

I have lived in this area since 1968, most of which time was on or close to Lake Sawyer. Since that time I have seen the area now known as Covington turn into a city like Federal Way. Once only a Johnny's Grocery store was located in Covington and it was really the only store of any type between Lake Sawyer and Kent. The exception being Lake Sawyer grocery and of course Play-Mor Tavern. Now when you drive in Covington it is one strip mall after another and of course having a Costco is a mixed blessing.

Black Diamond on the other hand consisted of a Ralph's grocery store, with a liquor and drug store attached, along with what was then the Morganville Tavern and Kings Tavern along with the Black Diamond Bakery. What separated Black Diamond from other big box cities was the rural feel, small town values, and it's people, who seemed to appreciate seemingly being left behind from the growth and shall we say corruption of it's neighboring communities.

Lake Sawyer was a terrific lake for all water sports but in my family's case we enjoyed fishing. Trout, bass, crappie and perch, in huge numbers swam in the clean waters, unmolested by dangerous run off that other lakes in more populated areas' seem to face. Pretty much everyone, knew everyone, and we liked it that way. Black Diamond was a safe, small town that seemed to not have the problems that other bigger towns face daily. Did we have crime? Did we have drugs? Of course but not like other cities had. Our Police department was highly capable of keeping this a safe area for all.

Now look what is happening. Over night we are going to become a much larger more diverse city and with it we will undoubtedly face the crime and problems associated with it. Lake Sawyer and it's relatively clean waters as compared to other lakes of its size will have runoff poured into it through it's tributary, Rock Creek. Phosphorus run off from a project of the size that Yarrow Bay is planning, will bring Lake Sawyer to dangerous levels. Soon the fish that live will be dangerous to eat. Our wildlife deer, quail, pheasants, and other animals that inhabited our forests will either die, or be forced to seek areas that offer more cover.

Now lets think about another area of concern for most of us a huge tax increase. While it is true that Yarrow Bay in a small concession has promised to build an elementary school, at some point, only a fool who thinks with his head in the sand can't foresee the need for a minimum of two additional elementary schools, a junior high and a high school. Who will pay for this ...we will. One side note to this is that anyone living around the 101 Pines area, around to Sawyer Woods Elementary, to the railroad tracks separating Maple Valley from our city are in the Kent School District. What this means is that if you live in what I am going to call traditional Black Diamond you will be paying for these schools not us. That further means that almost two thirds of the tax base are excluded from this problem. Our Police department who is already stretched thin since the annexation of the Lake Sawyer area will of course be forced to double in size. Who will pay for this...we will. Our roads already seemingly impassable depending on the time of day will not be able to handle the doubling of traffic. Who will pay for new roads...we will. Large trucks carrying equipment, sand, gravel, concrete and other items essential to the construction of such a large scale project will not only make our small rural roads unsafe but will greatly break them down. Is Yarrow Bay going to re- build these roads which will have twenty years of use over night? We will be taxed beyond anything that most of us can imagine because that is how these type of projects are paid for. Generally, it is a small increase

that pays for growth over time but with our city on steroids, this type of small tax increases simply will not sustain this type of un-natural growth.

How in the world did we get in such a predicament? No one knows just what it took financially to get our former Mayor, and the other city representatives to vote to approve this. Obviously we vote into office men and women who we think will represent us and our views. Who among us ever told our city council... "Please vote to double the population of our city" "We need more low income housing, more crime, more congested roads, and of course our tax's are much to low." Our streets are to clean, without enough pollution, our Lake is much to pure, and of course who really cares about salmon and other fish life. If you want fish go to the Cedar River. Oh yeah, the Cedar has been closed to sport angling for years for many reasons, and some of them we soon will be facing as well. Obviously, there is a major disconnect between the people of Black Diamond and those voted into office to represent them. If only we could prove why.

In short no amount of promises, bribes, or other inducements will replace the life that we have had here for so many years. Perhaps we took this lifestyle for granted. Yes, people must live somewhere. Most of us rationally are not against growth, just un-natural growth by greedy out of area investors who simply want to turn a buck at our expense. Growth is part of life, but controlled growth is what we want, not this head ache. Enumclaw, a city not unlike ourselves has done a solid job of growing while controlling growth and maintaining it's core values.

If Yarrow Bay is allowed to expand our city and community without any checks and balances, our family feel, that those who have been around a while, are accustomed too will be a thing of the past. We will be taxed beyond anything you can imagine. Our roads will be unsafe to handle this much traffic and we will all suffer as a result. Stop this, stop this now. Make it so hard on Yarrow Bay that they sell the land back to investors who are a part of our community, to turn into church's and perhaps a new school. One not four. Please don't allow them to prostitute our values and our city. Our homes are our refuge from the world and we don't want to face the issues which will undoubtedly be a result of this greedy corporate expansion. Anyone who stands in the way of Yarrow Bay by whatever means necessary is not an anarchist but a patriot. "The darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis. Danti Alighieri an Italian poet from the middle ages. Thank you.