



## The Scandalous Scallion

BY MEGAN LEE

Ahhh, another Valentines come and gone. Celebrations included electing this year's king and queen: Sol Amon and Sandra Dunn. Sweethearts are Frankie and Sharla Genzale but loads of other Marketeers were nominate (get the story on page seven). Valentines also marks the biggest single flower day in the Market—and the world. February 14 people queue up all over the globe for beautiful blossoms to give their special sweetie as a token of special springtime affection. In the Market, wait times ranged from a few minutes to much, much longer. The line for tulips, at Alm Hill Gardens, seemed to be over ten feet all day long and they weren't the only one.

Over at Pike Place Flowers extra tables were set up, they stoked more roses than the rose parade, Grace (James' mom) and Heidi and the armada Gildersleeve helped out. Best Flowers set up a staging room. Flowers ebbed and flowed like an Ester Williams performance.

Others celebrated by wearing black and drinking heavily.

The Market celebrated the Winter Olympics in our own way. On the clear days, the fresh snow outlined each peek of Olympic Mountains, of the Olympic Peninsula, seemed physically reachable from the Market. The fresh snow delicately outlining each peek. (Was that a bit of bicycle messenger hockey at the end of Pike Place? A nice change from the hackey-cask, eh?)

The big CASI Chili/BBQ event was another spicy one. The fourth annual fun-and-food function, in honor of Rachel, brought out droves of carnivores, tents, tasters, speculators, recipe collectors, 'himmers,' 'hawers' and a few indescribables. Rumor has it a chili Congo line developed. PDA Security estimated that there were about 2000 or so more people than normal Sundays this time of year.

The judging was moved back to the Champion Building, the BBQ judging took place in the Pike Place Grocery & Deli and the chili was in a (temporarily) vacant office building upstairs.

After the consumption of cups and the testing of tastes the big winners were

announced. There were a few notable upsets. For a complete list of winners go to the CASI website.

Cheryl And Dave Martin, Champion Building, were elated to be involved, again. They offered three kinds of their own homemade chili in the deli soup urns. They thought the was as big as the annual Street Fair (June 3-4), and speculate that maybe next year it will become two events: one for Chili and one for BBQ.



The only downside was they ran out of chili and BBQ, again. Everything has to be made on site, one of the main Seattle King County Heath Department rules.

This makes things less easy and limited by pot size. World Class Chili's Joe Canavan, one of the main organizers, says all in all everything went well, he is happy, and everyone is looking forward to next year.

Cinnamon Works' Mike Ruegamer satiated the crowd with his signature corn bread and hungry, hungry humanoids hankered around. Ruegamer says he and a few licensed restaurant owners talked about introducing their own chill's next year. The geniuses at Pike Place Chowder rumoredly are concocting some sort of GEODUCK chili.

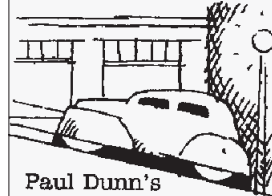
Speaking of chowder—because after all chowder does make 'em louder—the antics of the Chowder Bandit continue. Sources indicate that he was spotted posing, with a head full of scarves, as a gypsy fortune teller and telling peoples fortunes from visions he saw in a fresh salmon. Maybe he's a bit psychic as well.

The Market sadly says goodbye to a good friend and part of our community. Brian Koren who ran Bugsy's Pizza 1980 through 1995 (in what is now the Alibi Room) passed away. The ornate Chicago Style Pizzeria was notorious. Koren and his family forged it from the warehouse-like, in previously uninhabited space. His mother, Laurel Potkin, remembers constructing the bathroom (if you've been down those steps you can imagine), fixing the steps, installing the elevator and turning the space to the memorable restaurant it was. The endeavor was a family affair, Koren's sister restored the Market Theater around the same time. (Luckily, the other brother ran a construction business at the time.) The theater showed films and hosted events. Potkin remembers chasing the rats out of the alley when a

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## Political Rituals Shaping Downtown

Mayor Greg Nickels and Councilmember Peter Steinbrueck are joined in a Seattle ritual of public process over the future of downtown.



Paul Dunn's

### Post Alley Passages

The mayor's supporting cast includes downtown and owners, developers, and commercial associations. Ranked opposite them are nonprofit low income housing advocates, open space proponents and a large contingent of Seattleites who don't show up at City Hall in suits.

The goals of these two groups are disparate, but, essentially, not in conflict. The Downtown Seattle Association seeks to "implement policies and code changes to encourage development of a healthy vibrant urban core." The Seattle Displacement Coalition calls for replacement of low income housing lost to new construction, loss prevention strategies, annual inventories, and balanced jobs to housing ratios for downtown.

The mayor opened the ceremonies early last year by framing his proposals in comparisons with Vancouver, B.C. (which we all love and admire). It took six months to erase that urban conceit. Seattle lacks available downtown open space rising from its waterfront to a fully built urban environment. Mostly, though, Seattle isn't backed-up by the state and national sanity needed to clone Vancouver.

The rest of last year was consumed by the rituals of competing studies, reports, and public expositions of findings, which were then countered by newer studies, reports, and consultant expertise all spread thickly over the city via the print and electric media. Early this year the mayor released a downtown parks initiative (see February Passages) which described the relevance of parks to downtown livability, but offered no funding or action agenda.

The Pike Place Market PDA, which has 'development' in its name, and low income housing in its mandate is ambivalent and silent—saying it doesn't take political positions—unless it just wants to.

The contention between the two groups turns out to be the dollar amount per square foot of new construction under the proposed downtown zoning code that developers pay into an affordable housing fund. The mayor and developers have proposed \$10.00 per square foot and Councilmember Steinbrueck is asking the city to mandate \$20.00 per square foot of new construction.

Clerks, sales and service workers and other low income workers who serve downtown residents and businesses keep the city functioning. Their role in a livable downtown precedes that of parks, schools, and day care centers. Affordable housing for that low wage workforce has declined from 7311 dwelling units in 1985 to 5825 in 2005. This decline occurred despite the infusion of almost \$100 million

in public affordable housing funds which were used for replacement housing.

The issue is how much per square foot should developers return to the public housing fund for the governmental gift of up zoning which can increase property values by 25 or 30%. Peter Steinbrueck asserts his \$20.00 per square foot would add only 3% to a developer's costs and would still provide a 20% profit margin.

Complaints are not credible that developers will not build because of the additional \$10.00 housing fund give back. Work has begun on a hotel/condominium project, at First and Union, with pre-selling of upper floors at more than \$2000 per square foot—within the existing zoning code.

### Back To The Future

A few years ago Market resident Gary Cluff recreated a map of the 1893 Market neighborhood which this paper published. Along with an equal distribution of saloons, beer gardens, restaurants and stores were SRO hotels, and boarding and rooming houses including the Market's own renovated Leland Hotel. Many of the residents were transients from timber, fishery, or maritime occupations. But the majority worked in the growing commercial district downtown providing clerical and sales services while living in housing made affordable by their wages.

Paul Groth, a Berkeley professor of architectural history, has written of the attention San Francisco grand hotel builders gave to housing their hotel staff at the turn of the last century. Hotel residence for the most prominent and wealthy strata of society was the norm in America a century ago. Indeed, the 'American Plan' hotel rate included room and four meals a day in their fine dining rooms. Most of the hotels South of Market (now trendy SoMa) were built to meet the housing needs of service workers for the wealthy permanent hotel guests.

In the intervening century, wars, suburban growth, freeways, and fire codes that closed flophouses, mandates to empty state mental hospitals, social safety net cutbacks, and continuing chronic drug and alcohol use, plus inflationary housing values have altered our downtown housing landscape. If the proposed zoning changes can be configured to correct the imbalance of housing and jobs downtown, it will be worth the parade of aspirations.

There is general agreement among all groups on the goals of the upzoning for downtown: more residents, more amenities, more walking, plus bonuses for open space, green construction, off street parking, and preservation of historic buildings. All agree on the need for built-in affordable housing in the new residential construction or contributions to a city housing fund dedicated to the same goal. The parties are only \$10.00 apart from agreement.

A public hearing on this issue so important to the Market and its neighborhood downtown is Tuesday, March 7: at 5:30 p.m., in City Hall. Everyone's active support is needed.

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