



The Scandalous Scallion

BY MEGAN LEE

According to the Market's omniscient and odoriferous fishmongers this is going to be a harsh winter. They say indicators--like crab legs--point toward cold temperatures, possible snow even in the city and extreme wintry conditions. If November was an indicator they may be right: the dark days, the wind and rain and the first frost, but still scores of savvy Seattleites and vivacious visitors to our fair city braved the blindingly temperatures and driving rain to visit the Market.

No rain delays here, the month began with an interesting 4-H event, including goats, dogs and interesting people doing interesting demonstrations. The Better Your Best in the Pacific Northwest event was topped off by a special evening in the Market Arcade including nine-item buffet for about 12,000 people. Some dogs were spotted making their way to Patrick and Jason's increasingly infamous Cat World. The kitschy KITTEN HERDERS were able to avert any potential pussy problems and the cats remained docile. All goats were on their best behavior.

The Market celebrated Dia de los Muertos, by being a sort of ghost town; the first week of November seemed to be the slowest of the year. (This is the part of the quarter referred to by some as Black Friday, or the eerie calm before the holiday storm.) Some spirituous folk did turn up to celebrate with Beto and Sergio down at Cintli Mexican Jewelry, in the Down Under, to celebrate and see the Katrina dolls and what the boys brought back on the most recent trip to Mexico.

The Hmong New Year, November 5, was another day for celebration in the Market. Bao Thao, the first person of Hmong ancestry to sell in the Market (1991), and the shy yet diligent celebrated with special crafts in the

celebratory colors of black, white, blue, red and orange.

The big Election Night, November 8, was another big one. The smoking ban opposition party was HQ-ed at Kells, though strangely Kells is already a nonsmoking venue. The campaign against the

ban seemed to be lead by Vito (Sounds like VETO) Chiechi, retired lobbyist. Rory and the gang at Kells said it was a pretty big night, smoking and drinking on a Tuesday Night. Socially it will be interesting to see



where this measure leads, it can be very sobering to walk outside of a bar to smoke a cigarette. This imposition will change culture in our fair city, at least 25-feet in one direction or another. (The Scallion hears El Gaucho, 2505 First Avenue, is already working on a rooftop smoking room, in compliance with the dubious stipulations imposed by the ban...What is next?)

In a related note: our boy Rory took off to Ireland without telling anyone! He's back, to make Ritzy's Ginger-n-Jameson.

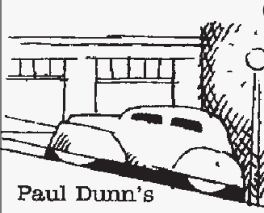
Speaking of smoking, the Market Tobacco Patch, nestled in the back of the Stewart House just before the Emmett Watson's Courtyard, has redecorated and increased humidior space. Sign-up to be invited to their sizzling cigar parties.

Thirteen Stores on the Third Floor DownUnder--Big Boys Toys, BLMF, Twilight Studio, Patrick Kerr Ink, Pharaohs Treasures, Grandmas Attic, Yesterdaze, Charlottes Web, Christopher's Lamp, Cintli, Holycow Records, Lefty's World, Old Friends Antiques and Sestos on Western put together a TV ad, to run 210 plus times on various cable channels. The ambitious project, spearheaded by Chris of BBT, is an effort to cast some light on the deep, dark forgotten floors of the daunting DownUnder.

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A WINTER STORY

An important debate about the nature of Market governance took place last month in the PDA Conference Room and only the participants heard it. The issue was: Are the Market Historical Commission (MHC) and the Public Development Authority



Paul Dunn's

Post Alley Passages

(PDA) co-managers of the Market, or is one a regulator and the other a manager? This debate arose from language in proposed MHC Guideline Revisions, voted on at the end of the scheduled public hearing. Half the PDA Council, plus its executive director and her senior property manager were present, for a total of eight. The Commission had two absent, less the permanent property owner vacancy, for a total nine. Only the MHC got to vote on the outcome.

MHC Chair Alex Rolluda wisely loosened the procedural rules on time limits during the public comment and Commission discussion. What resulted was an informed and healthy debate, with the Commission learning about difficulties the PDA faces in managing its property in the Market and the PDA learning that the Commission views its role differently from that of the PDA, but is not unsympathetic.

Previous revisions have remarkably left the document the same. This time around there were many small changes, but the revisions of note were two sections in *Styles and Methods of Business Operations*. The Owner Operator language (2.6.1) was expanded beyond original language present since 1971 which required owners to be involved in daily management and financial operation, including regular on-premises presence of the owner involving direct customer contact. This is the meet the producer tradition. This section was expanded to allow businesses with ownership structures other than sole proprietor to designate a person to be on premises regularly and be responsible for daily management and financial operations.

The language in *Ownership and Control Outside the Market* (2.6.8) proposed that the Commission shall deny an application if the owner or business entity has an ownership interest in or controls another similar business outside the Market. The original language had used the permissive, contingent may. The change to the commanding Shall excluded the idea of MHC discretion. These two revisions were fervently resisted by the PDA Council and staff in their remarks. Speaking from different perspectives, but with the same message, John Finke, Gerry Kumata, Bruce Lorig, and Ann Magnano all explained how the proposed changes would further bind their efforts to attract qualified, experienced, and ultimately successful business owners to the Market. The language limiting Commission discretion would force rejection of applications for a new branch bank, for instance, if US Bank were to leave.

Earlier in the agenda Sushi@Markets application for use as an organic sushi restaurant serving Kai-ten (conveyor belt) sushi was denied by the Commission because an investor in the business owned 144 similar restaurants in Japan. Commissioner Sara Patton noted that the Commission was not compelled by the current guidelines to deny that application. But there would be no discretion at all with the new language.

All the PDA Councilmembers and staff spoke of the dilemma facing the larger successful businesses in the Market, which have owners and operators looking to either sell or retire. Public discussion of these confidential and private matters by the PDA is difficult, but all felt the Commission had to be made aware of the thin veneer of economic strength on which the Market operates. These few businesses generate revenue far in excess of the space they occupy; they subsidize the majority of small businesses in the Market. When these anchor businesses consider selling they must look to buyers who have experience in the same or similar trade with large financial resources or access to likely investors.

Inexperienced buyers and under financed operators will have slim chances of success.

Councilmember Ann Magnano related her experience in selling Magnano Foods when she retired. She said the only viable buyer with experience in the natural food business gained that experience building a similar business in a Seattle suburb. The MHC Guidelines being considered for change would have restricted that buyer from the Market. The earlier rejection that day of the sushi restaurant shocked her. She felt the kind of restrictions that led to those decisions would also lead to the decline in the economic viability of the Market.

Commissioners Howard Aller and Helmuth Svoboda expressly denied any economic consideration superior to the historic preservation role of the Commission.

As the discussion proceeded, PDA Councilmembers Finke and Lorig called for closer cooperation between the two entities. Each stated that both organizations should work together as co-managers. This designation was swiftly rejected by Commissioner Alf Collins, who asserted that the Historical Commission is a regulatory body and not a manager. Others joined this digression about functions saying the economic health of the Market was the PDA responsibility and historic preservation was that of the Commission.

However, some Commissioners did acknowledge they could not ignore economic consequences entirely, when they were presented. Commissioners Rolluda, Patton and Ed Rose explicitly remarked that the information and arguments presented by the PDA Councilmembers during the discussion were valuable to them in understanding issues facing the PDA and would likely improve their future decision making.

After an hour of civil discussion and debate, Heather McAuliffe, Commission Coordinator, summarized the Guideline revisions and the changes that seemed to have been agreed upon by consensus. The change from May to Shall was rejected. Other expansive language in styles of business operation were approved. The final vote was a unanimous 9-0 approval. Carol Binder had rallied her forces to present a case for easier Market management procedures and consideration of the economic impact of MHC decisions. The MHC received a lesson in Market economics which it may or may not heed in the future. The real story was that important players in Market governance carried on a balanced, reasoned and civil discussion about elemental Market issues.

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