18 and up, this workshop is designed to assist small businesses and nonprofits to continue serving their target populations during and after a disaster such as flooding, earthquake or pandemic flu. Participants might include agency directors, managers, health and safety officers or other designated staff/volunteers. The workshop will cover key planning components; agency risk evaluation and control; agency emergency response planning; building agency resiliency via trainings, exercises and maintenance, and establishing partnerships.

Renton Technical College
3000 N.E. 4th

425-430-6700 / Admission: Free

Flood Preparedness and Safety

Wednesday, Nov. 3, 6-7 p.m.

The number of homes and businesses experiencing flooding is increasing due to weather

changes, new construction and infrastructure failure. Information will be provided about flood insurance, how to identify locations at risk of flooding, as well as steps that can be taken to reduce water's impact on your home. For ages 18 and up.

Renton Technical College
3000 N.E. 4th

425-430-6700 / Admission: Free

SENIOR EVENTS

Renton Senior Activity Center
211 Burnett Ave N.
425-430-6633

National Candy Day

Thursday, Nov. 4, 11 a.m. contest, 11:30 a.m. lunch

This is a day for kids and kids at heart. Games include "Name the Candy Bar."

Admission: \$3 donation if over 60, \$6 if under 60

Veterans Day Luncheon

Wednesday, Nov. 10, 11 a.m. contest, 11:30 a.m. lunch

Veterans will be honored with certificates and a special dessert and are asked to sign up at the front desk. Dessert is donated by Merrill Gardens at Renton Centre.

Admission: \$3 donation if over 60, \$6 if under 60

Thanksgiving Day Luncheon

Thursday, Nov. 24, 11:00 a.m. contest, 11:30 a.m. lunch

Along with a savory Thanksgiving Day luncheon fixings, there will be door prizes, a turkey shooting contest and pumpkin pie for dessert. Tickets are available Nov. 2 and must be purchased by Nov. 22.

Admission: \$3 donation if over 60, \$6 under 60

Holiday Craft Bazaar

Saturday, Nov. 6, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

The annual bazaar features hand-crafted items by seniors, music, and doughnuts. Vendors must be 50 years or older.

Admission: Free

If you have an upcoming event you want others to know about, we want to hear from you. Please send information about your event to info@pugetsoundpublishing.com or call us at 425-271-9300.

Report card time: What's our grade in citizenship?

*A*ts off to the Renton School District for doing everything within its power to improve the quality of education for our young people. It is not an easy assignment, placing our teachers, students and staff under tremendous pressure.

Hardly a week goes by when the Renton School District is not receiving accolades for outstanding performance ranging from journalism to robotics, from Web page design to accounting practices. The accomplishments are even more remarkable given the fact that nearly half of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch and a growing number of our students are learning English at the same time as their other subjects.

The community has also stepped up in, trying to ensure the best learning environment possible. Taking the lead is Communities in Schools, which has placed family liaisons in schools to work with households that are struggling to provide the basics for their children. CIS has created one of the best mentoring programs in the country, pairing caring adults with young people who can most benefit.

This fall CIS joined hands with Renton Rotary to perform Operation Warm. One thousand children received brand new winter coats. This partnership will also put a dictionary into the hands of every third grader in the district. Additional service clubs, P.T.S.A., and faith groups partner to provide backpacks filled with nutritional food for students to take home on the weekend.

The congregation I serve is hosting a before- and after-school program for McKnight Middle School kids. As of this writing, 85 young people are being fed a hot breakfast and given a safe place to socialize or finish up last-

minute home-work.

There is so much that is so right happening with our young people, but there is still a mountain to climb. The biggest challenge that we face is not an academic one. The biggest challenge is building the character of our young people. Two words say it all for me: respect and honesty. These values are about to end up on the endangered species list if we do not work equally hard to instill them in our young people.

We as a community need to invest as much effort in teaching respect and honesty as we do math and English. It is not the responsibility of our teachers to take on this assignment. This assignment is the responsibility of families and the community. It is hard work, and it must begin with adults and our behavior. Our kids observe how we treat people in authority from the President of the United States to, our police officers, teachers or the person flagging traffic. They also know how fast and loose we play with the truth. In a world of "spin," truth hardly matters. It doesn't pack it to say to our children, "Don't do as I do, do as I say."

We as adults also need to balance our discussion and practice of individual rights over and against the importance of living together in community. We owe it to our children and our teachers to do a much better job of modeling and teaching respect and honesty. The time is right to press hard to improve our grades in citizenship.

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



Kirby Unti
COLUMNIST



simple, seasonal, local

Today's shopping list

What did forest forager Mark
bring us today?

What is featured at Mosby Farms in
Auburn, or Westover Farms in
Maple Valley?

What did the students at Tahoma
High School pick for us today?

What does Uwajimaya have in
the live seafood tanks?

Tom Small, Executive Chef



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Top scholars imagine WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BRING

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SARAH ZUGSCHWERDT

This year's two Renton School District National Merit semifinalists are as different as can be.

One wants to major in business and design, perhaps following in the footsteps of clothing designer Johnny Cupcakes, named No. 1 Young Entrepreneur by BusinessWeek Magazine for his independent clothing label he started out of the back of his van. Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), DECA, and being Associated Student Body vice president and boys' swimming team captain fill this student's time.

The other is thinking about becoming a secondary teacher, took a trip to France last summer ("the best summer I've ever had") and is now inspired to study abroad to become fluent in the language. She's also the co-captain of the Speech and Debate Team and secretary of the Rocket Club.

Meet Jacob Zimmer and Anastasia (Ana) Wright of Hazen and Lindberg High Schools, respectively. Both seniors took the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) in 2009 and scored high enough to distinguish themselves as 2011 semifinalists, something less than one percent of the 1.5 million test takers accomplished.

This fall all semifinalists will submit an applica-



ANASTASIA WRIGHT

2011 National Merit semifinalist from Lindberg High School. Wright is considering studying education in college.



JACOB ZIMMER

2011 National Merit semifinalist from Hazen High School. Zimmer is interested in studying business and design in college.

math, Ana says, "I like seeing what people have done throughout history - the way things move and the way people do things and how it inspires the rise and fall. I just like the grand scheme of things. I like math (be)cause it's so orderly and it's like how things work and there actually is a right answer. (In) other things there is not."

For Jacob, being business-minded is more about freedom to create than anything else. He recalls a family friend whose job he learned about: flying around the world and taking pictures of exotic cars for Microsoft to put in their games.

"I heard that (and thought), 'If there's a job for that, there's a job for anything.' You just have to look hard enough and get lucky." Studying business means, "If there isn't a job, I can make my own job. If there isn't

a company I want to join, I can make my own company that suits what I want to do."

Merit Scholars will be announced starting next March. By then, both Ana and Jacob will be making college decisions for the fall. Ana is applying to several schools, including Vanderbilt, Notre Dame and Yale, while Jacob is wondering if New York University might have the perfect programs for him. Both are applying to the University of Washington.

And Merit Scholars or not, both will surely be making an impact on the future.

tion package including the following year's Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, recommendations, an essay, transcript, and school and community involvements. Ninety percent will advance to the finalist level. Come spring, about half will receive scholarships and be designated Merit Scholars.

What's most impressive about these young scholars isn't their grade point averages or test scores, but their fascination with life and its potential.

Talking about her favorite subjects, history and

Top 10 Reasons to Eat and Shop in Downtown Renton



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601-A S 3rd St
www.quadoos.com



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MAGICALLY SWEET
Holiday Season

425.235.1717

900 S 3rd St., Unit A 
www.commongroundcupcakes.com

Melrose Grill »

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~Best of Seattle, Seattle Weekly

425.254.0759

819 Houser Way South
(Corner of Wells & Houser)
www.melrosegill.com



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www.happydelusions.
wordpress.com



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509 S. 3rd St.
www.geriscasualdining.com



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- We buy gold & silver scrap

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225 Wells Ave. South

Simple Gifts

BY JAMES BAVENDAM

show Troops

When Kaylee Kennison, serving in Iraq, opens her Christmas box this year, it will contain Christmas stockings stuffed with small gifts for her and the other members of her unit. Smiling, half a world away, will be Diane and Blaine Anderson of Renton, and a host of volunteers who work throughout the year to support and honor our soldiers.

Since 2003 the Andersons have participated in packaging and sending goodie boxes to troops. In 2010 they formed a non-profit charity, Operation Support Our Troops, so they could accept a wider range of donations.

Multiple times per year, the Andersons host "packouts" at their home, where they organize and ship care packages to thousands of troops. The packouts are merely the last step in a series of contributions. Local schools, churches and community groups sponsor food and donation drives. Children write thank you letters. People from across the country sew gift bags or for Christmas, sew Christmas stockings.

The June packout sent gifts to close to 3,000 troops, mostly in the Middle East. Candy, chips, thank you cards, neck coolers for 120 degree days, even something as simple as a new toothbrush and toothpaste.

Support OUR TROOPS

Next packout is
scheduled for
Saturday Nov. 13th
at 10am.

Operation Support
Our Troops is on
the Web at
www.isotnw.org
(I Support Our Troops
Northwest) or phone
425-432-9939.

Assembling the goodies

Volunteers assemble at the Anderson's "barn," which is more like a large recreation room. Laid out on two lines of tables are bins of donated items. Start at one end, pick up a bag, then fill it as you walk past the bins and give it to the volunteer at the end of the tables who packs your bag into a box. Repeat.

Over time the Andersons have compiled a list of soldiers. Some are friends and relatives. Most names are just supplied from others in the community. Once the Andersons have the name and APO (military address) for a soldier, they confirm the address and the number of people in the soldier's unit. The next time boxes are sent, that soldier will receive a box with gifts for the entire unit.

Everyone is welcome to help. Some volunteers are friends of the Andersons and have been helping for years. The majority of volunteers heard about the packouts at church or through community groups and have simply shown up to help.

Marina Menzies from Covington heard about the packout through her

church. During the Vietnam era she predicted weather for military flights.

"I served in the Air Force for 10 years," says Menzies. "I used to care for boys returning from the war. Some had heart. One young man lost an arm. He had a fiancée. He hadn't told her about the war. He couldn't hug her with both arms, more."

Bonnie Taylor from Kent is a friend of the Andersons. She has been helping with the packouts for years.

"My granddaughter is in Iraq," says Taylor. "Last Christmas we sent her stockings. A number of Canadians helped. My daughter was able to share the stockings with her. A 120 degree day makes a big difference when we need to pack for things. The boxes are packed close to 10,000 stockings in each box."

Matching pay

Cathy Baylor of Renton was one of the first. The Andersons made a presentation to her. Her coworkers used the organization's program. For every hour they donated, she will match them by donating the same amount to the charity. Cash donations pay for the shipping of all these boxes.

Yet, the mood is light at the packouts. People eat each other's company. Halfway through the dinner. Then back to packing.

Ron Gamble from Kent is a friend of the Andersons. Having found out about it at church, he decided to help.

"I wish someone had done this

Thank you for
all of your support
and the care packages.
I really appreciate
how much you
care about and
what we do.
- PFC Johnson



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People chat and enjoy
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from the Coast Guard.
the packout is his first time.
for me," he says. "This is a

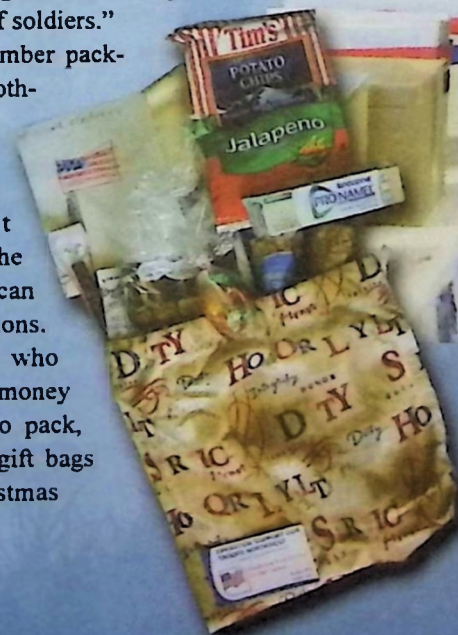
good thing to do for our men and women far away from home."

Alex Strong from Renton took a day from work to join his wife, Angela, to volunteer at the packout. He notes that while he hasn't personally served in the military, the packout is a way to help and say thank you to our soldiers.

Dwayne Hermans from Puyallup is retired from the Army. He and his wife, Virginia, volunteered for the first time at the June packout.

Hermans says, "This is a good way to support our troops and to remember those who have given their lives. In Vietnam, I spent months at a time in the jungle. When I came home to Seattle, Jane Fonda's group was at the airport. They spit on us and called us, 'baby killers.' I'll never forget that. I've looked at some of the cards that children have written. They can bring tears to the eyes of the toughest of soldiers."

The November pack-out brings another opportunity to participate. As a non-profit charity, the Andersons can accept donations. Even those who can't donate money or show up to pack, can still sew gift bags and Christmas stockings.



Top: Soldiers send photos and cards, thanking the Andersons and everyone who sends goodie bags. (Photo courtesy of Diane Anderson)

The Andersons' barn provides shelter for the packouts, in which volunteers from across the area gather to stuff goodies into gift bags. The reasons for participating are as varied as the volunteers themselves. (Photos by James Bavendam)

around the garden

The falling leaves

BY ELAINE ANDERSON

*"The falling leaves drift by my window..."**

There is no surer sign that winter is near than falling leaves, and by now they have pretty much completed their tumble to the ground. If a tree lost its leaves in spring or summer, a gardener would be greatly concerned. When this happens in fall, however, we don't give it a second thought. In fact, if a deciduous tree did not lose its leaves, it would be a cause for concern.

As temperatures drop and the days shorten, trees prepare

to enter a state of dormancy. Some animals do this, too, but we refer to it as hibernation. As the tree prepares for winter, it stores the food and energy reserves it will need for growth in the spring. It stops growing and producing leaves, because growth activity will hamper this storage process. The existing leaves cease photosynthesizing, and the lack of chlorophyll causes them to lose their green pigment. The remaining colors are one of autumn's greatest joys. Once the plant has withdrawn all the food stored in the leaves, they abscise (a fancy way of saying they fall off and hit the ground).

Deciduous shrubs also enter a state of dormancy in the winter. This is why gardeners should cease fertilizing shrubs (trees rarely need fertilizing) in late summer. Fertilization will cause a plant to continue growing, and that's not where a plant should be focusing its energy. Also, new growth will not have time to acclimate to the colder temperatures and will most likely

die. Heavy watering should also be avoided after late summer. It, too, will encourage continued growth.

Here's something to ponder. What if, heading into fall and winter, a tree continued to receive the same amount of light, via artificial sunlight, that it does in spring and summer? Under these conditions, a deciduous tree may be kept growing for several years. Eventually, though, the tree will go dormant regardless of the environmental conditions it finds itself in. Stressing a tree in this manner will usually be fatal.

Dormancy is a tree's survival mechanism, enabling it to live through a season that is unsuitable for growth. Don't feed it and don't water it. It will do just fine if it's not killed with kindness.

* *Autumn Leaves* by Mercer and Kosma

Elaine Anderson is the Washington State University Extension coordinator for the King County Master Gardener Program. The program, funded by WSU and the Master Gardener Foundation of King County, provides free, environmentally friendly gardening advice to home gardeners. For answers to your questions about trees and other gardening topics, call the Master Gardener Phone Clinic at 206-543-0943.

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Worried about cat scratching fever?

BY DR. KATHLEEN CONNELL

No, it's not a disease, but a cat that has the furniture-scratching fever.

How do you discourage your cat from scratching that heirloom armchair or irreplaceable Persian rug?

The first step is understanding that scratching is part of a cat's normal behavior. Cats scratch to maintain their claws. They also mark or claim territory by communicating with other cats by leaving a visual mark.

While there will never be a totally scratch-free cat, here are some tips for discouraging destructive scratching:

Purchase and make a scratching post available for your cat. It may take some experimenting with different kinds to determine which post your cat likes best. Some cats might like a horizontal post, while others may prefer a tall, vertical post. There are many kinds and varieties to choose from – free-standing, wall mounted and covered with various fabrics, such as sisal, hemp or carpeting. Loose catnip or catnip spray may make the post more attractive to your cat.

Cats can be choosy, so the size and placement of the post matters. Part of "leaving their mark" is stretching up to scratch. The scratching post has to be tall enough and sturdy enough for a cat to extend its reach to scratch and support the cat's weight. It may take some experimentation to determine the correct size and location of the post.



A discussion with your veterinarian can answer many issues about unwanted cat scratching.

To discourage scratching of a particular item, you can use various materials to make that item less appealing. Applying double-sided tape to the arm of a chair, for example, will discourage your cat from scratching on that surface. The idea is to leave the tape in place long enough to deter the behavior while encouraging use of an alternative, such as a scratching post. Positively praise the behavior you want to encourage.

Trim your cat's claws regularly. You could ask your veterinarian, veterinary technician or pet groomer for tips on how to properly use the nail trimmers.

Surgical declawing may be a last resort for destructive scratching. This procedure involves anesthesia and hospitalization. Pain medication and antibiotics are usually prescribed afterwards for your cat's comfort and to guard against infection. Declawing entails surgery to completely remove the nail and the last bone from each toe. Discuss this procedure with your veterinarian so you can make an informed decision and to learn about aftercare once your cat returns home from surgery. Some veterinarians will not perform this surgery, so ask your veterinarian if this is an option for your cat. The American Veterinary Medical Association considers surgical declawing a justifiable procedure for those cats that cannot be trained successfully to stop their destructive scratching.

Kathy Connell, D.V.M., owns and operates Foxglove Consulting in Olympia.

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Create your own winning recipes



Ten tips for entering recipe contests

- 1 Pump up the flavor, taste is the number one factor.
- 2 Look for a fresh twist; put a spin on an old favorite.
- 3 Be creative; make sure your recipe is original.
- 4 Do your home work; study past winners and see what works.
- 5 Make the food look good; if appropriate use a garnish.
- 6 Keep it simple; time and procedures give excellent results.
- 7 Follow the rules to the letter.
- 8 Test from your written entry. Have a friend make the recipe using your instructions.
- 9 Enter the right category.
- 10 Make it accessible; ingredients should be available at grocery stores nationwide.

Entering a cooking contest is a lot of fun. Winning is even better! Here are some tips for entering and making your recipe stand out.

First, it is important to read the instructions and determine if you are qualified to participate. Professionals are ineligible in some contests.

Practice your recipe and make sure your ingredients are listed in the order they will be used. Make sure the pan size, oven temperature and timing are specific. It is important to note if a recipe needs to be prepared in advance and other information, such as "can be frozen."

Number of servings and storage instructions should also be listed.

Recipes are judged first and foremost for taste. Originality is another factor to consider as well as ease of preparation. Think about the visual appeal of your dish. Is a garnish something that will make it stand out?

Another factor to consider is the use of eligible sponsor products. One local company left the blueberries out of a blueberry muffin recipe that was printed on all of their boxes. Oops!

You can get more attention from the judges by giving your recipe a catchy name. Current



trends in food and dining

will also capture attention,

as well as adventurous use of herbs and spices. When the contest is being sponsored by a certain company or ingredient, be sure to use that ingredient as a major item in your recipe. If allowed, enter more than one recipe in the contest.

This is the recipe that my friend, Maureen Tischue, and I created to win the \$100,000 first prize in the Southern Living magazine contest.



CHRISTIE KATONA

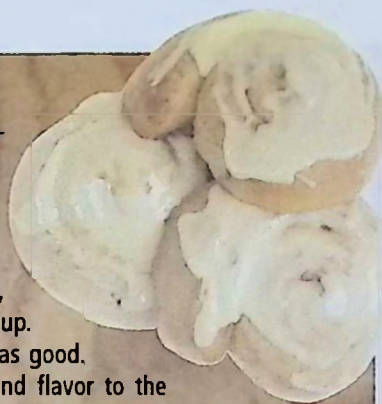
Christie Katona is the owner of Christie's Catering Inc. in Renton. She attended the Cordon Bleu in London, has authored many cookbooks, taught cooking classes for many years and worked as a restaurant consultant. More recipes and suggestions can be found at www.ChristiesCatering.com.

notes

We got the idea for this recipe by combining Maureen's dough recipe using sweet potatoes and Christie's cinnamon roll recipe. Use a 15-ounce sweet potato, pierce it with a fork and microwave it uncovered for 15 minutes on high. Cool it, remove the skin and mash it to get one cup.

Boiled or canned potatoes will not taste as good.

The sweet potato adds moisture, color and flavor to the dough. The orange zest adds depth of flavor and interest. Coarsely chop the pecans and toast them at 350 for about 10 minutes. This warms up the oven, making it a good place to let the dough rise after the heat is turned off. At first we used too much glaze and it muted the flavor. When pouring the glaze over the top it's important – because of gravity – to start from the outside and move toward the center.



Sweet Potato Cinnamon Rolls

Makes 12 • Prep time 40 minutes • Let rise two hours
Bake 20 minutes • Cool 30 minutes • Can be frozen

you will need

Dough:

2 pkgs. active dry yeast
1/2 cup warm water
1 tsp. sugar
5 1/2 cups flour
1 cup mashed sweet potatoes
1 egg, lightly beaten
1 cup buttermilk
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup melted butter
2 tbs. grated orange zest
1 tsp. baking soda
Non-stick cooking spray

Filling:

3/4 cup butter, melted
2 cups light brown sugar
2 tbs. ground cinnamon
1 cup chopped toasted pecans
Stir together all ingredients until blended.

Glaze:

1 cup light brown sugar
1/3 cup light corn syrup
1/4 cup butter
1/2 cup whipping cream
1 tsp. vanilla

directions

Stir together sugar, corn syrup, and butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and stir in cream and vanilla.

Pulse first three ingredients in a food processor using the steel blade. Remove steel blade and change to the short plastic dough blade. Let stand 5 minutes.

Add 1/2 cup flour to the yeast mixture and process for one minute. Add sweet potatoes and next seven ingredients and four cups of the flour. Add remaining cup of flour and process until a dough forms. It will be sticky.

Place dough in a large bowl coated with cooking spray, cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place for one hour, or until doubled in bulk.

Punch dough down. Turn out onto a well floured surface, and form into a 10x18 inch rectangle. Spread with filling. Roll up like a jelly roll starting at one long side.

Cut into 12 slices and arrange in a 13x9-inch pan which has been sprayed with non-stick spray. Let rise in a warm place for 30 minutes.

Bake rolls at 400 for 10 minutes. Remove pan from oven and drizzle with glaze, starting at the outer edge of the pan and going towards the center. Continue to bake for an additional 7 to 10 minutes, or until lightly browned and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Remove rolls from oven and invert onto a large platter or foil-lined baking sheet.



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Indulge yourself and give a little

Some are calling it "the new normal." While economists argue whether the recession is over or even if it's a double-dipper, there's no argument that people in our community need our help.

Renton area charities offer a number of ways to indulge your gift-giving spirit. If money is tight for your own family this year, many of these groups

are looking for lightly used or like-new clothing, toys and games.

Many of these charitable organizations remind us too, that while we think about giving especially at this time of year, the need doesn't go away at the end of the holidays. You're invited to join them in serving people in our community all year round.

RENTON SALVATION ARMY

What's Happening: Thanksgiving food distribution Tuesday, Nov. 23

How you can help: Donate Thanksgiving food. Monetary donations may be sent to P.O. Box 977, Renton, WA 98057.

Deadline: Food donations no later than Friday, Nov. 19, at the Salvation Army Food Bank, 206 S. Tobin St.

Contact: Ameeca at 425-255-5969

What else is happening: Christmas Kettles Campaign begins Nov. 15

How you can help: Volunteer bell ringers will be stationed at local grocery stores through December. The Salvation Army asks that patrons give generously.

Deadline: Sign up to volunteer by or before Friday, Nov. 19.

Contact: DJ Svenson at 425-255-5974

What else is happening: Giving trees – Businesses post wish list tags on trees provided by the Salvation Army, and employees purchase gifts to put under the tree, matching wish list tags.

How you can help: Renton Salvation Army is looking for businesses to sponsor a giving tree.

Deadline: Toys and gifts are picked up from participating businesses as needed with final pick-up Dec. 16.

Contact: Shae McCormack to sponsor

a tree, for gift tags or for toy pick up 425-255-5974

What else is happening: Christmas toy and food Distribution

How you can help: Volunteers are needed to distribute toys and food during the week of Dec. 21. Food and toy donations needed.

Deadline: Dec. 17

Contact: Ameeca at 425-255-5969

Web site:
www.salvationarmyrenton.org/

SOCIETY OF ST. VINCENT DE PAUL

What's happening: St. Vincent de Paul Thrift Store

How you can help: People may donate clothing, furniture, books, and household goods Monday through Sunday at 2825 Sunset Blvd. N.E. Store phone number is 425-226-9426.

Deadline: Items may be dropped off year round.

What else is happening: St. Anthony Parish St. Vincent de Paul conference

How you can help: People may drop off non-perishable food (especially peanut butter, jelly, macaroni and cheese, tuna, and canned fruits). Monetary donations are also needed to prevent evictions, hunger, utility shut-offs and more during the holiday sea-

son and all year long. Checks should be made out to St. Vincent DePaul.

Deadline: Drop off canned goods during the day Monday through Friday at 314 S. 4th St.

Contact: 425-277-6226.

Web site: Online gifts may be made at www.svdpsseattle.org

VISION HOUSE

What's Happening: Giving trees, adopt-a-family, financial contributions to support homeless children and mothers.

How you can help: Vision House delivers four-foot trees to local businesses and churches decorated with tags that describe a Vision House child or mom. In return, the businesses and churches collect gift cards and financial donations that support the homeless families at Vision House during the holidays and throughout the year. Giving Tree contributions will be picked up the week prior to Christmas. Individuals and businesses may also adopt a family and provide clothing, toys, and hygiene items. Financial contributions may be sent to P.O. Box 2951, Renton, 98056.

Deadline: Registration is open now for the Giving Tree and Adopt-a-Family programs.

Contact: Kristi Slattery at 425-228-6356, kristis@vision-house.org

Web site: www.NoHomelessKids.org

WAY BACK INN

What's Happening: Way Back Inn provides transitional housing to homeless children and their families, helping them rebuild their lives, dignity, and self-confidence. The program needs monetary and in-kind donations of basic household furnishings.

How you can help: Needs include cash donations to help operate housing units, gas and grocery gift cards for families, general household cleaning supplies, Home Depot/Lowes cards for housing maintenance projects, volunteers, and basic home furnishings. Check donations may be mailed to P.O. Box 621, Renton, WA 98057.

Deadline: Items will be picked up by the Way Back Inn staff year round.

Contact: Tonya Ward, 425-432-6766, to arrange for pick-up.

Web site: www.way-back-inn.org

RENTON CLOTHES BANK

What's Happening: Filling the clothing shelves

How you can help: Donate clean, wearable clothing for adults and children. Shoes are also acceptable and appreciated. Jeans and socks are always needed. Or, you can volunteer your time. Or, you can give a cash donation.

Deadline: People may drop off donations Monday through Thursday from 1 to 5 p.m. Items should not be left at the back door.

Contact: Del Mead, 425-255-8018, or Susan Bressler, scbressler@comcast.net

Web site: Rentonclothesbank.org



RENTON MAGAZINE / ANDREW FICKES

Chef John Fisher (center) gives a taste test of the potatoes Delmonico, which Vince Garcia is preparing. Amanda Nies stirs a steak sauté.

For this chef, what goes around comes around

BY ANDREW FICKES

John Fisher has come full circle as a chef – after graduating from Renton High School in 1966, he was the first graduate from Renton Technical College's culinary program, where he is now in his seventh year as senior instructor.

Having put 150 students through the program, Fisher says he likes to "pull the optimal potential out of each student. I instill teamwork and teach students how to be a lady and a gentleman and respect each other's work."

"You have to put your whole mind and being into what you're doing, because otherwise you'll have mediocre food," he instructs his students.

Fisher began cooking at age 5 when his Italian aunt taught him how to prepare homemade pastas and sauces.

"I cooked with her on weekends and helped her prepare meals for big holiday dinners," he says. "When my mother returned to work, I was responsible for the family dinners."

Fisher got his first taste of professional cooking in his late teens when he was a bus boy at the Renton Inn (now the location of the Yankee Diner and Holiday Inn).

"I gradually worked my way into the kitchen, working the breakfast hour," he says.

But sometimes he faced a sour reaction when he decided he wanted to cook professionally.

"People would say, 'Are you too stupid to go to college?'"

Not stupid at all. Fisher has been reviewed in such publications as Sunset Magazine's "Chefs of the West." In 1996 after many years in industry, he began teaching at the Seattle Art Institute. He finished there as the director of the culinary department before returning to RTC as a senior instructor in 2003.

He's a believer in methodology – roasting, frying, sautéing, grilling ... if you know the method, you can apply it to any recipe.

He teaches his students that they're going to be thrown challenges, and they're going to have to react in a way to satisfy their bosses and customers.

The Food Network, he says, has made some students entering the program starry

eyed.

"What they find out when they come here is that they have to walk before they can run," he says.

Fisher enjoys his time with students, buzzing from station to station helping prepare main dishes for the college café.

Third quarter student Amanda Nies reflected on his teaching while stirring a large pot of beef stroganoff. Fisher, she says, "is understanding when we're struggling, and he's right there to demonstrate different methods of cooking."

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Birthday Dreams

for homeless children

BY DANA E. NEUTS

Join The Party

Birthday Dreams needs donations of party supplies, cake, ice cream, juice and presents as well as volunteers to deliver Birthdays-in-a-Box and to help at parties. To find out how to help, contact Chris Spahn at 206-683-6056 or visit <http://BirthdayDreams.org>.

For homeless children staying at Vision House's domestic abuse shelter in Renton, it wasn't just any Saturday. It was the quarterly birthday party for boys and girls, ages birth to 18, celebrating a summer birthday. The smell of cotton candy filled the air, along with laughter from carefree children and their guests playing games, jumping in the Bouncy House, getting their faces painted and doing crafts. Today was their day – a day to set aside the stresses of daily living – to just have fun!

This special birthday party was hosted by Birthday Dreams, a nonprofit organization in Renton that provides birthday parties and Birthdays-in-a-Box to foster kids, homeless children and those in transitional housing.

"Everyone needs to have one special day just for them," explains executive

director Chris Spahn, 40. "Each child gets a day that's all about him or her!"

Spahn started Birthday Dreams in April 2009 to help homeless children and their parents and caregivers to celebrate the children's birthdays. The organization's first party was held at Vision House in 2009. It was so popular that Birthday Dreams and volunteers host the parties every quarter now, drawing 20 to 30 kids at each one. With donations from local individuals and companies, Birthday Dreams provides activities, games, prizes, cake and ice cream and presents for each birthday child. Each party features an age-appropriate theme and gifts or gift cards are purchased for each birthday child.

"We had 10 kids at our first party," Spahn says. "It's worthwhile. The kids that come absolutely love it!"

Adults from Kiwanis and teens from Kent-Meridian, Hazen and Liberty High Schools volunteer at the Vision House parties as well as parties at other area shelters including Hope Place (Seattle), Hopelink (Redmond) and The Willows (White Center).

The teen volunteers "will do just about anything you ask. They have good hearts," says Birthday Dreams vice-chair Shannon Avery. "They learn to be grateful for what they have by giving to the less fortunate."

In addition to hosting the parties, Birthday Dreams also puts together Birthdays-in-a-Box for homeless and foster children. With most of the supplies donated, Birthday Dreams delivers a birthday with all the trimmings to the child's parent or caregiver. The box contains a birthday cake, ice cream, juice, themed party supplies and gifts for the birthday boy or girl.

"The Birthday-in-a-Box comes from the parent, not from us," Spahn explains. "The parent gets to be the hero."

At press time, Birthday Dreams had helped 168 homeless kids celebrate their birthdays. What's next? Spahn and Avery say they are open to the possibilities.

"We weren't sure how big this was going to get," Avery says.

"We want them all to have birthdays," Spahn adds. "We'll take on as many as we can handle!"

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