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The Voice

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*Articles translated
into six languages*

The newspaper of Neighborhood House

My day as a poll worker



PHOTO BY ROBERT CANAMAR

Voters at the VFW Hall in Seattle's Ballard neighborhood gather at their polling place on Election Day, Nov. 4.

BY ROBERT CANAMAR
SHA Resident

Nov. 4 of this year was the last time that polls will be used in a national election in Washington state. This also means that no more poll workers will be getting a paycheck each election.

I worked at the VFW Hall on Market in Ballard as a poll worker this election. The last election, I was at the Ballard Community Center.

Last election was very boring, as there were not that many voters coming in. This election was just the opposite. The polls were very busy for the first time that I remember since I have been in Seattle. For once, it was so full that the line not only went outside, but down the street.

As soon as we opened in the morning, the wait time was 45 minutes to get a ballot in hand. Then another 10 minutes for a booth to open up. It was very gratifying to me to see so many people take an interest in politics this year. For once, people cared about who would win an election, and what direction this country would go.

I noticed that most of the voters this year were young. In the past, it always seemed to be those of us who were older that took voting seriously. I met with a couple of high school kids that made me feel like there is hope for the future.

They were part of a program that allowed

them to volunteer as a poll worker, and they were very interested in the entire process. With young people like this, the future of this nation cannot be that bad.

If that is the only good thing that came out of the last eight years, then let us raise a glass to the young people who made this election so big. And it was big.

This election had the highest percentage of the population registered to vote since World War II.

Let's face it, the old adage of "use it or lose it" does apply here. And boy, did we use our right to a voice in the process this year.

Next year will be the local race. This is the one where we elect a new mayor, council members, local judges, etc. I will miss the polling places, the need to take some time off during the day to go and vote, the camaraderie of people as we file into the polls.

It does not matter if you are Democrat, Republican, Green, or independent, the fact is we are all Americans as we file into our places of polling, and nothing unites a country more than the patriotism of meeting your neighbors as you go in together to have your voice in our government. I shall miss that, as well as the red, white and blue bunting, the signs, and everyone coming together under one flag to say, "We are Americans."

A Day in Port Townsend

BY KRISTIN O'DONNELL
SHA Resident

Note: Bus routes described run Monday through Friday only.

Getting to Port Townsend: Take the 9:15 a.m. Washington State ferry to Bainbridge Island (\$6.70/\$3.35). Catch the Kitsap Transit Bus # 90 to Poulsbo outside the ferry terminal (\$1.50/\$0.75). Transfer at Poulsbo to Jefferson County #7 (\$1.50/ \$0.75 for an all day pass). Bus arrives in Port Townsend in time for lunch.

In addition to the all-day pass, Jefferson Transit has a wonderful one-page bus schedule with detailed maps of the town and surrounding area, and drivers who are very helpful to tourists.

To see in and around Port Townsend: Take the #11 shuttle bus (runs every 20 minutes) to get an idea of the layout of uptown and downtown. Stop at city hall to pick up a free walking map which tells you more about what you are seeing — a lot of better-than-Pioneer-Square buildings, more than a century old, with the harbor across the street, and several blocks of shops and restaurants, mostly tourist-oriented, and many quite expensive, but with a few consignment shops, used book stores and teriyaki restaurants in the mix.

Best stops for low-cost lunch? The deli at the Port Townsend Co-op (mostly vegetarian, less spendy than PCC in Seattle, and good — and there's seating available). Safeway Deli is right next to the Park and Ride and has seating.

There's also a McDonalds next to the Park and Ride, and some other not-so-expensive restaurants around town — check the menus, posted by the restaurant windows.

After lunch there are choices of seeing the Jefferson County museum (\$6) and perhaps worth it if you really love historical museums; visiting the old Courthouse on the bluff (free, with original marble floors and ornate woodwork); walking or busing on the #11 shuttle around town to check out the shops and the architecture; taking the bus out to Fort Worden to see the old military installation or taking a bus farther out of town (Castle Hill or North Beach routes) to see the farms — sheep, cows and llamas — in the nearby area. Best thrift shopping? Orthopedic Thrift Shop on Sims Way heading out of town.

Home again — Last bus back toward Seattle leaves the Park and Ride at 5:06 p.m. Kitsap transit fare from Poulsbo to Bainbridge Ferry is \$1.50/\$0.75. Westbound ferry back to Seattle is free and gets into Seattle at 7:45 p.m.

Total transportation cost: \$4.85 with reduced price transit ID, \$9.70 without.

Accessibility: All buses are lift-equipped. There is a 3-4 block walk between Bainbridge ferry and buses behind the terminal. Many buildings in the older part of Port Townsend are not accessible, and curb cuts — and sidewalks — are not everywhere.

Check Schedules in advance: Washington State Ferries, 888-808-7977. Kitsap Transit, 800-501-RIDE. Jefferson Transit, 800-371-0497.

Although all Jefferson County buses meet Kitsap buses at Poulsbo, some of the Kitsap schedules into Poulsbo can leave you at the Park and Ride for several hours. Check schedules in advance — or visit Poulsbo, which is also a good trip

Clarification

An article in last month's issue of The Voice described techniques for canning vegetables at home. Foods can spoil and cause significant health risks if not properly canned, so please take great care when canning at home and, if possible, use a pressurized canner.

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A shorter Voice

To allow for staff vacation time, this month's issue of The Voice has been shortened to four pages. It will return to its standard size of eight pages next month. The January issue may arrive a few days late due to the Christmas and New Year holidays.

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