

## The Scandalous Scallion

By MEGAN LEE

The new year came in with cold, clear days, beautiful sunsets and whispers of snow and "deep freeze." We waited to sled down the First and Virginia hill again... but no, at least not yet. January and February are usually a *slow time* of year but, like Ridgmont High, the "fast times" continue down here at the Market. After the series of cold, clear-blue days the notorious semi-monsoons of Seattle descended. Some days were so rainy the chalk washed off the sandwich boards. But, don't worry, the sun will be back in June, or July.

During January, a few orca whales were spotted swimming in Elliot Bay, (Which pod???) seals were seen on Bell Street Pier, fish jumped, shoppers and visitors trickled through and in some corners it was construction time, again.

Maintenance on the southern-most tables of the Main Arcade closed three prime Pike Place parking spots in its wake. Pure Food & Fish was shut for a fortnight while longtime leaks were fixed and tiles replaced. The only PF&F fishmonger to stick around was the infamous Harry... Walter, Brison, Josh and the rest sneaked away for vacations. Folk at The Market Grill said things just weren't the same... especially with the jackhammer going. The Emerald Kettle, in the Sanitary (Corner) Market, left everyone a little hungrier when they closed for re-tooling/ renovation/vacation/hiatus.

Still, situations scuttled and sizzled.

\* \* \*

The Showbox hosted a series of Tsunami fund-raisers: The Presidents of the United Sates of America played with MXPX and Smoosh on Jan. 12, Jan. 13 featured Ben Gibbard, of Death Cab for Cutie, with special guests Eric Bachman of Crooked Fingers and David Bazan of Pedro the Lion. On Jan. 14 Gibbard played another show accompanied by Bazan and James Mercer, of the Shins. Jan. 22 KUBE and the Showbox presented their "Mix for Relief" show including Sir Mix-a-lot, Byrdie, The Rashard Lewis Show and the KUBE 93 Mixers: DJ SupaSam, DJ Vinnie, DJ Big Mike, DJ Scene and DJ B-Mello.

The first three shows raised \$77,500, all proceeds going toward Northwest Medical

Teams who will be sending medical volunteers and life-saving supplies to people in Southern Asia.

Organizers were impressed with the outpouring of support and how well everything came together to make each of the four events so successful. They give a big thanks to Marketeer Terry Marks of Terry Marks Design, 91° Pine Street.

A temple troupe through with drums and a Chinese dragon Sunday, Jan. 16.

\* \* \*

**Jim Hinde**, Market musician and officer of the Pike Place Market Performers Guild, and **Stephanie Cirkovich**, P D A director



of marketing, began spearheading a quest to maybe get the Pike Place Market featured on a federal postage stamp, for the Market's centennial anniversary in 2007. They contacted the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee and it is evaluating whether the Market meets the established criteria. (If the Missouri State Fair can do it, why not us??) The proposal, which included a video, nominates the Market as a natural choice as representative slice of Americana. Now, they are hoping to get the [super] Friends of the Market involved, to further the endeavor. Contact Jim Hinde for more information.

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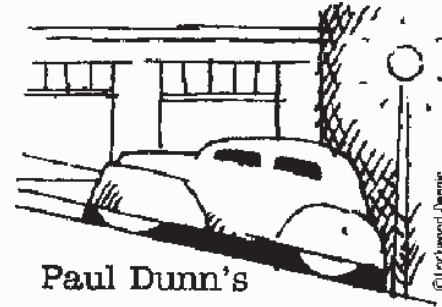
Eclectic cabarets and music continue down in Patti Summers Cabaret. Cabarets included various nights of spoken word. Jan. 13, Mr. Joe Fischer returned to perform his multi-media comedy stylings and spoken words. Fischer, whose day job in a veterinary, has been performing at Patti Summer's Cabaret since 1995 and loves it. The night also included the ferociously silencing, yet charmingly edgy spoken words and poetry of Capital Hill's Miss Gigi. Summers still does Jazz every Wednesday and Sunday, and the rest of the week is open to a plethora of performance

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## SIGN LANGUAGE

One of the best things about this time of year in the Market is that with thinner crowds you can walk and move easily on the sidewalks and in the hallways. The ease of passage should improve even more year around as the Market Historical Commission completes its purge of unapproved sandwich board signs that have been growing in Market passageways like vine maple crowding a Cascade trail.

The Commission has been wrestling for decades with the problem of



### Paul Dunn's Post Alley Passages

proliferating sidewalk sandwich board signs. A current enforcement action is the culmination of more than a decade of work that included both Guideline revision and a physical sign survey.

In June 2000, after public notice and debate, the Historic Commission approved extensive revisions to its 1971 Guidelines. These included a new approach to sandwich board signs in the Market.

The design section of the revised guidelines deals comprehensively with signage of all sorts. Historic signs are protected, such as Loback Meats and Milwaukee Sausage Company, plus business signage on storefronts and exteriors.

Off-premises signs are prohibited. Exceptions are provided for directional signs, group directories, signs from marquees or canopies, and those that identify the Market as a whole.

"Sandwich board signs are not allowed because they interfere with pedestrian movement, represent a safety hazard and detract from the historic character of the Market."—Commission Design Guideline 3.6.6 (b).

The Commission can make exceptions for businesses with access or location problems. These rare exceptions must meet six conditions:

- 1 One sandwich board sign per business.
- 2 Maximum size, 18 inches by 36 inches.
- 3 Sign removed at end of business hours.
- 4 Sign displayed only at specific, approved location.
- 5 Approval revocable by Commission with 30 days notice.
- 6 Sign must display sticker indicating Commission approval.

The 2000 action of publishing the new Guidelines and applying them to subsequent applicants neither relieved the sign congestion nor deterred the scofflaws. In late 2004 the Commission surveyed all off-premises signage in the Market and compared the

on-street results with certificates of approval. At that time 72 signs were in daily use and only 20 had been approved.

### SIGNING OFF

Since some businesses have multiple unapproved signs, the number of offending businesses is far less than 72. The offenders fall into two main groups. The larger group consists of businesses using sandwich board signage at the front door of their street-side stores.

The smaller group comprises businesses located within interior "pedestrian ways," such as the Soames-Dunn and Stewart House inside shops, plus some located on the inner walkways of the Sanitary and Economy Markets. Most of those shops are listed on group directories. There are a few signs belonging to businesses that overstayed their temporary permission time limits long ago. And a few did not act on City Hearing Examiner decisions.

The shops on First Avenue, Pike Place and Post Alley Courtyard, with direct access to the public, have the weakest justification for signage. Their wares and services are in plain sight. Clean well lighted shops with welcoming staff should not need sandwich boards to trip or trap customers.

A forthcoming Commission letter to all businesses with off-premises signs in the pedestrian ways of the Market explains the Guidelines and asks business owners to remove unapproved sandwich board signs. Procedures for applying for approval are explained. The Market should soon see a marked reduction in the clutter of sidewalk sandwich boards.

Market businesses thinking of appealing to the City Council, the Mayor or some higher authority should be aware that the city is also undertaking a review and policing of sandwich boards throughout Seattle by its Department of Transportation. City ordinance gives the Market Historical Commission jurisdiction over all signage in the Pike Place Market

What is the purpose of a sandwich board or of any sign? Is it directional, to help a customer locate and arrive at a store or shop? Or is it to sell the visitor by reminding them of a service or product they may or may not be seeking, i.e., is it to troll for impulsive shoppers?

The Commission Guidelines explicitly allow for the first, directional, function, but not the second use, hawking a product. The trolling or selling sign leads to the explosion of sidewalk signage that has created the movement and safety problems in the Market the new guideline enforcement seeks to correct.

There are other sign rules for business fronts, for banners and for temporary proclamations.

The Commission considered all historic and current uses and needs. It is not punishing any businesses for past practices. It is trying to thin the forest of signage in the Market so visitors can see some of the trees in the forest.

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The Market News is published monthly by the Pike Place Market Merchants Association, 93 Pike St. #312, Seattle, WA 98101. Copr. ©2005 All Rights Reserved.

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