

### Segregation Era Saga Explores Racism in Servant Relationships



Although the story is set in the author's hometown of Jackson in the early 60s, her best-selling novel is more fictional than autobiographical in nature.

The screen adaptation unfolds from the point of view of Aibileen Clark (Viola Davis), a long-suffering nanny left bone-weary by a life spent "lookin' after white babies." Born in 1911, she is currently raising little Mae

Kathryn Stockett made an auspicious debut in 2009 with the publication of "The Help," a poignant period piece examining the unquestioned relationships of entitled, white socialites and their deferential black maids in Mississippi.

Mobley Leefolt (Emma and Eleanor Henry), a recent addition to a prominent Southern family.

As narrator, Aibileen is able to admit to the audience the existence of a "bitter seed" planted deep inside of her soul since the recent death of her only son. Still, she is not one to risk her job by allowing her face to reveal even a trace of that resentment in the presence of her employers. Instead, the grammatically-challenged domestic dutifully nourishes the impressionable toddler in her care by regularly reciting the same spiritual mantra she's shared with all 17 other children entrusted to her over the years, namely, "You is kind; you is smart; you is important."

By contrast, Aibileen's relatively-mercurial best friend, Minny (Octavia Spencer), is not nearly as stoic, which explains why she frequently finds herself fired for insubordination. After all, the strictly-enforced housekeeper code of conduct calling for no spanking, touching or sassing white folks, and especially no using their bathrooms tends to test her patience.

Passive-aggressive Minny is lucky even

### Umoja Fest

Beautiful weather greeted Umoja Family Fest 2011 last weekend at Judkins Park. The annual parade, family reunions, cook-outs and live music drew thousands.



#### MOVIE REVIEWS

by Kam Williams

Excellent (4 stars)  
 Rated PG-13 for mature themes and ethnic slurs.  
 Running time: 111 Minutes  
 Distributor: Walt Disney Pictures

to be alive after her latest outburst which led to her being dismissed by Hilly Holbrook (Bryce Dallas Howard), an insufferable shrew who only got what she deserved. Minny next lands a position with Celia Foote (Jessica Chastain), a newcomer ostracized by other well-to-do ladies because of her white trash roots.

The plot thickens, upon the arrival back in town of cotton plantation heiress Skeeter Phelan (Emma Stone). Having spent time away from the racist region, the aspiring journalist now finds herself offended by a way of life everyone else around her seems

to take for granted.

Feeling for the plight of the long-suffering black servants who had raised her and her friends so lovingly despite the discrimination, Skeeter decides to write a book recounting what life in Jackson is like from their perspective. So, starting with Aibileen and Minny, she starts approaching sisters to cooperate with the project, which is no mean feat, given that this is Mississippi at a time when it was often fatal to challenge the status quo.

Truth and reconciliation belatedly achieved, like a dream deferred.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

# SEATTLE AUGUST 2011

### BULLETIN BOARD



If you have an event you want to share with the community, email it two weeks in advance to *The Skanner* at [info@theskanner.com](mailto:info@theskanner.com)

Thursday August 11

SEATTLE PRESENTS – A PERFORMANCE AT CITY HALL! Kore Ionz Groove (heavy reggae) will be performing at the free lunchtime performance. Noon – 1:30 p.m. City Hall, 600 4th Ave.

Friday August 12

7TH ANNUAL SOUTH LAKE UNION BLOCK PARTY! As always this free event will feature a full day of

outdoor summertime fun and entertainment for all ages. Noon – 11:30 p.m. South Lake Union Discovery Center, 101 Westlake Ave N.

Saturday August 13

FRIENDS & FAMILY EVENT WITH GUEST SPEAKER ALICE! If you or someone you love struggles with an eating disorder, come to this special event Ramey Nutrition is holding to support you! 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. Ramey Nutrition, 4241 – B 11th Ave. NE

TASTE OF HOOD CANAL: Community event by The North Mason Rotary with over 80 booths of food, crafts, kids' fun and information. Free for everyone to enjoy: Belfair, WA.

Sunday August 14

COME OUT READY TO MIX AND MINGLE! The NPHC (National Pan Hellenic Council), Seattle Urban League of Young Professionals and National Society of Black Engineers have come together to host the 1st Annual Unity in the Community BBQ. Members and non-members welcome. 3 – 7 p.m. Gene Coulin Park, Shelter 2, 1201 Lake Washington Blvd. Renton.

Monday August 15

MONDAY AT THE BEACH: Bring your beach bag and a snack and we will provide the fun. Trips leave Loyal Heights Community Center and run from 1 – 4 p.m. Call for this week's destination. 206-684-4052. Loyal Heights Community Center is located at 2101 NW 77th St.

Tuesday August 16

MARINERS NIGHT GAME! Come out and support the home team with other teens from around the city. Spots fill quickly, so sign up early 5:45 – 10 p.m. Hiawatha Community Center, 2700 California Ave. SW. To sign up call 206-684-7441.

Saturday & Sunday August 20 & 21

EASTSIDE FUCHSIA SOCIETY PLANT SHOW AND SALE: This show features a great selection of plants from Eastside gardeners. Free admission, costs for plants vary. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Bellevue Botanical Garden, 12001 Main St. Bellevue.