



A Man Behind Renton's Parks

Ron Regis is one of the City of Renton's longest serving volunteers. You may not have heard of him but his mission to ensure the well being and future of Renton parks has spanned over four decades. Regis has served on the city's Parks Commission for 42 years; three and a half times longer than the Parks Commission's next longest service tenure.



Ron Regis

Regis was born in 1932 in Spokane, Washington and moved to the Renton area as a child. He went to high school at Seattle Preparatory School and as a young adult didn't have much involvement in city affairs.

Then one day Regis' television set broke. In hindsight we can all thank that malfunctioning television for beginning Regis' long record of volunteer service.

"My TV broke so I decided I'd go to a City Council meeting. When I came back I decided I didn't need the TV fixed because there was a better show on," recounted Regis.

Soon after the City Council meeting Regis was recruited for volunteer service by the Renton park superintendent at the time, Gene Coulon. Regis and Coulon became good friends.

According to Regis, city affairs weren't always as easy as they are today. "I made a few enemies on the Council back in the old days," explained Regis. That may have been because Regis has always had an interesting habit of shaking things up.

On two separate occasions Regis challenged seats on the City Council that were held by men he considered friends. First he ran against Donald Custer and then later against Earl Clymer. Regis explained that he maintained his friendship with both men but, "hated to see someone run unopposed."

"I personally doorbelled every home in the city of Renton. Came pretty close to winning but glad I didn't. City council is a thankless job," said Regis referring to the election in which he lost to Earl Clymer by just 125 votes.

Electoral politics among friends was not the only battle Regis waged in the city over the years. Again, most people who enjoy the recreation areas at Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park weren't around or don't remember the struggle to establish what is now Renton's most used park.

According to Regis, the 53 acres of land



Kennydale Park

that Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park now sits on was all swampland and was originally known as Lake Washington Beach Park. In the late 1960s the City of Renton attempted to sell the land to The Boeing Company after it had been filled in with displaced soil from the I-405 project and become valuable. Regis, who saw the potential in the land and knew that the transaction would dash all hopes of a citizen-serving recreation area at the site, filed suit against the City and blocked the sale. He then sought out federal grants and funding to develop the land into the beginnings of the park Renton residents enjoy today.

Regis also notes the development of Cedar River Park and the Renton Senior Activity Center as accomplishments he is proud of. However, he will remind you that he doesn't "go by the senior center much. There are too many old people," commented the 74-year-old Regis.

During his tenure on the Parks Commission Regis has had the opportunity to influence more than park placement and services offered. He has also helped with the honorary naming of the parks. In fact, many of our parks' namesakes were friends of Regis' as well as being active in the community. One such friend was Thomas Teasdale of Teasdale Park on South 23rd. Regis also worked hard and is partially responsible for getting Lake Washington Beach Park named Gene Coulon Memorial Beach Park in honor of the good friend and park superintendent



Liberty Park

who initially recruited him.

While most parks are named after their namesakes posthumously, Regis is a rare exception. In 1993 Regis had a 45-acre park on Orcas Avenue SE named after him. "I really feel honored that I can have a place where my children can remember me," said Regis.

When asked about the future of Renton and its parks he says, "I won't be here but you guys will miss me so drive out to the park and remember me by the sign."

Regis is modest about his time and hard work spent volunteering with the city. In his opinion Renton parks are some of the best locally operated parks in the nation. He has said that the Community Services Department staff is responsible for the continued success and deserving of any available credit.

His only prediction for the future is, "As long as we have these staff and volunteers Renton is in pretty good shape."

City information
425-430-6400

Web site
www.
ci.renton.
wa.us.

Mayor
Kathy Keolker

City Council
Randy Corman,
Council President

Dan Clawson

Terri Briere

Denis Law

Toni Nelson

Marcie Palmer

Don Persson

Volunteers Help Prepare for One Million Park Visitors

Renton parks will see over one million visitors this summer. Fortunately for city staff, several community groups rolled up their sleeves and lent a helping hand last month in a volunteer effort aimed at preparing the parks for the summer season.

Working with staff from the City of Renton Parks Department, volunteers from the Latter Days Saints Washington Issaquah 4th Ward spent a Saturday morning spreading beauty bark at Kiwanis Park. "What better way to serve the community than to help maintain a park that I used to play in as a child? So many great memories of soccer, Frisbee, and playing on the toys took place at Kiwanis Park. Through this service, current and future generations can continue to enjoy the same beautiful park," said Diane Argyle who helped organize the activity for the group.

At a separate event both Coulon Memorial Beach Park and the Highlands Neighborhood Center benefited from the Windermere Community Service Day on June 16, 2006, when the staff of the Windermere Real Estate Renton Inc. in the Highlands, and Windermere Real Estate Renton South Office donated their time and effort to clean and mulch these areas. Highlands Neighborhood Center even received two new trees through a donation. Overall, the two groups boasted thirty-eight volunteers and a donation of 130 hours of service. "It was a great team effort and it felt good to stand back and see how much work we had done and how nice the area looked after we were done," said Pat Larkin from the Windermere Real Estate South Office.

Coming from all corners of the United States, the Ladder Day Saints Washington Mission Group, Renton Zone of young people 18 to 24 years in age, spent nearly four hours of a rainy June 1 morning at Cedar River Park to spread over 50 yards of bark around the Renton Community Center and the bank below the outside patio. Countless community center visitors will enjoy the results of their hard work.

The Community Services Department and the City

of Renton believe that volunteer projects in our city help strengthen Renton communities and neighborhoods. Our citizens benefit from the beautification projects that produce visible results in the parks. Our Parks Department Staff has the opportunity to share their skills and knowledge with volunteers and can better care for our resources with the assistance they receive from volunteers. Our volunteers have the opportunity to make a difference in our community, meet new people, become familiar with our park system and give back to our wonderful parks and trails; places that renew and refresh us all. If you are interested in ways to give back to your local parks please be sure to contact the City of Renton, Community Services Department at 425-430-6600 or go to www.ci.renton.wa.us/attract/volnopp.htm.

During Windermere Community Service Day, volunteers donated their time to spread bark at Coulon Memorial Beach Park.



Volunteers from Latter Day Saints spread bark at Kiwanis Park.



Renton Students Give a Gift of Diversity to City

Mayor Kathy Keolker and members of the Renton City Council welcomed several students from Hazen High School to the weekly council meeting, Monday evening, to present a series of shadow boxes they had created to donate to the city. The boxes will join an existing exhibit that serves to highlight the diversity and broad range of international residents in Renton.

Under the direction of their United States history teacher, Celeste Brady, the students filled the display boxes with art and trinkets indicative of the countries they were intended to represent. The newest additions to the exhibit will feature countries such as Cambodia,

Ethiopia, and Mexico.

During their presentations many of the students called the project a collaborative effort. The students worked with classmates, instructors, and family to design and build the boxes. Sunny Naimdii, along with her presentation, invited a family member to attend the council meeting in traditional Mongolian dress. All of the students are learning English as a second language and most had been living in the United States for less than five years. "Thank you for giving us the opportunity to represent our country," said Tatyana Pyarastari while addressing the council during her presentation of

the shadow box representing Russia.

"Renton is a city that has pride in its diversity. We are proud of these students' hard work. I am pleased we were able to acknowledge their contribution and thank them personally for celebrating Renton's diversity," said Mayor Kathy Keolker. City officials briefly paused the meeting to hand out certificates of appreciation to the students and allow family to take pictures of the students with the councilmembers.

The shadow boxes will be installed on the seventh floor of Renton City Hall and will be able to be viewed during normal business hours.

Youth athletics proven to build self-esteem

Over 3,000 children participate in the City of Renton youth athletic programs each year and over 200 volunteers generously give their time and energy. For this reason, volunteer coaches are an essential part of the youth athletic programs. Their efforts contribute to teaching the "40 Developmental Assets" identified as building blocks of healthy development. The goal is to help local young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. Those volunteering with our youth athletic program create opportunities for children to be active, learn teamwork, have fun, develop social skills, and spend positive free time with their friends and adult mentors.

The City's goal is to strengthen self-esteem by introducing a safe, noncompetitive environment where children can feel good about participating in youth sports. Without quality volunteer coaches this would not be possible.

Every year, children look forward to the youth sports leagues with great enthusiasm. Without volunteers many children would not be able to benefit from youth sports programs. One of the reasons they enjoy the sports leagues is because of the wonderful job the volunteer coaches do to help make the players and parents feel comfortable and welcome learning a new sport. The City of Renton thanks coaches and volunteers for all their help, expertise, and for providing their time and energy. Their involvement and cooperation, which contribute to the success of the program is greatly appreciated. If you are interested in supporting local youth development programs, please call the City of Renton Community Services Recreation Division at 425-430-6700 or e-mail sclaggett@ci.renton.wa.us

City Parks seeks help to plant trees and tree donations

As you may know, trees provide a multitude of benefits to humans and animals. Besides providing wildlife habitat and water purification, trees produce the oxygen we breathe, reduce carbon dioxide emissions created by powerplants, reduce water surface water runoff and filter polluted air. Planting trees is a good thing and makes those doing the planting feel good. It is a fun activity to watch trees planted in parks mature and the good feelings from planting lasts for years and generations.

The City of Renton has a need to replace many of the trees that had to be removed over the past year. Trees were removed due to advanced wood decay, disease, or construction work that would have left them unstable had they remained. Current funding for replacement trees has been exhausted and the Parks Division has only been able to continue the remaining tree planting through donations of trees and volunteer planting. There are approximately 22 trees that still need to be planted in 2006. If you are interested in helping with this effort please contact Jerry Flatley, Parks Maintenance Manager, at (425) 430-6600.

Volunteer Opportunities... An Invitation to Get Involved

SPECIAL TEAM

A team of hundreds of volunteers who donate thousands of hours of service, annually, help make the City of Renton the place it is today. These volunteers assist the City staff and enhance services to the Renton community. Volunteers contribute a citizen's perspective and offer a wealth of personal and professional experience.

The Volunteer Program operates in many City departments. Examples include: Renton's Recycling Days with our Solid Waste Utility or the Mayor's Planting Day through the Neighborhood and Parks Division. Both present one-day volunteer opportunities each year. Numerous Renton citizens give their time and talents serving as appointed members of boards and commissions, or on one of our various advisory committees.

If you are one of the extraordinary people that have chosen to make a difference in your community, we want to express gratitude to you. We could not do what we do without your assistance and support.

If you, or a group you belong to, are interested in participating in one of our many volunteer opportunities, we invite you to explore them. For additional information on these programs, please visit our volunteer opportunities page at www.ci.renton.wa.us/attract/volnopp.htm, or contact the volunteer coordinators within the following divisions. They will be able to answer specific questions you may have, and can send you a volunteer packet to get you started:

City Volunteer Coordinators

Police Department	Terri Vickers	425-430-7520 or Tvickers@ci.renton.wa.us
Solid Waste Utility	Linda Knight	425-430-7397 or Lknight@ci.renton.wa.us
Fire Department Office assistant volunteers	Judy Hayward	425-430-7043 or Jhayward@ci.renton.wa.us
Specialized Recreation including Renton Special Olympics	Colleen Heuiser	425-430-6715 or Cheuiser@ci.renton.wa.us
Parks	Bonnie Rerecich	425-430-6600 or Brerecich@ci.renton.wa.us
Housing Repair Program	Tim Lawless	425-430-6653 or Tlawless@ci.renton.wa.us
Carco Theater	Vincent Orduña	425-430-6706 or Vorduna@ci.renton.wa.us
Recreation Youth Athletics	Sean Claggett	425-430-6700 or Sclaggett@ci.renton.wa.us
Facilities	Dennis Conte	425-430-6643 or Dconte@ci.renton.wa.us
Public Library	Aaron Oesting	425-430-6830 or Aoesting@ci.renton.wa.us
Renton History Museum	Dorota Rahn	425-255-2330 or Drahn@ci.renton.wa.us
Recreation Programs	Kris Stimpson	425-430-6700 or Kstimpson@ci.renton.wa.us
Recreation Special Events	Shirley Anderson	425-430-6700 or Sanderson@ci.renton.wa.us
Renton River Days and 4th of July	Sonja Mejlaender	425-430-6514 or Smejlaender@ci.renton.wa.us
Renton Neighborhood Program	Norma McQuiller	425-430-6595 or Nmcquiller@ci.renton.wa.us
Senior Activity Center	Shawn Daly	425-430-6633 or Sdaly@ci.renton.wa.us
City Hall Information Desk	Bonnie Walton	425-430-6502 or Bwalton@ci.renton.wa.us
Aquifer Protection Program	Helen Weagraff	425-430-7287 or Hweagraff@ci.renton.wa.us
HAM Radio Operators	Mark Bailey	425-430-7000 or Mbailey@ci.renton.wa.us

For additional information on how to volunteer with the City of Renton, please contact the Community Services Department at 425-430-6600. To find an online listing of several of Renton's community programs and volunteer opportunities, visit our website at www.ci.renton.wa.us/attract/volnopp.htm

Citizen of the Year nominations sought

Do you know someone who is dedicated to making the Renton community the center of opportunity in the Puget Sound Region where businesses and families thrive? This is your chance to recognize that special person for their civic commitment. Online nominations for Renton Citizen of the Year are being accepted through August 31, 2006.

The City of Renton needs your help in identifying individuals throughout the Renton community who perform acts of goodwill in an effort to help others and to improve the quality of life in Renton. Some of these people make significant contributions through a number of local organizations in which they are involved. Others give selflessly in support of an individual group, local church, or school.

Representatives from the Greater Renton

Chamber of Commerce, City of Renton, and Renton Rotary will select the top three outstanding citizens, who will be recognized at a special banquet. Out of the finalists, they will pick one candidate to be named Renton's Citizen of the Year.

Nominees do not need to reside in Renton, but their acts of service must have benefited Renton area residents. The selected three outstanding citizens will have demonstrated achievement in one or more of the following areas:

- ★ Served the Renton community above and beyond that required or expected through the individual's employment.
- ★ Demonstrated, either as an individual or through an organization, character, commitment, and/or leadership that made a

positive difference.

- ★ Contributed his/her talents in helping others through acts of goodwill, without personal or monetary compensation.
- ★ Demonstrated leadership resulting in contributions that had a positive impact on the Renton community.

The person selected as Citizen of the Year will have demonstrated achievement as an Outstanding Citizen and demonstrated personal involvement:

- ★ In more than one area of interest.
- ★ Over a period of time.
- ★ In a way that resulted in significant impact within the Renton community.

City spotlights long time volunteer

There is no doubt that the Renton community is blessed with dedicated, caring, talented, and skilled volunteer support. The City relies on the valuable input of volunteers currently serving on Boards, Commissions, and Advisory Committees.



Janet Bertagni

These volunteers assist City staff in various departments and enhance services to all Renton residents by contributing a citizen's perspective and offering a wealth of personal and professional experience.

Janet Bertagni, Chair of the Human Services Advisory Committee, is one of these giving, and talented individuals. She has served as Chair for two years and had previously been a member for six. Her most recent volunteer experience was serving on the committee that established funding criteria for the Human Services division 2007-2008 funding cycle.

Bertagni and her family are long-time Renton residents. For eight years she has been Treasurer of the Monterey Homeowners Association and has also served as Treasurer of The Salvation Army Renton Rotary Food Bank Capital Campaign. She put her fiscal knowledge to good use by participating in the Earned Income Tax Credit Program by preparing income tax returns for low-income individuals.

Bertagni highly recommends volunteering.

Her reasons for volunteering include being a worthwhile member of the community, helping others, and contributing to make a difference. She strives to involve herself with all walks of life and enjoys being a part of the decision-making process. The City of Renton has truly benefited from Bertagni's years of hard work and dedication.

City welcomes new Library Director

Please welcome Bette Anderson as the new Library Director. Anderson comes to the City with many years of experience. Most recently she was the Regional Library Manager for the Timberland Regional Library. She also was the Library Director for the City of Lebanon in New Hampshire from 1994-1998 and Director for Junction City, Oregon from 1978-1994.



Bette Anderson

She has participated in a variety of organizations including Soroptimists, Kiwanis, and Chamber of Commerce. She has taught college level classes and has participated on numerous radio and television talk shows.

The City is excited to add her to the Community Services Department. Marilyn Pederson, who has given so much over so many years, will be retiring from the City the end of July.

City Hall Information Desk Volunteer Program

When the program began in 1984, Mary Breda probably did not realize she would be volunteering at the information desk of Renton City Hall for the next 22 years. Neither did Bert Nord, nor did Ann Grinolds. But that is exactly what each of these three Renton citizens have done, and they say they enjoy their weekly hours at City Hall as much today as when they first began.

Together, Breda, Nord, and Grinolds have volunteered a total of 20,140.5 hours since 1984. That is the equivalent of nearly seven years of full time work for a city employee if that employee were to work every day with no vacation, sick leave, or absences of any kind. Other current volunteers have contributed another 9,270 hours of community service to the City. Altogether the volunteer hours since the program's inception equate to approximately 37 years of one city employee's full-time work.

Each of the ten volunteers works a 4.5-hour shift one day per week. As the first point of contact at City Hall, the volunteers answer phones, greet and direct visitors to City Hall offices and meetings, provide information and referrals, and occasionally assist with projects. Volunteering at the lobby desk provides a great opportunity to learn more about municipal government, city operations and community issues in a relaxed environment with lots of customer service opportunities and social interaction.