



The Newsletter  
of the Denny Creek  
Neighborhood Alliance

www.dennycreek.org

AUGUST 2009

The mission of the Denny Creek Neighborhood Alliance is to preserve, protect, and restore the natural resources of the area to promote stewardship of wildlife and the environment.

## Once annual O.O. Denny Park festivities return in September

Plans are underway to resurrect the celebration at O.O. Denny Park that DCNA used to have until a few years ago.

DCNA Board Director Francesca Lyman is leading a team of volunteers in putting together a lineup of fun activities for Sunday, September 13.

The O.O. Denny Park Community Potluck Festival will be held from 1 to 5 pm near the Clayton Rich Memorial Shelter.

All Finn Hill residents and supporters of DCNA are welcome to attend and encouraged to bring a potluck dish to share with friends and neighbors.

Details continued to be worked out but here is what is planned:

### Live Music

A terrific band from Seattle called Wynne Blue and the Trouble Fakers will be performing along with a trio that has performed at past functions, Ben Musa.

### Dog Parade and Contests

Alison Bodie is putting together a fun dog competition. It starts with a parade of dogs around the park at 2:30 pm. Then several competitions will be held:

- Perkiest Pup (dogs under 12 months);
- Superlative Senior (dogs over 10 years);

- Best Young Handler (child 12 years and under);
- Most Obedient and Disobedient (dogs to be on a long leash);
- Best Kisser;
- Dog and Owner Look-Alike;
- and The Dog The Judges Would Most Like To Take Home\*

Participants are asked to donate \$1 for each competition entry with the exception of the last category in which

al dogs are welcome.

Three or four judges will handle the canine critiques and awards will be given to dogs judged tops in the various categories.

For pre-registration or to ask any question, e-mail Alison at denny-dogs@yahoo.com.

Remember, all dogs must be continually leashed because that's the law

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Assistant City Manager Marilyn Beard takes questions from the audience during the April DCNA General Meeting. It was one of the largest turnouts in years for the General Meeting, though most people were there admittedly to learn more about annexation than get caught up on DCNA-specific project summaries. Beard was surprised at the turnout and the interest helped prompt subsequent public meetings held in the proposed annexation area. Photo by Jeff Hoerth

## DCNA Board endorses annexation measure

At its August meeting, the DCNA Board of Directors voted to endorse supporting the annexation vote appearing on the November ballot. The measure asks voters in the proposed annexation areas of Finn Hill, Juanita, and Kingsgate if they approve being

annexed into the City of Kirkland.

The proposed annexation area is home to approximately 32,000 residents. The ballot measure requires at least 40% of the voters who voted in the last election to cast their votes in

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## DCNA 2009-10 Board Roster

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## Message from the Board President

The Board of Directors, as noted in the front page article, took a stand on the upcoming annexation vote during its last Board meeting. I want to give a little more background on that decision because there may be some questions on why we chose to support annexation.

Many of you have seen articles on annexation in this newsletter in the past three years so it's no surprise that the Board has been paying attention to the topic. After a bit of a roller-coaster ride, the issue will appear on the ballot in November. You and your neighbors here on the hill along with residents in Juanita and Kingsgate will decide if our proposed annexation area will formally become part of Kirkland.

There are many factors that go into deciding whether you favor that idea or not. Among the issues raised with regards to annexation are police and fire protection, taxes, the state of Kirkland's budget, the casino in Kingsgate, zoning, and faith in Kirkland's staff and government to manage a City nearly twice its current size.

In choosing to vote on whether or not to endorse annexation, however, the DCNA Board limited its decision to a much narrower focus: how would annexation impact the organization's ability to fulfill its mission statement?

The organization's mission, as defined in our bylaws, is to preserve, protect, and restore the natural resources of the area and promote stewardship of wildlife and the environment. In the end, the endorsement was made because of Kirkland's proximity and compatibility.

DCNA has from the outset worked closely with King County. DCNA founders helped county staff craft the SDO (special district overlay) ordinance protecting mature trees and vegetation. The county stepped in to fund the Juanita Woodlands purchase in exchange for the financial contribution raised in a five year pledge campaign. DCNA projects have been funded by grants from the County.

In recent years, with land values rising, we've seen more development in the area. With that has been some questionable clearing of trees. While the SDO ordinance allows for clearing trees that represent a hazard, some clearing has been in violation of the ordinance and, in at least one case, permits have been issued after the fact. Like many governments, King County's budget is in trouble. Even before the current economic climate, though, the county's enforcement officer working for the Department of Development and Environmental Services (DDES) has had to work a wide area going all the way out to North Bend. That has made it difficult to seek enforcement promptly and before trees are cleared without permits.

When we want meetings with DDES staff, we have to drive to offices in south Renton. The County Council itself of course is headquartered and meets in Seattle.

If annexation passes, we will be able to work with planning and parks department staff just 10 minutes away. It doesn't solve everything, but it eliminates one issue for us in addressing problems impacting our environment here in the Denny Creek watershed area. Additionally, we stand to have more influence in lobbying on behalf of the DCNA mission with a city of 80,000 people compared to a county of 1,875,000 people.

The DCNA watershed study of two years ago recommended better oversight of



Jeff Hoerth

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Scott Morris shows kids in Barb Roy's second grade class at Carl Sandburg Elementary exactly where the Denny Creek watershed is on a huge map he brought in. Morris spoke in February to the class about the Juanita Woodlands, how people in the area worked to save it, and what challenges face the parcel now, including the popular butt rot that piqued the kids' interests.

Photo by Jeff Hoerth

## Potluck Festival in the park

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in O.O. Denny Park. Sponsors for the dog competition include Pets Energy, Denny's Pet World, and Dooley's Doghouse.

### Chili Cookoff

Our own little food reality show returns with a competition to see who can brew up the best batch of chili. Contestants are asked to bring a campstove and several gallons of chili to serve to festival attendees who will be doing the judging. Awards to the top vote-getters. Annabelle Hynes leads this activity and welcomes participants to contact her and confirm they want to be in the competition. Reach her at 206-372-0374 or annabelle.hynes@comcast.net. Plaza garcia is helping to sponsor the competition.

### Trail Tours

Lou Berner will be leading a couple of interpretive forest walks. Tour times will be announced at the park Lou will describe the area vegetation and history. Hopefully there will be wildlife available for viewing.

### Arts and Crafts

Marianne Francis heads the activity area for younger children. Marianne is a sculptor and mixed-media artist who moved here from Magnolia.

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## DCNA Project Leaders

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# Halcyon Days, Trout Fishing at Lake's Edge:

By Donald Mackey as told to Francesca Lyman

*The sky was blue over the lake, with a nice ripple, that Sunday afternoon last winter. Donald Mackey and his wife, Dianne, were enjoying the rare sunny day, walking along the slope of the hill, past the railroad ties. Near the bridge over the mouth of Denny Creek, he lingered by the water's edge, taking in the woodsy scent of the stream where he had so often fished for trout as a kid. When his parents and grandparents went visiting on Finn Hill, they would drop him off there to fish.*

*The old bunkhouse that once stood up the hill from the shore had disappeared years before. But it seemed like not so long ago that every yard of beach was staked out with daylong picnic encampments, gatherings of his family, and other families and friends, many from Big Finn Hill, and others from Little Finn Hill, further south toward Juanita.*

*None of the old beach tables were occupied now, but in his memory he recalled from his childhood the stretches of grass packed with people. The park was coming back to life in his mind. He shares this reminiscence with all of us.*

\* \* \* \* \*

It was always O.O. Denny Park. But the north end, we called Camp Denny, alongside an old fence that was there for years. That was originally where the City of Seattle bused their kids to stay a week or two at a time in the old bunkhouse. My memories really started in 1941. However I am sure that I was there many times before, having been



born in 1938 in Kirkland Hospital to parents of Finnish descent.

It was a time during the summers when the first men to arrive at the park shelter

in the morning got the fire going in the shelter stove. The stove was about 14 feet high, with a large chimney in the center, dividing it in half. The top was heavy, made of iron plates, and the firebox was concrete with heavy iron doors in the ends for loading wood.

The ladies put on pots of kahvi (coffee) in the morning. Later they would start midday lunch, and then dinner. We seemed to have something to eat all day long. Weekends

with good weather, the park was full, and I remember having to get there early to stake out our own table for the day. We ate stews and casseroles, with potatoes (mainly boiled), meat balls, chicken, some noodles, and salads, of course (my favorite being potato salad). My dad liked a rich chowder called Kalamojakka (made of chunks of salmon, with all-spice, rutabaga and dill). Hamburgers and hot dogs made an appearance around the mid-50's. It wasn't a potluck all of the time so each family had to take turns for a spot on the stove.

Weekdays, in the evenings, you could get a table any time and we brought an old Coleman gas stove to warm up dinners prepared at home. If we didn't get a picnic table, we would spread our blankets on the grass. Mind you, this park had people from all over the North End and Eastside, of all nationalities. However, the Finnish families did have a large group in the surrounding areas, not only Finn Hill!



Deer were around and the occasional bear would be spotted. Coyotes were all over the back country and did a lot of howling at night. All the same smaller animals were around, as now, except that there were more of them.

We would like to spend hot summer afternoons during the week after work, for a swim and dinner. I remember the camp next door, on the North side of the fence where the city of Seattle's youth programs were set up. Occasionally my friends and I would go over by the fence and ask how things were in town. It did seem like a long way away at the time from the North end, or the Eastside.

I learned how to swim at O.O. Denny Park, and I was pretty good by seven or eight years old. I really loved to explore the bottom of the lake, although I didn't use a face mask till years later and I didn't ever have a snorkel. I would dive to maybe 12 to 15 feet, most of the time, at the deepest cut, and was able to stay down quite awhile.

This was a precursor to my fishing the area. I learned where the drop-offs came near the shoreline and where the perch liked to hang out in Lake Washington. North of the creek mouth, it swooped toward the bulk head like a small underwater bay, and it started 5 feet from the bulk-head and went out to 8 to 10 feet within 20 feet and as far as I knew it went on down to 20 feet, and over, after that.

# A Secret History of O.O Denny Park

It was the trout hole. The perch liked to hang out by the North fence that divided the park, where there was shallower water with some underwater weeds that grew there.

At that time I also spent hours in Denny Creek and noticed small trout and salmon. Plus, I would catch insects of all types and feed them to the fish and watch them come out from the under-cut banks and take the offerings.

One warm fall day in the 1940s, we were on the last



picnic of the year and I went to the creek and spotted a couple large fish in the creek behind the caretaker's house

so I went and showed my dad. "Well," he said, "they're salmon and probably Silvers (Coho)."

As I got a little older — most likely 11 or 12 years — I started to apply the experience of fishing for trout with my dad in many lakes and streams around Washington to the Denny Park lakeshore. From reading *Field & Stream* and *Outdoor Life*, it dawned on me that there were most likely trout lying at the mouth of the creek in the fall and spring that were going to either spawn or eat the fry as they came out of the creek — and I was right. My younger brother and I would take a few cutthroat (some of which were sea-run) and rainbow trout. Then we started fishing through the winter and making a ritual of going over on Christmas Day to try out the new fishing gear that we inevitably would get as presents (if the roads were drivable).

During this time, I started a very primitive style of fly-fishing. I had noticed in the late summer, in the evenings, that a red flying ant came out of the rotted logs in the bulkhead and woods and fish were rising consistently beyond my reach so I got an old inner-tube, tied in a canvas seat and was given an old beat up bamboo fly rod and an old Bronson fly reel with a 100 feet of level fly line.

With a little tape and good luck, I was able to throw (not cast, mind you) at least twice the length of the rod. I caught some nice rainbow and however many squawfish

(now known as the Northern Pike Minnow). The real ant hooked on would work well but then I got some advice from a sport shop and bought an imitation ant so I didn't have to bother catching those ants anymore.

The caretaker of Denny Park was an older fellow who also enjoyed fishing after work and watched my progression as a fisherman. He kept an old wooden row boat chained to the bridge at the mouth of the creek. He saw I'd gotten a driver's license and was able to get there with my 40' Ford coupe hot rod. I suppose he figured I was responsible enough (little did he know) so he gave me a key to the boat and I would get the oars out of his woodshed and use the boat for a few years until the time he moved on and his cabin was torn down.

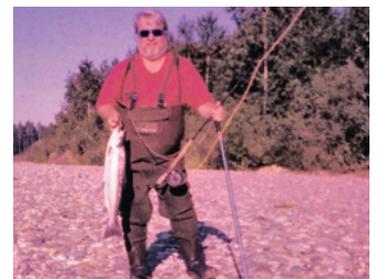
The real trick he had shown me was the use of a Flat-Fish F-4 orange with black spots and a ¼ to ½ ounce weight that really caught some nice trout trolled slow. However, I did use flies in the evenings, which also worked well, mainly slowly mooching them.

Ecologists now say the water is as clean or cleaner as it was in my days of exploring thanks to the sewers Metro placed years ago. The engineering started in about 1959 and construction began in 1960 or '61, so it did not take long for the lake to clean up. In the early 60's, I was raising my own family. We did some swimming and picnicking. But since the pollution warnings were out about the water, we went to cleaner lakes.

Those early years eventually led to a misspent life of "only fly-fishing" for trout and steelhead, summer or winter. So ends the memories of my secret fishing spot on Lake Washington.

\* \* \* \* \*

*Mackey, who grew up in Bothell and Lake City, has spent much of his life working as a contractor in the electrical power line, telephone and cable TV fields, working most recently as an estimator and division manager for Evergreen Utility Contractors. He and his wife, Diane, married after graduating from Roosevelt High school, and they now live in Wandering Creek, a waterfront development in Bothell. Their current home is situated about a quarter-mile from the house his parents brought him to after he was born, so you could say he swam back to his spawning grounds.*





## Stream bank project nears end

Bill Pierce and Jim Sproull have been leading a team of volunteers in stabilizing a portion of the stream bank adjacent to Denny Creek a short hike up the trail from the east parking lot at O.O. Denny Park. Pierce applied to King County for a grant to cover expenses and is working with the Washington Fish & Wildlife Department, Mid Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group and project biologist Bruce Kvam to come up with a strategy to prevent sediment runoff into the creek when it rains.

Using coir (coconut) logs (see photo at left) and fabric to provide mechanical stability and erosion protection, Pierce and Sproull have had a couple dozen volunteers participate in three work parties so far. Native wetland plants are also being added. The plants will be put into place at a final work party in September. To participate, contact Sproull at [jimsproull@comcast.net](mailto:jimsproull@comcast.net) or Pierce at [systems\\_r\\_up@yahoo.com](mailto:systems_r_up@yahoo.com). Thanks to all who've been pitching in!

Photos by Jeff Hoerth

# Commission addresses security issues in O.O. Denny Park

By Leigh Readdy, Finn Hill Park and Recreation District Commissioner

It is unfortunate that we need to write this report to our neighbors. We have been having an increase in security and vandalism problems at the park. We need to enlist your aid to help solve these situations.

Our Commission has been working very hard making park improvements and trying to keep the park a safe and nice place for all the park patrons. Many of you have commented favorably on the improvements made to the park. In order to keep the park a nice, family friendly place we need to keep it clean, orderly and free from vandalism and other illegal activity. As part of this effort when we first took over control of the park from King County Parks Department we adopted all of the King County Regulations regarding parks. This was in order to have County services such as Animal Control and Sheriffs personnel enforcement. This saves our tax payer base some of the additional costs that are incurred. While the tax levy is an established rate this defines an up to amount. That is, our costs to you can not exceed the levy limit. We are working very diligently to keep our costs down such that you should have a tax billing that is less than the maximum amount provided by law. What is happening now is that we are incurring additional costs because of vandalism and patrons breaking the King County park rules which will increase your tax bill.

We have had drinking and drug use in the park after hours. Syringes have been found on the grounds which are a very serious health and safety risk. King County rules are that dogs must be on leash. Several recent incidents of dogs off leash, attacking or threatening patrons or other dogs has required us to contract with Animal Control for additional patrols. Vandalism such as graffiti and breaking benches, damaging signs and other park equipment are a continuing problem. Recently three new trees were destroyed. We also have had people digging holes in the park to build fires or just for the heck of it. Only fires in fixed grills are allowed in the park. We have had two small fires so far this year which could get out of control with serious damage to the park and neighboring homes. Teenagers have been building fires up along the trails breaking fences to use for fuel. We also have people trespassing into the park after it closes. Unfortunately some of these folks are from the neighborhood.

Because of these problems we have had to take corrective steps. These include the following: King County Sher-

iff's officers, including plain clothes officers visit the park fairly regularly and will ticket and possibly arrest people drinking or using drugs in the park. They are also making sweeps in the evening and will be ticketing folks in the park after hours for trespassing. They will also be ticketing cars parked along the road after the park is closed as these are clearly signed as no parking. We have also engaged additional security staff to patrol the park at various times. Owners of dogs off leash are subject to ticketing by King County Animal Control and we have had to contract an officer to make additional sweeps through the park periodically.

How can you help? Talk to any teenagers in your family and insist that they obey the park rules. If you see drinking or other illegal behavior in the park do not confront the offender but do call 911. Tell the operator what is happening and that it is in O.O. Denny Park on Holmes Point Drive in unincorporated King County and that the issue is for the North Precinct. We have had good assistance from the fine folks in the Sheriff's office.

For more information about this project, contact Leigh Readdy at 425-417-6412.

## Annexation endorsement

*Continued from page 2*

development in order to better protect the watershed. Working with a government so much closer will be easier in that regard.

The city of Bothell expressed interest earlier this year in annexing the three areas voting this fall. At that point, Kirkland moved ahead to put the issue on the ballot. Would Bothell, or even Kenmore, be a better fit? Well, that's certainly a question that can be asked. But we know Kirkland has some laws and practices that are already compatible with our mission statement. Kirkland has been recognized as a Tree City community by the Arbor Foundation for seven straight years. It has an impressive inventory of parks. And while the Finn Hill Park and Recreation District will continue to be in charge of O.O. Denny Park, it's not inconceivable that Kirkland could take over when the current levy authority expires in five years.

We encourage you to vote in November and to consider the important issue of our environment when making your decision.

As always, feel free to share comments you might have at [info@dennycreek.org](mailto:info@dennycreek.org).





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## Potluck Festival in the park

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### Local History

Some longtime residents are being recruited to share some stories of what Finn Hill was like years ago.

### Backyard Wildlife Program

Lou Berner is working with John and Beth McCaslin of Houghton to supply information on how to help Kirkland get a National Wildlife Federation's "Community Wildlife Habitat Certification." It's a program different from the state's Department of Fish and Wildlife Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program. But those registered with the state program can count towards meeting the NWF's minimum requirement. More information will be available at the park.

### Potluck

Try to bring a dish of some sort to share. Tables will be available to display your food in and near the shelter. In addition, QFC is donating some supplies.

Volunteers continue to be needed for some of the activities as well as for cleanup. If you can spare a little time, e-mail [jeff@dennycreek.org](mailto:jeff@dennycreek.org) or [chicha19@comcast.net](mailto:chicha19@comcast.net) with your name, contact information, and preferred area of support. The event failed to get off the ground the past few years because of the lack of volunteers. Several people have stepped up admirably this year so any help is greatly appreciated.

Watch for more details in an e-mail sent to DCNA contributors (send your e-mail address to [info@dennycreek.org](mailto:info@dennycreek.org) if you haven't been receiving DCNA updates this year) and posters at retail stores in the area.

This promises to be a fun event and will be even more fun with you there. Tell your neighbors about it too!

## Nature classes upcoming at St. Ed's

The St. Edward Environmental Learning Center has several programs taking place in September and October that may be of interest to you. They are: Historical Tour of Saint Edward Seminary, Wilderness Navigation and Orienteering, Composting, Worm Bins and more!, Name that Tree, MushRoaming in Saint Edwards, and Our History with Salmon in Washington State. The programs are free but require you to pre-register at [www.seelc.org](http://www.seelc.org).

The organization began offering courses last year as a way to better utilize St. Edward State Park. Courses begin in the spring. Go to the website for more details.

## Annexation vote endorsed

*Continued from page 1*

November. Then 60% of those voting need to endorse the measure for annexation to be approved.

If approved, Finn Hill is considered part of Kirkland effective next January 1. But there would be some additional time before Kirkland would fully take over the variety of services it offers current Kirkland residents. For example, King County would continue to handle zoning and permitting issues until July of 2011.

Kirkland will not take over supervision of O.O. Denny Park, at least not in the near future. The tax levy passed by voters last year on Finn Hill funds the Finn Hill Park and Recreation Commission which will continue oversight of the park.

Further information on the Board's decision to endorse annexation can be found on page 2.