

ARCHIVES GAZETTE



City of Seattle
Seattle Municipal Archives

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Office of the City Clerk
Legislative Department

Message from the City Archivist

The Publications Board of the Society of American Archivists (SAA) recently sponsored a short fiction contest. Submitted stories of up to 3000 words had to feature an archives, an archivist, or archival materials. Thirty-four manuscripts were submitted.

The stories went through a blind review by a jury of three archivists; I had the great fun of serving on the jury. We selected a winner and also recognized two stories for honorable mention.

(They can be accessed at: <http://www2.archivists.org/news/2015/winner-of-the-archives-short-fiction-contest>)

We agreed that we would rate each story based on the quality of the writing, the development of plot, and the story's "archivalness." None of us are literary critics and we have different tastes in literature, as well as very different archival backgrounds. Nevertheless, we were unanimous in our selection of the three stories which stood out among the many really good entries.

I've reread the stories since we made our determination and noticed something about the selections that I had not considered during our process and discussions. The three stories address one of SAA's themes from 2015—Archives Change Lives.

One of the stories receiving honorable mention is about saving a life (and others' lives) through the agency of learned identity. In it, readers are exposed to the concerns and traumas of communities whose voices are not always heard.

The other runner-up is about identifying and reconciling individuals through the use of records. It is told entirely from the archivist's perspective. It also explores the relationship between a young professional and a long-time volunteer in a small archives.

The winning entry is a ghost story of sorts. It is about changing the life of someone long dead, and presumed lost to history, whose identity is revealed in the present through the power of memory.

These stories are, indeed, about changing lives and even about personal redemption. And they clearly are about solving mysteries. On one level, the archivist's work is to help the researcher unravel a mystery.

Among the dictionary definitions of mystery is: "something not understood." Among the examples on the SAA website of how archives change lives are stories of orphaned twins, separated at birth, and then reunited many years later; and a mother who after many years learns the fate of a child she put up for

adoption. Solving both mysteries was accomplished through the use of records and the aid of compassionate and dogged reference archivists.

When a fifth grader called me to ask who was mayor of Seattle in 1933, I helped that young student solve a mystery—at least a mystery to her. And while the answer probably did not provoke a significant change in her life, it might have had a gratifying impact on her coursework.

We can understand (or surmise) the effect the stories from the SAA website might have on the lives of the individuals involved. In fact, they were profound and emotional, and did change lives.

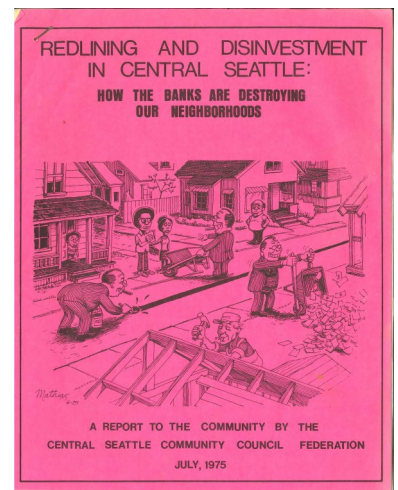
As for my fifth grader, I don't know what the impact of my simple answer to the question was. But I believe the best approach is to assume that it, too, could be profound. We need to consider all the questions that come to us—all the mysteries—with the same belief that they can be life changing, because they might just be.

(FYI, Seattle's mayor in 1933 was John F. Dore.)
—Scott Cline

New Online Exhibit: Redlining

A new exhibit looks at the city's efforts to address discriminatory lending practices identified in a 1975 report by the Central Seattle Community Council Federation. In July 1975, the Central Seattle Community Council Federation published a report, "Redlining and Disinvestment in Central Seattle: How the Banks are Destroying our Neighborhoods." In the report, redlining was defined as "the practice by banks and other lending institutions of refusing home loans or requiring higher interest rates and larger down payments to otherwise credit worthy people because they happen to live in a certain area."

In response to the Federation's report, both the State and the City began to explore the allegations. The Washington State Human Rights Commission



Redlining (cont)

announced that hearings would begin in September regarding possible discriminatory practices among Seattle lending institutions. Mayor Uhlman (who was in the midst of a campaign for governor) and Councilmembers John Miller and Paul Kraabel announced the formation of the Reinvestment Task Force.

Work done by the Task Force and other groups within the City helped change attitudes and policies and not only the local level but the state level as well. In June 1977, Governor Dixie Lee Ray signed House Bill 323 prohibiting redlining, making it unlawful for a financial institution to deny or vary the terms of a loan because of the neighborhood in which the property was located.

Visit the [exhibit page](#) to get the full story.

Lenders Review Board Advertisement.
Box 4, Folder 201, Office of Management and Budget Housing and Community Development Subject Files (Record Series 5015-01)

63 Years Ago: Rent Control

Federal restrictions placed on rent control during World War II ended in September 1952. In the months preceding the termination of these restrictions, citizens debated whether or not Seattle should retain or lift the restriction on rent control. Mrs. Richard E. Storch wrote "I agree that there is available housing at Shorewood, Lock Haven, Lake Burien Heights etc. as well as many dumps around Jackson Street that most decent citizens would not live in, nor would you expect them to... My husband is a veteran and is going to school under the GI Bill. I am working for the Alaska District, Corps of Engineers, Seattle Branch office to help maintain our home. Our income is approximately \$290.00 a month take home pay which is distributed for our medical bills, dental, rent, household, grocery, insurance for the family and the maintenance of our small son in a day nursery. After meeting our obligations we have nothing left. We could not begin to pay any higher rent nor could most of the

Rent Control (cont)

employees I am working with or the other married veterans my husband goes to school with." (CF 212949) Those urging that rent control be continued included those on fixed incomes, the National Council of Jewish Women (Seattle Section), US Representative Hugh Mitchell, the Street Car Men's Union, Young Democrats of King County, and Municipal Employees, Local 457.

Those who wrote in favor of abandoning rent control included apartment building owners, realtors, the Apartment Owners Association, the Queen Anne Community Club, and Wallingford Commercial Club. Fred Pohls, manager of Harvey Apartments at 2615 E Cherry St., wrote, "Controls in any form, are a menace to the American Way of Life, they are despotic in character, creating discord and class hatred, they stifle private enterprise and dull our initiative, they are the political footballs of Government bureaucracy." (CF 218060)

Charles Moore, of 1321 E Union #107 wrote, "I attended a couple of these so-called 'public hearings...' They were packed with landlords, real estate agents and income-property owners and it was worth a man's life to get up and say anything for tenant's protection."

New Images: Seattle City Light—1960s

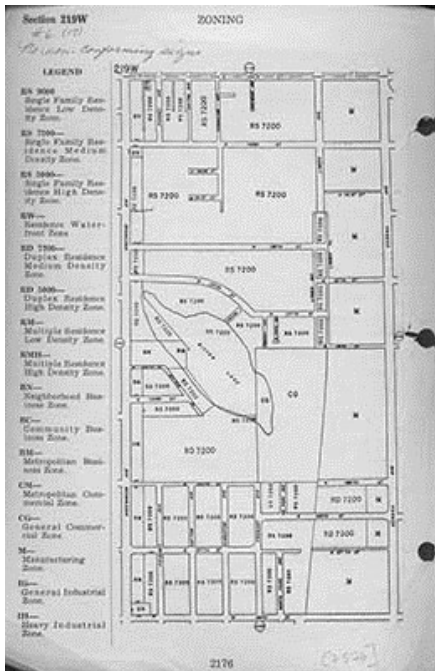


Visitors at City Light's history of electricity display, December 1965. [Item 177123](#), and City Light Facilities building cafeteria, January 1961. [Item 177127](#), Seattle Municipal Archives



New Zoning Maps: 1961

Zoning maps from the 1961 zoning code, up to and including Ordinance 90314, are now in the Map Index. Already online are zoning maps for 1923, 1947 and 1973.



Zoning map for Bitter Lake, 1961.
[Item 2576](#),
Seattle Municipal Archives

Newly Processed: Mayor Nickels

Newly processed are both paper and electronic records from Mayor Nickels dating from 2002-2009: Proclamations (5259-02), Briefing Materials (5259-08), Office Subject Files (5259-09), Labor Relations Records (5259-10), Transition Document (5259-11), and News Releases (5259-12).

Proclamations are ceremonial documents issued by the Mayor honoring individuals and organizations and celebrating special events; they are both paper and digital. All digital records can be searched in the research room and saved to a magnetic media.

Briefing materials were prepared for internal and public meetings, special events and interviews such as groundbreaking or neighborhood events. They include background material, names of persons attending, and schedules.

The Labor Relations files date from 1998-2009 and include correspondence with labor advocates and union representatives; reports and studies, and other documents.

The 2001 transition document provides a snapshot of city government including an overview of the organizational structure, financial procedures and appointments made by the mayor.



Press Releases are all digital (2736 digital files) and concern issues, events, personnel, funding, and other items related to City business.

Please contact Archives staff for assistance searching born digital records in the research room.

Cheslud Lake Union Loop Route Map. April 23, 2008
Greg Nickels Record Series 5259-12

Also recently processed are the records of the **Seattle Commission on Children and Youth** (Record Series 3620-04). Dating from 1988-1994, the records include minutes, agendas, and notes for



Commission meetings relating to legislation and programs about youth health, homeless youth and LGBT youth.

Flyer, 1993
3620-04 2/21

Interns and Volunteers

New volunteer Alexandra Swast joined us in October and has been working on mayoral and City Council records.

Staci Crouch also recently began working with us, and is processing Central Staff records and digitizing General Files.

Maris Sovold continues working on sorting through our Woodland Park Zoo photographs and slides.

Jen Woodfield has been hard at work weeding and processing a very large digital accession of Parks Department photos.

Cass McQueen took a temporary assignment in the public disclosure arena but is back volunteering in the Archives.

Megan Mitchell is our newest work-study student, joining Cierra Cooper in helping us keep the archives running.

YouTube and Flickr News

The most popular image on SMA's Flickr site in the past three months is a 1960's view from underneath the Alaskan Way Viaduct looking east towards where the Harbor Steps now stand.



Looking east from underneath the Alaskan Way Viaduct, c. 1966

[Item 169460](#), *Seattle Municipal Archives*

One of the most popular items on YouTube continues to be "Reduce Your Chills and Cut your Bills," a public service announcement created by Seattle City Light in 1987. It includes lyrics by Sir Mix-A-Lot and dancers from Madrona Youth Theater.



"Reduce Your Chills and Cut Your Bills," 1987.

[Item 3662](#), *Seattle City Light Moving Images (Record Series 1204-05)*, *Seattle Municipal Archives*

Seattle Municipal Archives

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92 Years Ago: Russian Refugees

In 1923 - six years after the Russian Revolution - Frank Pease wrote [the following letter](#) to City Council:

Mr. President and Members of the Council:

Press accounts tell us of the President's decision to admit to our country the Russian refugees who have been drifting about the Far East for months past, and about whom probably as much is known to yourselves as to the writer. Should these refugees enter this port, may I suggest the propriety of your body appointing a committee to cooperate with other community groups - business and social - to formulate some plans of reception and placement.... These refugees are, I believe, all conservative persons with numerous women and children among them, persons of business, technical and cultural accomplishments, and thus not likely to be (or but temporarily) a burden upon either the city or national community....

It strikes the writer that just at this time, should the official and conservative interests of this city take it upon themselves to arouse [sic] local and even national interest in these refugees, such a movement would possess particular significance and merit if and when originating in Seattle, and go far to offset the erroneous opinions existing elsewhere that Seattle is notoriously a "red center." It would be, indeed, one of the most striking opportunities in this direction since Seattle became so unfavorably reputed....

Should you decide to take up this matter, I would be pleased to appear before your committee with further suggestions. Surely the official and conservative interests of this city have here an exceptional opportunity to notify the nation that Seattle is not one step behind any other city of section in its adherence to the principles of law, order and conservatism.... And I beg further to suggest...these undoubtedly worthy people can be absorbed into our national life with a minimum of suffering and confusion. In short, here is an excellent opportunity to show the mettle Seattle is made of when it comes to opposing bolshevism in any and all of its malignant manifestations. Thanking you for your every consideration, and trusting you will give this matter your customary prompt consideration, I beg to remain,
Very truly yours, Frank Pease

Upcoming Events

January 26: AKCHO General Meeting, Museum of Flight
10AM