

## **I Remember When.....**

### **Changing Times & Tires at Madrona Auto**

*Thanks to Marge Lutton & Tom Flood*

Today we know it as that distinctive beige stucco building at 34<sup>th</sup> & Pike with the blue glass in the parking lot and live music in the summer. And colorful as that may be, it's nothing compared to the long and varied history of the space now known as Madrona Automatic.

It was built in 1930 and for the next 35 years it provided dawn to dusk full service station amenities to the cars and people of Madrona, first as a Texaco and than a Gull franchise. While gas was pumped for customers at the drive-through in front, battery installation, tire repairs, and other maintenance was handled in the service building out back. Over the years the service station was owned and operated by several Madrona and Leschi families, including Richard & Hortense Kreigel of 34<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene & Anna Grow of Railroad Ave S., Lewis & Emma Carter of Cherry St., Walter & Florence Thorn of Empire Way, and Pete & Theresa Galando of Lane St., with Pete Jr. as the station attendant. In 1937 it got its address. In 1939 the station's telephone number was Prospect-9877; in 1956 the number became EA4-3555.

The last gas was pumped from Walt's Payless Gas Station in 1965 and Gull sold the property to Madrona residents Rudy & Margorie DeVaul. Marge remembers removing 22 junked cars in various states of decomposition from the lot before she and her husband officially opened their body and fender shop in 10960. Until 1985, Rudy's Auto Repair was a neighborhood hub where car problems, advice, and neighborhood news were exchanged freely.

For the next decade, the lot and the building were used by the DeVaul family for storage and as a place to do odd jobs. In 1995 Marge, now Marge Lutton who still lives on 34th Avenue, rented it to Tom & Diane Flood who performed minor auto repairs and shared the space with artist Tom Moore. Gradually paint replaced grease as the property's lifeblood. Today, Madrona Auto is the home of a frame shop run by Margaret Reishel. Local Hero Tom Flood hosts many art programs, including the go-cart classes from Coyote Jr. High, from the back studio.

Were any of its mid-century owners or customers to visit today, they would easily recognize their former service station as the building itself is nearly unchanged since its construction. For us in 2001, it appears now as it did then, a distinctive beige stucco building at 34<sup>th</sup> & Pike, a Madrona landmark and living link to our neighbor's past and recent history.

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