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Made in the shades

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THE LISTS

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Port revamp urged

Panel pushes closure, development options

By STEVE WILHELM
STAFF WRITER

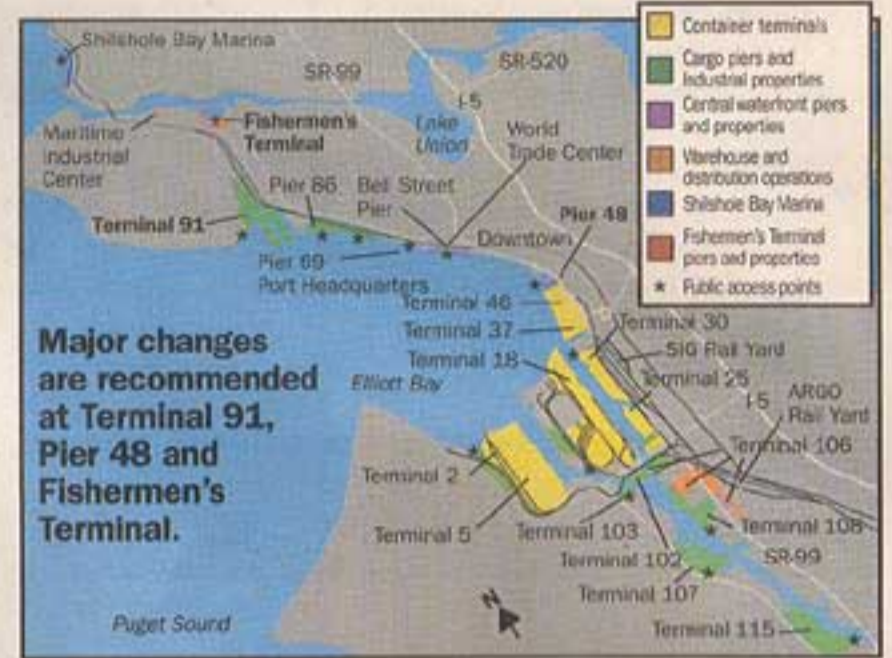
The Port of Seattle should close some significant waterfront operations and closely scrutinize the profitability of several others, a citizens panel told the agency this week.

The panel's potentially controversial recommendations include redeveloping Terminal 91 near the Magnolia neighborhood,

now used for auto imports and chilled fruit exports, and turning the Pier 48 facility, previously used for passenger vessels like the Princess Marguerite, into a mixed-use office building.

The Port of Seattle organized the 30-member panel to spur reconsideration of decades of assumptions about what it does with its land. The committee focused on the

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PORT OF SEATTLE GRAPHIC/KELSO, SASALA



BUSINESS JOURNAL PHOTO/DAN SCHLATTER

Fast Corridor coordinator Dan Pike says the project has wide support.

Fast forward

A regional effort to improve freight movements is gaining speed

By STEVE WILHELM
STAFF WRITER

While the region's battle over traffic priorities and funding rages, an ambitious plan to improve local freight shipments is making quiet, steady progress.

The Fast Corridor freight mobility project — an unusual collaboration of government and private interests — now has 15 projects under way or committed and is ready to launch a second phase.

Fast Corridor projects are intended to reduce surface obstructions to freight movement in the Puget Sound Region. Fast is an acronym for Freight Action Strategy for Seattle-Tacoma.

While the Phase One projects are primarily 10 grade crossings, intended to eliminate conflicts between rail and highway traffic, the Phase Two projects are more focused on truck traffic, said Dan Pike, Fast Corridor project manager for the state Department of Transportation.

Most advanced of the Phase One projects is an overpass at the Port of Tacoma road, which will be dedicated in ceremonies this August. In late April work will start on one of the most important projects for Seattle drivers, the so-called SR-

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Cities, biz locked in B&O tax battle

By GEORGE ERB
STAFF WRITER

When Shinoda Floral Inc. of Snohomish last year delivered flowers to a Tacoma shop, a city employee spotted the delivery truck and took note: The wholesale florist lacked a business license with the city.

Tacoma sent owner Paul Shinoda a letter saying his company needed a license and owed Tacoma back taxes and penalties worth about \$1,500. "At this point, they've got my dander up," said Shinoda, who has threatened to stop delivering flowers in Tacoma.

Business revenue isn't the only thing taxed by cities throughout the state — so is the patience of

Companies that do business in cities statewide must contend with dozens of different municipal tax codes.

business owners and city officials alike.

Companies complain about contending with aggressive tax collectors, double taxation and a mind-boggling array of business-and-occupation taxes collected by 37 cities statewide. "It's a very ex-

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Malls may recast movie multiplexes

Theaters won't easily fit new retail roles

By CAROL TICE
STAFF WRITER

SeaTac Mall general manager Bob Fliday doesn't know yet whether troubled AMC Entertainment will close the 12-screen movie theater complex it has operated since 1976. But he's thought about options for filling the space if the screens go dark.

"It would be expensive to renovate, because they (the theaters) are sectioned off and the floor is inclined," he noted. "It's not an easy fix. It takes up 18,000 square feet, so it wouldn't be an anchor, but it's potentially a pretty big

space. It could be (turned into) big-box retailer."

With virtually every major national theater chain either in bankruptcy or on the brink, local mall owners with cinema tenants are beginning to strategize how they would cope with closed theaters. After more than a decade of expansion, major theater chains have announced plans to close older locations with fewer screens.

That description fits many local malls, including the single screens at Northgate and Southgate malls,

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SBA disaster loans now available

Disaster loans are now available through the U.S. Small Business Administration as a result of the Nisqually earthquake that rumbled through the region Feb. 28.

SMALL BUSINESS BULLETINS



Betta Ferrendelli

SBA disaster loans are the primary form of federal disaster assistance for non-farm, private sector disaster losses. SBA disaster loans help homeowners, renters, businesses of all sizes and private nonprofit organizations fund rebuilding.

The SBA has approved 19 disaster loans totaling more than \$234,000 to owners who suffered property damage from the Nisqually earthquake, said Robert Meredith, local district director for the SBA, which began issuing disaster loans March 8.

"This is just the beginning," he said. "As more people seek help, the total of loan approvals will rise."

SBA representatives are now available in Kent and Olympia to help individuals and businesses complete loan applications, answer questions about the disaster loan program, accept completed applications and provide one-on-one assistance, Meredith said.

The SBA is encouraging individuals and businesses with property damage or economic loss as a result of the earthquake to meet with an SBA representative.

"You do not have to wait for your insurance settlement or a contractor's estimate before applying for SBA disaster assistance," he said.

Individuals and businesses affected by the earthquake should register first for disaster assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, said Diane Offord, programs and recovery unit manager with FEMA. Tele-registration can be completed by calling 800-462-9029.

To register for SBA disaster loans in Kent, visit Center Point Corporate Park, Cascade West Building, Suite 300, West Valley Highway (Route 181). In Olympia, visit the Federal-State Disaster Field Office, Westfield Shoppingtown Capital Mall, 625 Black Lake Blvd., Suite 200. Both locations are open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For more information on the disaster loan program, call the SBA office at 800-U ASK SBA, or visit the Web site, www.sba.gov.

Reach Betta Ferrendelli at 206-447-8505 ext. 117 or bferrendelli@bizjournals.com.

COOL SHADES

Jil Smith's talent has

shed light on her

lampshade business,

Insatiable Studios

By M. SHARON BAKER
STAFF WRITER

After toiling quietly in a basement studio making colorful lampshades for the past several years, Jil Smith finds herself very much in demand.

A feature story on the Seattle artist last year in Mary Englebreit's *Home Companion* magazine has prompted her to embark on a transition from artist to small businesswoman.

Architects and interior designers are now clamoring for her lamps and lampshades. Her lampshades were a main part of the décor at WatchGuard Technologies Inc.'s new Seattle office. The new Dahlia Lounge also sports 100 of her shades.

Her 4-year-old Seattle company, Insatiable Studios, has hired its first full-time employee. Smith has secured a bookkeeper and accountant and is gearing up to fill her largest order ever — shades for 70 Nordstrom stores. And she expects revenues to more than double this year.

That's in part because Smith's shades aren't the typical boring white ones found on most lamps for sale.

Using Japanese rice paper and glue, she fashions functional works of art. The process is akin to papier-mâché, whereby paper is layered over a metal frame, five layers thick. Smith adds stripes, polka-dots, leaves, numbers, flowers, or whatever strikes her fancy, cutting the designs out of papers from Thailand and Indonesia.

Scott Cameron at Paper Scissors Stone, a Seattle interior design company, can't get enough of those shades. He first noticed them several years ago.

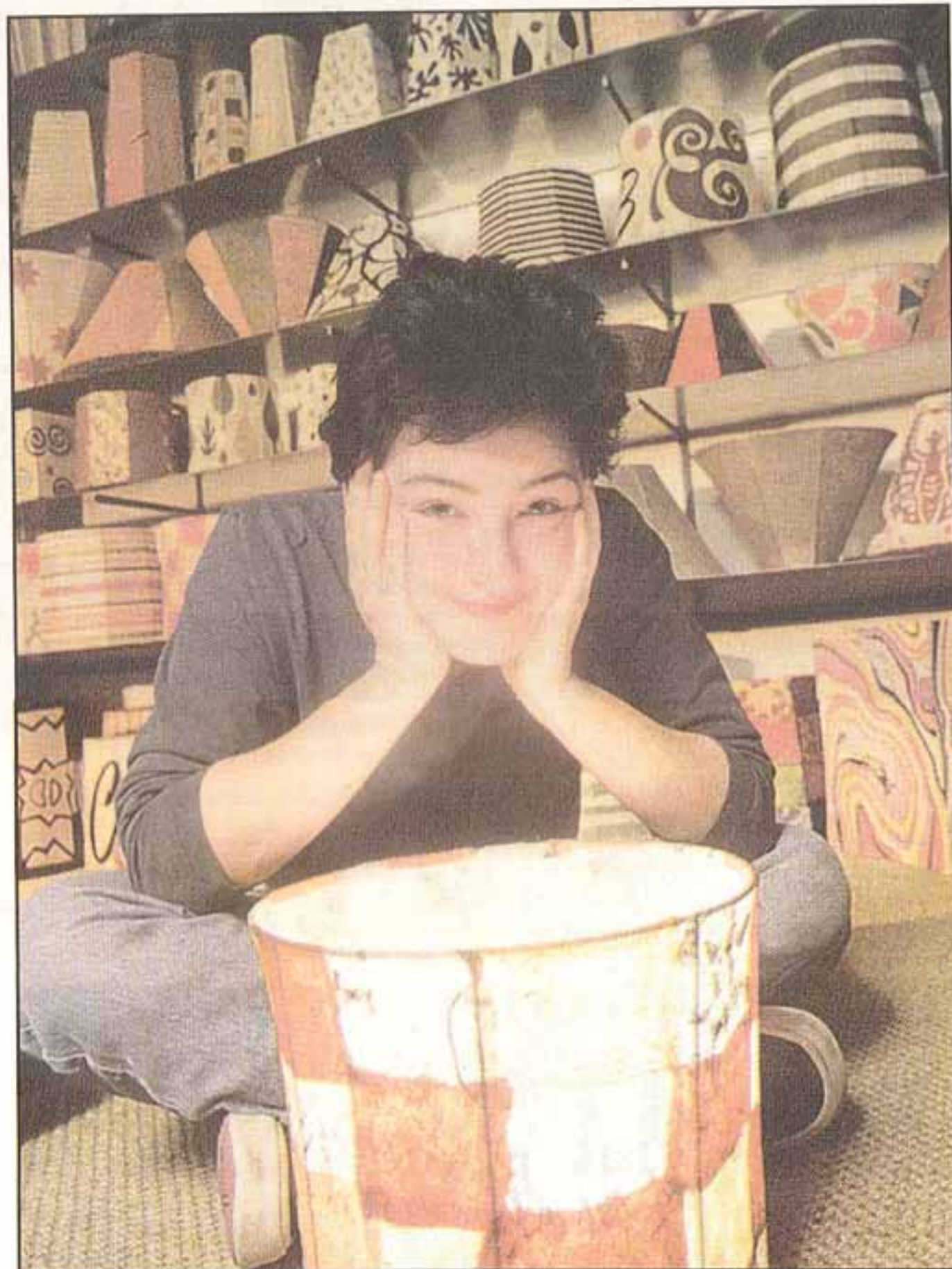
"I was driving by the antique store, and there were red and white striped rice paper shades in the window, and they just struck me very boldly at the time," he said.

Cameron has used Smith's shades in a number of projects, including the design of new offices for WatchGuard, several homes, and other retail stores.

"There's a real craftsmanship to them, and they are something that's unusual," he said. "The texture is different than the corporate environment and they bring a personal touch with them."

The shades were perfect compliments to the homey atmosphere Cameron was trying to bring to WatchGuard's high-tech offices, but they also have a wide appeal due to the many materials and colors Smith uses, he said. The shades fit in well with the return to comfortable and homey touches that have been lost in the current high-tech and fast-paced world, Cameron said.

The lampshades "very much have a place in the spa, home furnishings, cosmetics," industries, he said. "What she does is



BUSINESS JOURNAL PHOTO/DAN SCHLATTER

Four years ago Jil Smith, a former museum art teacher and textile designer, was designing lampshades while she refinished furniture. Today, as the owner of Insatiable Studios, her shades are in demand in high-tech offices and restaurants.

like a great piece of jewelry in the corner, and this is just the tip of the iceberg."

Paper Scissors Stone has proposed a number of projects for Smith that she was either too busy to fit in or that their modest mom-and-pop clients declined to commission, Cameron said. But he's always looking to use her again.

Like Cameron, Michael Crawford, corporate cosmetics visual designer for Nordstrom, was struck by Smith's craftsmanship and artistic nature.

"I thought the shades were wonderful, edgy and had a real good feeling to them," Crawford said. "I saw many other applications that we could do with them such as embedding verbiage between the different layers."

Crawford is using Smith's shades for a May promotion in 70 stores.

"She's really unique in the industry right now," he said. "She's talented and really zeroed in on making these unique."

Just four years ago Smith, a former museum art teacher and textile designer, was making a few shades while she refinished furniture for an antique dealer. Smith made

a few shades for the display windows, which were snatched up quickly. Now she's faced with a huge order and making the transition from solitary worker to boss.

"I'm excited about having to pay taxes," Smith said, adding that for years she didn't make enough money to do so. "I've had some marginal years; I call them the hot plate years."

"I want to be decent to any employee that I have and make sure this remains fun," she added. "Sure I invented this, and at first it's hard not to be a nudge."

Finding the right employee for such a small enterprise and learning to articulate the reasons behind doing things a certain way have been difficult at times.

"There's a lot of voodoo involved, and reasons for everything, even though I haven't said them," Smith said.

Smith had a part-time employee on-and-off for the past year, a college student who could devote time in between semesters. But now that student is too busy.

"When I really needed help, the employee I found didn't work out," Smith said.

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SHADES

FROM PAGE 30

"Maybe because Caryl found me, she became a great asset immediately."

Caryl Kiley saw an article in a daily newspaper and trekked down to Smith's studio to buy a lampshade. The next day, the former production manager for a specialty coffee company came back and asked for a job.

"Jil was really surprised and said she couldn't pay me what I'm worth," said Kiley, who said she was awestruck by the lampshades and craftsmanship.

"There are no health benefits," she added. "And I wasn't interested in learning everything I could and then go into competition with her. Jil's quiet and gentle nature impressed me. She is incredibly talented, and incredibly normal."

A week after Kiley joined, Smith landed the Nordstrom order.

"All the sudden things have popped," Smith said.

Four years ago, Smith's business was primarily retail sales. She worked in a tiny studio in the basement of an antique store in Pioneer Square. There she was often the main attraction when baseball and football fans waiting for a game to start would wander in and watch her work.

Now in a studio tucked in an architecture office in South Lake Union, retail sales have vanished, as have the simple days of finding materials in small quantities.

"I used to see all that stuff on commercials about banking and other relationships and never thought that applied to me," Smith said.

But she's found a number of business partners willing to jump in and help her in a pinch.

"I've sent flowers to my welder," she said smiling.

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