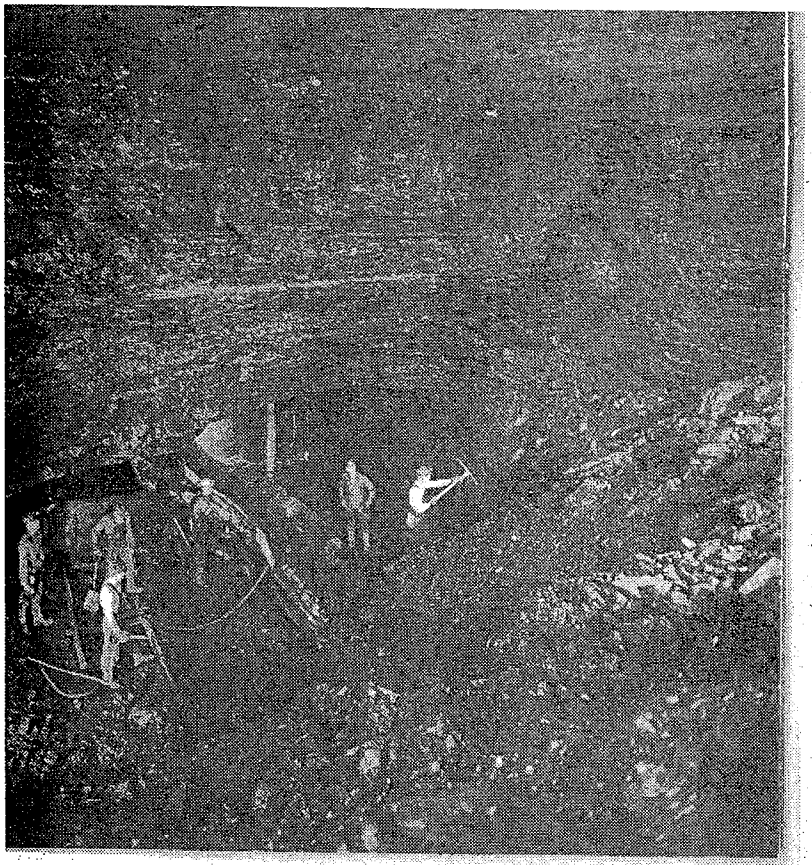
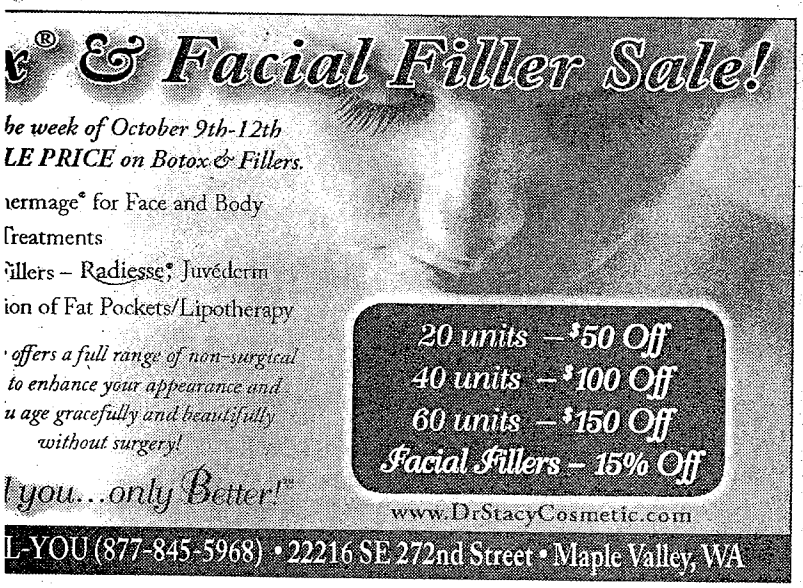
...was King ... a weekly photo column

By Bill Kombol



R photo is of an unknown coal mine and unknown date, though it is probably e miners' clothing and the machinery vintage. A track mounted "Joy" loader a supplier of underground coal mine equipment) is shown loading coal into an the era. The Joy loader was powered by direct current electricity and operated bed the loose coal onto a moving metal conveyor allowing the coal to be lifted car. The coal car would typically be pulled forward as each section was filled l car would then be transported to the bottom of the mine slope by an electric by a steel cable pulling the car up the slope to the outside tipple. This coal car i the early days, coal cars were smaller and were usually constructed of metal to is taken from an area where the previously mined coal has collapsed. It also of coal, which was somewhat unusual for the coal mines of Washington. The ould have been in a working area of the mine with an unsupported roof. This erous as the chance of deadly roof falls or collapse was heightened. The safer the under the timbered sections back where the men are working with the Joy as any more specific information about this photo, please contact the column



Letters to the Editor

Potentially huge changes likely to take place regarding the "Donut Hole"

Editor, the VOICE:

As most of you have heard or read in recent months, there are potentially huge changes likely to take place regarding the "Donut Hole" – the approximately 160 acre area that includes nine holes of the Elk Run Golf Course as well as various facilities for the King County Department of Transportation. All of this land is owned by King County and the property is the only large unincorporated rural island in the state. In other words, while this land is in the middle of the City of Maple Valley, it is outside the "urban growth boundary" and therefore outside the City's jurisdiction.

Under current King County zoning, the Donut Hole could only be developed at one home per 20 acres. However, the County is negotiating exclusively with one developer (the Yarrow Bay Group) about potentially developing this land as R-8, which means in reality that the density could go up to R-12 (i.e., 12 housing units per acre). To put this in comparison, the developments next to the Donut Hole are now primarily six units per acre. King County's plans for the Donut Hole could result in a 30% increase in the City's population – just from this single piece of property. While the City and County have had several meetings regarding this issue, so far the City has not been able to get the County to commit to take action to seriously address the City's concerns about the future use and development of this property.

The City will continue to meet with King County and is hopeful that the County will agree to a joint planning process for the Donut Hole. The County is currently engaged in its 2008 comprehensive plan update process. The City is closely monitoring the County's process and is involved in that process to the extent any City can be involved, including preparing for the County's upcoming public meeting ***on Tuesday, Oct.16th from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Kentridge High School.*** However, the County's comprehensive plan process is too uncertain and the City's role in that process provides no guarantees for the City.

The City will hold its own Emergency Town Hall meeting on the Donut Hole ***at 7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 29th at Rock Creek Elementary in the School Gym.*** We encourage everyone who is concerned about the future of the Donut Hole to attend **both** of these meetings and to make your voice heard about this issue which is of utmost importance to Maple Valley and the greater Maple Valley community.

The City is seeking a reasonable and straightforward solution to this issue – to have the County agree to a joint planning process for the Donut Hole. Through such a joint planning process, the City and County would be required to reach a mutual agreement on the most significant decisions regarding the property's future use, including the potential change in the designation of the Donut Hole from "rural" to "urban." The City believes strongly that the Growth Management Act mandates such a joint planning approach and it would be unconscionable for King County to make unilateral decisions on the future use of this property, particularly without thorough analysis regarding potential impacts from this property's future development.

The City is hopeful that the County will agree to such a joint planning approach. The City also recognizes, however, that the County may not agree to formal joint planning. If the County is unwilling to agree to the City's reasonable approach, the City will continue to actively evaluate and pursue its legal options.

The City is also reviewing legislative options at the state level.

To be clear, the City supports an urban designation for the Donut Hole and annexation of the property to the City once the designation is changed from rural to urban. The City also supports development of the property at reasonable densities and potentially developing a variety of housing and recreational uses on the site. Since incorporation, the City has been prevented from annexing the property due to a quirk in state law that the City has been working with the state legislature to fix. It is time for this property to become part of the City of Maple Valley and part of the City's vision for the future.

The future of the Donut Hole will have a fundamental impact on how the City of Maple Valley and the greater community develop and grow in future years. Please come out and share your opinion with the County *on October 16th* **and** with the City on *October 29th*. This is one of the most significant issues Maple Valley has faced since incorporating in 1997 and your input is needed before it is too late.

Sincerely,
Mayor Laure Iddings