

News and Events

by Annie Chou

Limited Light Rail Parking

The City of Seattle has been operating the Light Rail system for a few months now and things are going as planned. Unfortunately, riders are discovering that riding the rail isn't as convenient as possible. The city is making sure that there is no long-term parking offered around the light rail zones.

Even before the Light Rail opened, the city deliberately planned to not have long-term parking available to make sure

the local neighborhoods keep their charm. The city did not want to have giant parking lots that invaded the nearby space. Ideally, the Light Rail users can walk or ride the bus to the stations. The city is going so far as to tell neighboring businesses to prohibit long term parking in their lots. Permits are required for street parking in the area.

Light Rail riders are frustrated with the limited ways to get to the stations.

Many of them would prefer to park near the station and ride the rail to their destination. That would be the quickest and most convenient arrangement, but it is not possible.

The City of Seattle is aware of the situation, but does not plan to make any changes in the near future. They will consider allowing some businesses to offer long term parking, but changes will only be made if the city policy is modified.

Earthquake in Haiti

On Tuesday, the island of Haiti, in the Caribbean, was hit by the largest earthquake in 200 years. The 7.0 magnitude quake caused a lot of damage to buildings and left chaos throughout the country.

Immediately after the disaster, communication and electricity was down, so relief agencies were unable to fully assess the situation. Initial reports estimated thousands of deaths in collapsed buildings and people struck by debris in the streets. Some Americans on the inside were using social sites like Twitter to give updates of the country's situation.

Haiti is a poor country and many of the buildings could not stand up to the

forces. There has been political instability and no construction standards. The earthquake was centered about 10 miles west of Port-au-Prince, about 5 miles deep within the Earth. The last recorded strong earthquake in Haiti was in 1770. A nearby 8.1 magnitude earthquake struck the Dominican Republic in 1946 that caused a tsunami on Haiti and killed 1,790 people.

This earthquake occurred at a strike-slip fault, where one vertical fault slides along another. Experts believe this type of fault will cause drastic damage and casualties. Roads have also been blocked in areas, such as to the capital. The air was

filled with dust and people were screaming in the streets, full of chaos.

Countries are preparing to send aid, like the United States, Venezuela, and Brazil. The United Nations has a peacekeeping Mission in Haiti, and its headquarters reportedly suffered major damage. Brazil has a 9,000 member UN peacekeeping force in Haiti and the government was trying to re-establish communication with its troops.

The United States State Department Operations Center has created a toll free number for Americans seeing information about family members in Haiti. Please call 1-888-407-4747, though some callers may receive a recording.

Woodland Park Zoo Plans to Close Nocturnal Exhibit

The Woodland Park Zoo is trying to make up for some budget troubles and has suggested that it will need to close the Nocturnal House. The news struck the public as shocking and concerning. The Nocturnal House is a popular attraction that patrons would be sad to see go.

The zoo says no closure date has been set, but an announcement is expected for next month. The exhibit closure would save about \$300,000. The zoo is trying to cut \$800,000 and along with

closing the Nocturnal House, they expect to lay off 12 employees. The exhibit was chosen because it uses the most energy in the old building and the animals will be easy to move. Some animals will remain at the zoo and others will be transferred to other zoos.

Last year, the zoo made some budget cuts by suspending payments to employee retirement accounts and required employees to take unpaid time off. This year, the zoo is restoring the payments.

They are also building a new zoo store to try and increase revenue. Half the money needed for running the zoo comes from admission and concessions. A third of the zoo's revenue comes from the city and county government, and the remaining costs are covered by donations.

After hearing the news, there was a surge of interest as visitors rushed to see the Nocturnal House exhibit before it was closed. Some people were trying to raise awareness and raise money to keep the

exhibit open, but the zoo said it could not take money donated to an exhibit that it is planning to close. That money was being returned to the donors.

Upcoming Events

- Jan 8-31 Meet Me in St. Louis (Village Theatre Everett, www.villagetheatre.org)**
Jan 16-30 Il Trovatore (Seattle Opera, www.seattleopera.org)
Jan 19-24 Xanadu (Paramount Theatre, www.stgpresents.org)
Jan 22 Celebrate Asia! (Benaroya Hall www.seattlesymphony.org)
Jan 30 A Bash for Bart (Intiman Theatre www.intiman.org)

往事故事 XU YA (9) 徐亞

By Philip K. Chu

"Being in charge of food purchasing, I found a way to increase our food intake. Under the existing policy, we were allowed 13 jin of wheat or 10 jin of rice per prisoner per month. [a jin is about a pound]. So I changed all our requisitions from rice to wheat, thus gaining my unit 30 % more food. Furthermore, wheat has more nutrition than rice, jin for jin. I became a hero to my unit. Other units in the prison heard about this and asked me to help them also. So I got to help others and eat my share at three other units. The prison chefs and I probably ate better than most people outside. I may even have gained some weight during this period." Xu Ya joked and his eyes sparkled.

"Beginning in 1963 I was allowed out of work camp to visit my family once a year. But I had no wife to visit by then, so I visited my sister-in-law in Chengdu and my uncle in Beijing, who was raising my children since my wife's death."

Xu Ya became silent. We waited for him to continue. Since he didn't, I asked him what came to my mind, "What happened to your wife and family?"

"My wife's story? That's a whole story in its own." He sighed.

"Her name was Sun Chongyu. She was formerly a principal at that school where I taught. Immediately after Liberation, the Communists praised her for keeping the school open to educate the future citizens of New China. A

year later, they placed a Party member under her. The following year my wife was told to go home, for she was no longer needed. There was no other explanation.

"Without an income, without a ration card, subsisting on what meager food others would share with her and with our children, she died of hunger in 1959. I was in prison. I could not do anything . . . I could do nothing."

Xu Ya's voice quivered and tears welled in his eyes. He took a deep breath, collected himself and continued:

"My daughter was four years old at that time. My sister-in-law told me later that she cuddled up around

her mother's feet . . . wrapped her arms around her mother's feet . . . and . . . and felt my wife's body turn cold . . ." His voice broke again.

All of us in the room were silent. I looked at my wife through watery eyes and saw that she was dabbing the streams of tears running

down her cheeks.

None of us made a sound for a long time. I quietly closed my note book – for I had been taking notes while translating for my wife – and looked at my watch. I said softly, "Shall we get some sleep now? Everyone must be tired. We can continue another day." We all agreed that it was time to rest and my cousins retired to their rooms.



Grand Canyon Ya and Tshui 1984

The next day, I rented a van and we all went sightseeing around Shanghai. Since Xu Ya and Xu Ou had not been to the center of Shanghai for many years, they too were surprised at its modernity: The skyscrapers in the new Pudong section rival those of New York, Chicago, and San Francisco. There are beautifully kept parks everywhere. The stores are full of goods. The streets are kept clean and landscaped with trees, bushes, and flower beds. Smartly dressed people with cell phones hurry to make their next business or personal appointment. Tourists from all over the world come to see this most prosperous city in China. Those from the developed Western nations smugly tell themselves that capitalism had always been the answer. Those from the have-not nations want to emulate China's economic success.

Twelve million inhabitants live in this city that exudes the smell of prosperity. While I too observed everything in Shanghai with amazement, I wondered how many personal tragedies the inhabitants lived through. There must be millions who can tell their individual stories of suffering during the Tiananmen crackdown of 1989, the Democracy Movement of late 70's, the decade of bedlam during the Cultural Revolution, the Three Years of Natural Disasters, the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957, the periodic purges; for those much older, the carnage after Liberation, the atrocities of Japanese invasion, the civil wars among Guomindang, Communists and various warlords . . .

(To be Continued)

Celebrate Asia!

The Seattle Symphony presents the second annual Celebrate Asia! performance on Friday, January 22 at Benaroya Hall. The evening will be hosted by King5 News co-anchor Lori Matsukawa.

Pre-concert and post-concert performances will take place in the Samuel and Althea Stroum Grand Lobby, beginning at 6:30 pm. The extra performances will feature the Japanese Taiko drummers from One World Taiko, Chinese Lion Dancers from Belltown Martial Arts, the Liên Tâm Vietnamese Music Academy, and Filipino guitarist Angelo Pizarro.

The performance in the S. Mark Taper Foundation Auditorium will begin at 7:30 pm. The musicians include the Seattle Symphony, soloists like violinist Chuanyun Li, Mongolian morin khuur player Li Bo, and Indian band Farmaash. This year, the musical selections are centered around a Love theme that integrates contemporary and traditional pieces.

The audience is encouraged to wear festive dress or their national costume to the event. Tickets are available for \$20 to \$50 through the Seattle Symphony box office at www.seattlesymphony.org. More information is also on the website.

Il Trovatore

The Seattle Opera presents the famous Il Trovatore opera from Saturday, January 16 to Saturday, January 30. The opera has become one of the main sources of popular opera songs today.

This intense story of love, hate, revenge, and death incorporates sound and spectacle to create a beautiful experience. A gypsy mother's love conflicts with a dark secret from her past in the suspenseful romantic drama. Full of swordplay, poison, late night mischief, and a gypsy curse, the story is engaging and mysterious.

Tickets are now available for \$25 to \$168 through the Seattle Opera Ticket Office at (206) 389-7676 or online at www.seattleopera.org. Performances are held in the Susan Brotman Auditorium at McCaw Hall at the Seattle Center.