



# TAG TEAM



TRIBUNE PHOTO: KATIE HARTLEY

The police bureau has dedicated an officer, Matt Miller (above), to graffiti investigation for the past three years. A restriction on the sale of spray paint, pushed through the City Council by Commissioner Randy Leonard (top), took effect in October. Now, Portland officials are pondering the next abatement effort.

## Police, City Hall weigh next step to curb graffiti

By DANIEL SAVICK, *The Tribune*

Commissioner Randy Leonard is the City Council's most outspoken graffiti opponent.

In recent months, he has convinced the council to pass an ordinance restricting the sale of spray paint within the city limits, and has also pushed to include graffiti in the offenses that result in guaranteed jail time under a city-funded program called Project 57.

But some believe it will take more to significantly reduce graffiti in Portland, and Leonard is one of them.

Leonard's goal for curbing graffiti is what he refers to as a

phased approach. One of the newest phases could involve creating a city-sanctioned graffiti wall — where taggers and graffiti artists could paint without fear of criminal charges — as a way to fight Portland's most visible graffiti.

"I've actually been convinced that makes a lot of sense," Leonard said about building legal walls in different areas of Portland.

Leonard's interest in such a wall is an indication that his recent anti-graffiti efforts are, by themselves, not enough to stem the graffiti issue facing the city of Portland.

And he concedes that at least some of the people who create the largest and most visible

**"Free walls don't work. You'll see the surrounding area being pummeled by new graffiti."**

— Matt Miller, Portland Police Bureau

graffiti in town, such as taggers, will have no trouble getting paint.

He calls them graffiti "artists" and says they have skills and resources that distinguish them from what he calls "malicious vandals," whom he sees as being the main target of his new ordinance.

"You have to define what the problem is and realize there are these different subclasses of people who do the graffiti," Leonard said. "It's two different subjects that a lot of people confuse into one."

Not everyone, including those charged with enforcing the new policies, draws distinctions between vandals and artists, nor do they agree with the idea that

a legal graffiti wall will stop taggers or graffiti artists.

"Free walls don't work," said Portland police officer Matt Miller, the bureau's graffiti investigator. "They draw more taggers to that area, but then you'll see the surrounding area being pummeled by new graffiti."

To Portland's graffiti abatement coordinator, Marcia Dennis, if it is done without permission, it's not art, it's vandalism. "That's the view I have to have, whether I like it or not," Dennis said. "There are some that are really colorful or funny, but it's vandalism."

When Leonard pitched the

See GRAFFITI / Page 3

# Graffiti: Law went after vandals

From page 1

ordinance to the council, he hoped it would have the same effect that locking up pseudoephedrine had on the production of methamphetamine in Oregon.

An ingredient in over-the-counter cold medicine, pseudoephedrine also is used by homegrown meth cooks.

The restrictions caused large-scale meth cooking in Oregon to all but drop off the map, and dropping off the map is exactly what Leonard had in mind for spray paint-related vandalism with his new ordinance.

The ordinance that went into effect Oct. 1 requires anyone who buys spray paint or other potential graffiti supplies to show valid photo ID at stores. The supplies also must be stored out of customers' reach.

Storeowners must keep a record for two years of anyone who buys spray paint and similar items, such as spray paint nozzles, paint pens of a certain size, glass cutting tools or glass etching tools and or instruments.

Leonard hopes these restrictions will help stop the most casual graffiti vandals — those he believes are "often the people who steal a can of spray paint, or buy a can of cheap paint, and wander through neighborhoods spraying " (bleep) you" on people's cars, drawing penises and ruining a working-class person's car or fence."

But Leonard does not believe the restrictions will stop those with "artistic skills (who) get specialized paints and tips and get the kinds of products to do truly what most people would consider to be art."

As Leonard puts it: "I'm not defending graffiti artists, but I think it's very important to make clear that typically they aren't people who would go after people's cars or a person's house or fence. I think there's a certain amount of ethics. They'll pick a blank wall, a warehouse wall, or a freight train. That's not appropriate, and that's not legal, but that's not who we're after."

Leonard followed up the spray paint restrictions by pushing to include criminal mischief in the list of crimes that result in guaranteed jail time under Project 57, an agreement between the city and Multnomah County for the city to pay \$1.3 million a year to reserve 57 county jail beds for quality-of-life crimes.

"I feel like I'm giving a tool to the police," Leonard said. "If you catch someone in the act, don't give them a ticket, slap them on the wrist and send them on their way; arrest their ass and take them to jail. And we'll deal with them in the criminal justice system."

These steps are in addition to adding a graffiti investigation officer to the police bureau, which happened three years ago, when Miller was appointed.

The second step was to assemble a photo database of graffiti taggers that would be available to officers.

Since establishing the database Miller has documented more than 60 graffiti crews operating in Portland, and has begun classifying taggers within their crews. Some crews Miller has followed have 10 or more members. Additional steps include the new graffiti ordinance and now,



The work of taggers is layered on top of more graffiti on a surface in North Portland. Commissioner Randy Leonard draws a distinction between people who leave signs on such empty surfaces and people who vandalize someone's car or home.

TRIBUNE PHOTO: ANNE TRACY

## SOUND OFF

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the addition of criminal mischief to Project 57 crimes.

The next step, which Miller points out is difficult due to staffing shortages,

would be to add officers to the graffiti investigation team and more money for graffiti abatement or clean up.

## Police say they need more

Leonard, Miller and Dennis all agree there are many reasons, including the lack of resources dedicated to it, why it is so hard to significantly reduce the amount of graffiti in town. For example, Miller is the only police officer working on graffiti full time.

"We need three full-time officers on the street meeting these kids," Miller said. "We need face-to-face, personal contact to let them know we know who they are, who's in their crew, and that we're going to arrest them every time they get up (vandalize)."

The process of battling graffiti can be cumbersome, and Miller points out that putting together just one case to prosecute a prolific tagger can take several months.

According to Miller, he is lucky to get four to six major cases against a prolific tagger completed each year.

"Unfortunately with limited resources and staffing shortages, this is what we're stuck with," Miller said. "And me sitting at a desk isn't solving our

problem."

Over the past three years, actual gang graffiti has made up about 13 percent to 15 percent of documented graffiti in the city, which is up from just 3 percent to 5 percent from the previous five to seven years, while tagger graffiti makes up 80 percent to 85 percent.

## One city has 'art wall'

One thing Leonard, Dennis and Miller all agree on is that Portland's graffiti problem is not any worse than any other city. Miller also says that graffiti is becoming more widespread because it is working itself into the popular culture.

"It's in movies, it's in music videos, they even have video games now where the entire purpose is to get up (spray-paint graffiti tags onto walls)," Miller said.

Dan Melbiness, who works for Art Primo, a specialized graffiti paint supply company out of Seattle with a large online store, completely agrees.

Melbiness compares graffiti to skateboarding, which once was considered a crime and a problem until cities gave young people a place to skate by building skate parks.

"We do need to provide these kids with an outlet," Melbiness said. "Police need to try to meet with kids, it's the city's responsibility to recognize the culture and provide places for kids to paint."

That's exactly what happened in Redmond, Wash.

Kim van Ekstrom, the city's chief communications officer, said Redmond (just east of Seattle, home of Microsoft Corp.)

created a place for graffiti artists to show their work without fear of arrest or harassment.

"There were a couple of kids that (Redmond police) knew who were doing graffiti in the area; and instead of going after them they worked with them and recruited them to help them find a solution," van Ekstrom said.

The solution was Redmond's legal graffiti wall, or "hip-hop art wall," as it is called, next to the city's skate park. The wall was built in 1993, and anyone can paint on it once they register with the police department.

"The next year (after the wall was built), graffiti went down 67 percent, and we haven't seen an increase since then," said Jim Bove, spokesman for the Redmond Police Department. "Before that, it was a huge problem. We had 60 complaints (about graffiti) each month."

Although Leonard is convinced that a legal graffiti wall makes a lot of sense, he realizes that a single wall would not remedy Portland's graffiti situation.

Miller also is not convinced that a legal graffiti wall would make a big difference. Redmond has around 60,000 residents, while Portland has more than 500,000 residents, with about a 1.5 million people living in Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas counties.

[danielsawickas@portlandtribune.com](mailto:danielsawickas@portlandtribune.com)

Free Report Shows How to Put Thousands of Dollars of Mortgage Interest Payments in YOUR Pocket Instead of Your Banker's

A just released consumer report exposes the tricks and gimmicks that predatory lenders and credit card companies use to get borrowers to pay thousands of dollars in unnecessary payments and finance charges - and how homeowners can keep that money for themselves.

"Lenders hope you never read this report because they want to keep fleecing you," say Dalia Renov and Ella Gurfinkel from Portland, nationally recognized debt elimination experts. "But once you know the facts..."

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**Olympia-Rafah Mural Project Workshops -- Jan. 26th**

author: redrhythmicmoon e-mail: mural@rachelcorriefoundation.org

Workshops offered to develop design components of mural to be painted in Olympia, WA, later this year.

Olympia-Rafah Mural Project Workshops--Saturday, January 26

With Guest Mural Artists: Susan Greene and Lisa Nesson

The Olympia Center, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 26th, The Olympia-Rafah Mural Project presents a full day of workshops led by a team of artists and community members for Olympia residents and artists. Workshops will focus on developing themes and design ideas for a mural to be painted in downtown Olympia later this year honoring connections between Olympia and the town of Rafah in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The mural will be an expression of a people's recognition of the Olympia-Rafah Sister City connection. It will honor that relationship and, also, the common struggles for justice and the hidden histories that impact members of this community. Saturday's workshops will be from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm, at The Olympia Center, 222 Columbia St. NW, in downtown Olympia. A light lunch will be provided.

Artists Susan Greene and Lisa Nesson of Break the Silence Mural Project in the San Francisco Bay Area, will share their work painting murals in the United States and in Palestine and discuss the power of mural art to spark action for social justice. They will provide guidance for the Olympia-Rafah Mural Project and help create a foundation for the elements of the final mural image. They will, also, address the public mural painting process as a tool for human rights advocacy through education and creation of a culminating mural celebration. Saturday's workshops will include creative breakout sessions, exploration of proposed mural themes, a visit to the wall site, assembling images, and working with art materials to conceptualize and gather preliminary sketches for the mural.

The workshops will provide local artists a unique opportunity to learn about the process of painting a collaborative public mural as they, also, learn more about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within the framework of human rights and art.

The free events are sponsored by The Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice, and The Olympia-Rafah Sister City Project. For more information call (360) 754-3998 or email mural@rachelcorriefoundation.org .

homepage: <http://rachelcorriefoundation.org/site/break-the-silence-the-olympia-rafaah-mural-project/>

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Olympia/Rafah mural • Jan 26 Saturday

# Court allows city to prefer art to advertising

HEATHER HILL  
THE MID-COUNTY MEMO

Last year, Parkrose residents witnessed the rousing power of public artwork when Larry Kangas produced the Horses through History mural on the east side of the Parkrose High School Community Center. Even those without an opinion of art can concede that the mural certainly improves a blank wall.

How would the community respond if a billboard of such a size were erected instead? The city of Portland currently restricts billboard advertising to 200 feet. In 1986, the city exempted murals from this regulation. To underline the difference, the city defined a sign (in part) as something

tested the mural exemption. This time around, the muralist community rallied for representation, nominating muralist Joe Cotter to intervene on its behalf. The muralists' argument may have helped shape the ultimate decision ordered by Judge Michael Marcus who, while upholding the ban on content-based discrimination, gave the city a right to prefer art over advertising.

Regarding the original 1998 opinion, Marcus wrote, "I can say with confidence that my conclusions in this litigation that the City cannot prefer murals over billboards (or other commercial advertising) were limited to the context of regulatory distinction based on the content of expression and

Please see **NEW**, Page 9

# New ruling allows renegotiations for

Continued from Page 4

were in no way intended to convey any suggestion that the City cannot prefer art through some other mechanism."

To clarify, Marcus said, "Nothing I am aware of prevents the city from preferring art over commercial speech. Even in the context of regulation, the City may surely regulate distinct channels of communication based on what makes them distinct: as long as the basis for the distinction is not based on the content of any of these forms of expression."

This decision (As of this writing, Clear Channel has indicated it plans to further litigate the issue by filing an appeal.) now enables new negotiations regarding all facets of mural art. On Jan. 7 the city announced the formation of a Murals Working Group to discuss regulatory alternatives afforded by the court's new direction.

Coordinated by the mayor's and City Commissioner Sam Adams' offices, city attorney, Bureau of Development Services, Bureau of Planning, RACC and representatives of the muralist community, the Murals Working Group will work out new wording to segregate art from advertising to clearly enforce the current sign code while simultaneously expanding channels of artistic expression.

The January memo disseminated by the city loosely defined murals as "works of art for which no compensation or thing of value is given or received for the display or right to place the mural." Billboards generate renewable revenue to display the sign, whereas a muralist gets paid once for the initial work alone.

On Jan. 15 members of Portland Mural Defense met to exchange views on how to best project their interests in conversations with the city. The group, organized by Joanne Oleksiak who spearheaded the PHS mural project, also included renowned Portland muralists Isaka Shamsud-Din, John Early, Mark Meltzer and Cotter, who led the proceedings. Shamsud-Din, Cotter and Oleksiak, with Meltzer as an alternate, will represent the muralist community in the upcoming workshop.

At the meeting, both veteran muralists and newbies voiced concerns with the new wording, specifically the compensation aspect. "I hope that we can make the really strong point that whatever you decide today is going to open up or limit the imagination of artists that haven't been born yet," Oleksiak said.

The muralists hope the city will concentrate on concrete distinctions to avoid the sticky and subjective necessity to define art itself. Even subtle differentiations pose difficulties. In the future, however the city draws the lines between signs and art, muralists hope to educate officials and others on murals' intrinsic value to the neighborhoods they're in, raising the estimation of the art in the public eye.

With more funding and freedom, professional artists have more incentive and resources to create higher quality artwork available outside the galleries of the Pearl District to illuminate neighborhoods in Mid-county and beyond.

*"I hope that we can make the really strong point that whatever you decide today is going to open up or limit the imagination of artists that haven't been born yet."*

— JOANNE OLEKSIK, PORTLAND MURAL DEFENSE

**Web Resources:**

- Portland Mural Defense: [www.pmc.library.org](http://www.pmc.library.org)
- Regional Arts & Culture Council: [www.racc.org](http://www.racc.org)
- Commissioner Sam Adams: [www.commissionersam.org](http://www.commissionersam.org)





MERRY MACKINNON

### NEW LIFE ON FOSTER ROAD

The new Foster Road Business Association is symptomatic of a new mood on what had been a rather nondescript Portland street. This mural is in an alley off Foster Road at the border of the Woodstock and Mt. Scott-Arleta neighborhoods. New shops and businesses are opening along Foster, and efforts are underway to install pedestrian islands and 25 MPH speed limits, to make crossing Foster Road safer and less stressful.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Mrs. Peterson and some of her students at Llewellyn School, holding Rwandan artifacts.

### Classroom Project Really Gets Teacher's Goat

*Editor,*

It all began when we read an article out of the new Portland Public reading adoption. We read about one boy who made a big difference in the lives of others. Well, that was the start for us. Christmas was nearing. Mrs.

in the lives of many children.

*Jean Cheney  
Llewellyn School  
via e-mail*

### Party for Lois

*Editor,*

Lois Stroup has been the S-Studies Institute site coordinator at SMITB (2210 SE 13th)

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# Sign code revisited: Murals may return to city

BY HEATHER HILL

Ten years after the city effectively outlawed murals to satisfy Clear Channel Communication's legal objection to the sign code, a new ruling may open more walls to art in the future.

After the media company Clear Channel asserted that the sign code's exemption of art violated free speech laws in 1998, mural art lay dormant and often covered up for six years until the city council voted to resurrect them under the protection of a public art distinction. Clear Channel again sought legal recrimination, and this time muralist Joe Cotter represented artists' interests in the challenge.

In the final ruling last fall, Judge Michael Marcus, while upholding his original decision on the unconstitutionality of the previous content-based regulations, also declared that the city had every right to favor art by other means. Ruling that "nothing in this court's Opinions say that the City cannot attempt to free wall murals from sign regulations in ways that do not depend on the content of the message displayed," Judge

## GET INVOLVED

A public meeting set for April 1 will re-examine the city sign code, which may lead to bringing back Portland murals.

Marcus thwarted sign companies from further manipulating the polymorphous nature of art for their own ends.

In January, the city formed a Murals Working Group to re-examine the sign code under this new lens. Comprised of representatives from the Regional Arts and Culture Council, Bureau of Planning and Development Services, offices of the Mayor and Commissioner Sam Adams as well as from among the muralist community, the group will hold four private negotiating sessions, and one public meeting (scheduled for April 1) before they present their recommended code changes to city council.

The first session took place Feb. 4, at which the city proposed defining a mural as "works of



photo courtesy of Robin Dunitz

*The Musicians Union mural is on the corner near 20th and Burnside.*

art for which no compensation or thing of value is given or received for the display or right to place the mural," as opposed to signs which accrue recurring revenue. Other objective criteria under discussion may impose limitations on artists.

Since billboards usually hover where the eye meets the horizon, around 50 feet in the city, a mural height ceiling has been proposed. As for materials, though innovative artists may experiment with diverse modes of creation, few work with the prohibitively expensive digital vinyl used in billboards, a material which muralists willingly agree to concede.

The city has also proposed confining murals to commercial areas, which would ban

the residential work muralists earn primarily for garage doors. On the issue of permanence, the five-year minimum currently required by the public arts mural program will most likely stand, but artists seek careful wording on this count to allow for large temporary installments as well.

All delegates seek to ease the red tape around the mural permit process while reducing program costs. If the following months result in an agreement that satisfies all parties, then we may soon have a new sign code that not only protects the aesthetic quality of our neighborhoods, but also improves upon them.

*Heather Hill is a freelance writer in Portland.*

# Iran peace forum opens dialogue

BY JAN BORR

On Saturday, Feb. 9, the American Iranian Friendship Council (AIFC) hosted its first-ever American-Iranian forum at Duquesne State University.

U.S. government has worked against a friendship between the two countries, refusing to have a dialogue with the Iranian government. According to Blumenauer, Bush's "Axis of Evil" speech came at a time when Iran was actually helping us stabilize Afghanistan, leaving the U.S. bewildered. If we were friends, the president calling them

Kinzer called the rush to bomb Iran an act of intellectual laziness. It is far easier to start throwing bombs around than it is to sit down and have a painful conversation about the part we played in past atrocities. It is far easier to fall into an "us vs. them" mentality than to work together. And it's far easier to start shouting that Iran is trying to build nuclear weapons than

in China, and called for our government to offer Iran direct, bilateral, unconditional negotiations. At the top of the world, he said, the U.S.'s goal should be stability in the Middle East, not fomenting further revolution.

Many of the speakers expressed fears that an American attack on Iran is still a very real

# Schoolgirls' mural is picture point of pride

By Michael Bales  
SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

**M**ayrangel Cervantes, 10, nibbles on an ice cream cone as a cold wind swirls along North Lombard Avenue last week in St. Johns.

"I finally did something that the world can see," she says.

The Shaver Elementary School fourth-grader is among 24 girls who designed and painted a 32-by-12-foot mural. The mural, behind them on the side of a building, depicts silhouetted girls dancing beneath a tree in a dreamscape of butterflies and flowers.

The project began in Octo-

ber and included brainstorming and much drawing as part of after-school programs at Shaver and James John Elementary. Girls Inc. of Northwest Oregon runs the programs as part of its school-based mission to empower girls.

Along the way, the girls learned how to develop healthy relationships with one another, says Kristin Robinson, who led the project as a Girls Inc. volunteer coordinator.

Artists Rodolfo Serna and Kate Zonis guided the girls in refining ideas, then drew outlines of the final concept on large pieces of plywood. The



Girls from Shaver and James John elementaries gather last week in front of the mural they designed and painted in St. Johns.

MICHAEL BALES  
SPECIAL TO  
THE OREGONIAN

girls did the rest.

Building owner David Hassin says he jumped at the chance to donate the south wall of the now-closed Jowers boot store when Robinson broached the idea. The Regional Arts & Culture Council

paid for the work.

In a vacant lot next to the mural, the girls from the two schools gather in a circle and say their names. They've never met.

Serna joins the circle and sings a song while beating on

a small drum. Later, he says the song is from a sun dance ceremony of the Lakota native people. It has no words, only sounds that create feelings. ■

Portland News: 503-221-8199;  
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April

2008

THE SOUTHEAST



# Neighborhood Notes

## Richmond By Karen Maczko

The last Richmond Neighborhood Association Meeting was held on March 10. The Community policing report indicated it had been very quiet month around the neighborhood. The Association unanimously voted in favor of writing a letter to the Metro supporting two native gardens at the southside of the Richmond Elementary School.

Jenna Plank, the SE Portland Deputy District Attorney, was present to discuss the neighborhood D.A. program. Jenna is involved primarily in quality of life crimes such as graffiti, transients and criminal mischief. She stated that the Hawthorne eater is a concern having received multiple complaints. A meeting to address complaints is in the planning stages. The neighborhood association does have a Good Neighbor Agreement with the Hawthorne Theater.

Kirsty Hall from PDOT discussed a transportation safety project for bicyclists and pedestrians along SE Clinton St. The objective of the Clinton Bike Boulevard Enhancement Project is to let people know that they are on a street prioritized for use by bicyclists. PDOT is conducting a pilot program to test various sign designs.

Tim O'Neil, SEUL Neighborhood Sustainability Coordinator, let us know that he is available to help the neighborhood on an environmental sustainability project. It is a great opportunity for neighbors who may not want to commit to attending monthly meetings but would like to have an active role in the neighborhood. Ideas are welcome, and one example in the works for the Sunnyside neighborhood is to purchase five energy meters to measure efficiency in appliances that could be lent out to neighbors.

Erik Hovmiller was elected as the new Chair of the Richmond Neighborhood Association, thank you and congratulations Erik! Roy Hartley volunteered to become our SEUL Coalition Representative - Thanks to Roy this position that was vacant for over a year is now filled!

Welcome to new board members Linda Ralley, Jeff Cropp and Jeff Horne. Thanks for helping out! The Land Use Board of Appeals heard the arguments regarding the Wild Oats/Gold's Gym saga and will have a decision in April or May. The Richmond Cleanup has been scheduled for May 31. Mark your calendars and start organizing that junk you don't need. Our next meeting will be held on April 14. Hope to see you there!

Please Note: Monthly meetings of the Richmond Neighborhood Association are held on the second Monday of every month at the Cascadia Building at the SW corner of 43rd and Division at 7 pm. Please enter on SE 43rd and proceed to the second floor, Room #4. Neighbors are encouraged to attend and get involved in our neighborhood.

## Buckman By Susan Lindsay

It's Mural time!! Joe Cotter renowned muralist will be repainting the Buckman Mural found on the south wall of the laid Pantry store at SE 12th and Morrison St. He will lead a community mural planning process discussion with slide show at the Buckman Elementary School Cafeteria, 320 SE 16th Avenue, Tuesday, April 29, 6:30 - 8:30 pm. To contact Joe, call 03.637.3381 or email Chameleons\_garden@yahoo.com.

It's also time to gather all that "stuff" cluttering your basements, yards and attics and bring it to the annual Buckman/BERNS Neighborhood Association Clean Up. The event takes place on Earth Day, Saturday, April 19 from 9 am-12 pm at 26th and NE Burnside. There will be dumpsters for garbage, recycling and yard debris. While it is free, we do ask for a donation to help support the event and the both sponsoring associations. At 12 pm there will be a party for volunteers with lots of food, refreshments and entertainment. To volunteer, please contact BCA Cleanup Coordinator, Cory Ulrich, Americorps Volunteer t.culrich@portlandimpact.org

In the same vein of planet saving, BCA will be forming a new Sustainability Committee, assisted by Tim O'Neil volunteer at Southeast Uplift. This group will discuss, implement and showcase ways we can save energy creatively and help stop global warming and wasteful consumerism. At press time the date of first meeting to be held at Buckman Elementary had not been set. Contact Tim directly at tim@southeastuplift.org for more information and to get involved.

April 24, the BCA Public Safety Committee will meet at 7 pm at Central Catholic. This meeting which will follow the monthly Land-Use meeting will be held in CCHS Faculty Conference Room, 2401 SE Stark. All interested and concerned neighborhood residents as well as business owners and tenants are strongly encouraged to attend. This newly forming, proactive group seeks to identify and help curb the substantial upsurge in car-break-ins, home and business burglaries, graffiti, vandalism, and chronic drug/alcohol related problems occurring in Buckman. The Committee will obtain current statistics and work with the Portland Police to identify the patterns and location of crimes in Buckman, learn the reality of present police and investigation staffing in our area, and see what relationship new ordinances downtown may have with present scenarios.

All residents are also asked to report theft, vandalism and drug/alcohol issues in order to assist with a true analysis. Contact the non-emergency line at 503.823.3333.

A special note on the Washington High School property: This home of the future community center, field and affordable ownership family housing, is legally a drug and alcohol free zone as is all PPS property. Please contact the non-emergency line immediately if you see any violations of that policy and help keep the area safe for kids, residents and of course the hounds.

At our general meeting on April 10, come hear about the plans Metro has to do a "make-over" at Lone Fir Cemetery. There will be a presentation and discussion. Also, we are planning for a candidate fair for May so you can see your choices and hear some debates.

BCA Board meets Thursday, April 3, from 6-7:15 pm and the General Meeting is Thursday, April 10, 7-9 pm. Both meetings are at Central Catholic High School and all are welcome. To contact the BCA: buckman\_comm2000@hotmail.com or 503.236.2214.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

### Buckman mural process presentation and slideshow

The Buckman Community Mural will be painted this year on the south wall of the Plaid Pantry at the corner of SE Morrison Street and 12th Avenue. The lead artist, Joe Cotter has been painting murals for twenty years, primarily in Portland and Estacada. The presentation will include material from past murals as well as a drawing in progress of the Buckman Community Mural.

There will also be a discussion of the mural process from its inception to its completion. The slide show will feature the previous Outside In mural, "For the People" painted in 1989-1990 as

well as the 1996 Cycle of Wood mural in Estacada.

The Buckman Community Mural is being designed in consultation with, and support of, the Buckman Community Association and is made possible by a grant from the City of Portland Environmental Services East Side Community Benefit Opportunity (CBO) Program.

The event is scheduled for Tuesday, April 29 from 6:30 - 8:30 pm in the Buckman School Cafeteria, 320 SE 16th Ave.

Contact: Joe Cotter, 503.637.3381, Chameleons\_garden@yahoo.com

### Getting ready for soccer

Mt. Tabor Soccer Club is currently registering players for fall soccer. If your child has always wanted to get involved with soccer, now is the time! Mt. Tabor Soccer Club will have several opportunities this April to register for fall soccer. All times are from 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm and the locations are as follows:

Monday, April 7 at Richmond (2276 SE 41st Ave.)

Tuesday, April 8 at Sunnyside (3421 SE Salmon St.)

Wednesday, April 9 at Bridger (7910 SE Market)

Tuesday, April 15 at Glencoe (825 SE 51st Ave.)

Thursday, April 17 at Atkinson (5800 SE Division)

Mt. Tabor Soccer Club provides affordable recreational soccer to boys and girls, grades K - 8. A non-profit, volunteer-run organization, their goal is to enhance the lives of area families, strengthen community and to further the game of soccer regardless of one's race, gender or national origin.

Contact the club registrar, Darcy Mundorff at 503.253.5638 or registrar@mttaborsoccer.org with questions. Visit the website at www.mttaborsoccer.org.

### Successful Swap Shop and Indoor Playground

**ANNUAL TULIP SALE**—Brighten your day! The Mt. Tabor Chapter of the Friends of the Oregon Symphony holds its annual tulip sale Friday April 11. Enjoy Spring blooms fresh from the field. Pick up tulips (\$6/bunch of 10) at 5631 SE Madison from 9 am - 3 pm. Free delivery on advance orders of 20 bunches or more! Call 503.253.2599 today to reserve your tulips.

**SPRING BAZAAR**—Everyone is invited to the Annual Spring Bazaar at Epworth United Methodist Church, Saturday April 26, 11 am - 3 pm. Delicious Udon, Chinese Chicken Salad, Inari Sushi, Hum Bao, baked goods and other food items will be available to eat in or carry out. The event features a Plant Sale, Rummage Sale, and performances by community members including the Minidoka Swing Band, Epworth Break Dance Group, and Richmond Elementary 5th Grade Class. The church is located at 1333 SE 28th Avenue. For more information, contact Epworth UMC at 503.232.5253 or epworthumc@hotmail.com

**SPRING CRAFT SALE**—A newly formed neighborhood group, the "Crafty Betties", is hosting its first Spring Sale Saturday, April 26, from noon until 9 pm at 6323 SE 22nd Ave. Check out the newest creations from 7 very local artists and crafters with lots of great gift ideas for Mother's Day! There's a wonderful and unique selection of handmade jewelry, skirts, accessories, aprons, stationary, ponchos, tote bags, dresses and much more depending on how fast their crafty little hands can work! Call Linda at 503.771.5850 with questions.

**FIFTH ANNUAL PIL SLAM DUNK COMPETITION** at Franklin High School is coming up April 4. Former Blazers judge the event, and dunkers and three point shooters from Portland Public high schools will be there too. Competition begins at 7:00 pm in the Franklin gym. Ticket prices are \$5. Children seven and under and senior citizens are free. For more information, contact Mark Tucker at mtucker@pps.k12.or.us

**FREE WOOD WASTE DUMPING**—McFarlane's Bark, Inc., one of the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area's largest commercial composting operations is accepting clean waste wood and woody yard-debris for FREE for an indefinite, however extended, period of time. The Portland location is 13345 SE Johnson Rd., Milwaukie and the phone is 503.659.4240. Open seven days.

**THE ANATOMY OF PEACE BOOK**, study group starts April 3 at 6 pm. The group meets once a month on the first Thursday. Call: 503.452.0399 or email, ageless@mynetimpact.com.

**IDEAL MEDICAL CLINIC**—You are invited to brainstorm and discuss your thoughts about what makes an ideal medical office. What types of services would you like to see? What should the atmosphere be like? Thursday, April 17 at 6:30 pm at 1235 SE Division, in the atrium behind Artemis Foods Café and hosted by Jennifer Wallace MD, who will be opening an innovative medical clinic in the same building in mid-May. 888.480.1115.

**FREE ESL CLASSES** offered at Marshall Campus SUN Center every Tuesday and Thursday beginning April 8 and ending May 29. The Marshall Campus is located at 3905 SE 91st Ave. Take Bus Lines 9 and 17. The ESL classes are free and open to anyone interested. For more information call 971.570.1384.

**SPRING MASTER RECYCLER PLASTICS ROUNDUP** takes place Saturday May 3 from 9 am - 2 pm at the Floyd Light Middle School 10800 SE Washington. This is for all those items not taken at curbside recycling. See details in next month's Southeast Examiner.

**MULTNOMAH COUNTY CHAPTER OF OSU MASTER GARDENERS**, Speaker Series -Tuesday,

C. 2008



Joe Cotter, who has advocated for changed mural rules in Portland, is currently working on a mural about the Buckman community on the side of a Plaid Pantry at Southeast 12th Avenue and Morrison Street.

TRIBUNE PHOTO:  
L.E. BASKOW

# City may relax rules on murals

■ Deal may end 11-year ban on most painted art work on city buildings

By ADRIANNE JEFFRIES  
for *The Tribune*

New rules proposed by the city of Portland would make it possible for artists to get permits to paint large-scale murals on privately owned building walls — something that has been illegal in the city for the past seven years.

Murals are commonplace in some cities. San Francisco has more than 600, and more than 2,800 murals have been painted through Philadelphia's

Mural Arts Program. But there are fewer than 50 murals in Portland.

"The tradition of murals here in Portland has been an unhappy one," said Joanne Oleksiak of Portland Mural Defense, an artists' advocacy group.

Portland's dearth of oversized outdoor murals is due to city regulations meant to restrict advertisers from pep-

## Inside

■ Group working to finish huge Oaks Bottom mural.

Page B1

pering the urban landscape with murals pushing products.

But the permitting process, which needs to be approved by the Portland City Council before it goes into effect, would smooth the way for muralists who want to paint, tile or mount murals larger than 200 square feet in the city.

"When there are voices that don't have a giant ad budget to get their ideas across, it's often very important

See MURALS / Page 3

# A Tale One a River

Five bridges, two  
problem. A bridge of s  
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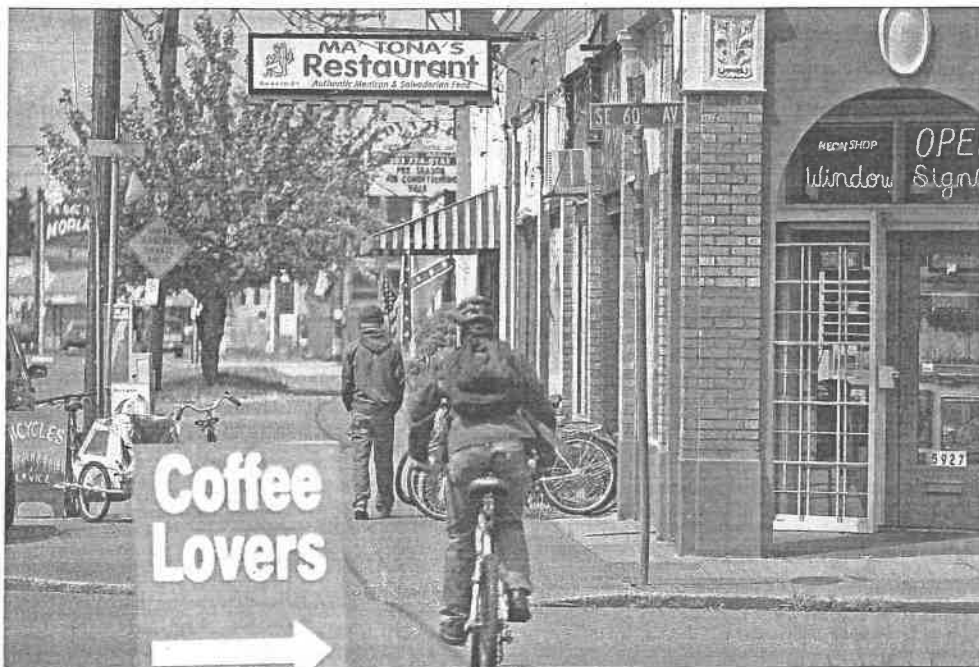
popping up all over town. N  
education from schools, lay off city, county  
and state workers, close schools where the  
most economically disadvantaged families  
live, eliminate R&B, Soul, Jazz music  
from the radio band, and blanket the inner  
city with the gentrification brand, to create  
an exclusive cottage industry.

## & COMMENTARY



*Peter C. Little took this shot of a new mural by Joe Cotter, muralist taking part in the PDX public arts movement. Joe is active with Portland Mural Defense. He is also a member of both Artback and the Spiral Gallery, two artist co-operatives in Estacada.*





Southeast Foster Road, previously inhabited by pawn shops and fast food restaurants, is showing signs of new vitality. New businesses like Speedboat Coffee are popping up and encouraging locals to hang around.

TRIBUNE PHOTOS: KATIE HARTLEY

## ■ New businesses, affordable housing revitalize neighborhood Foster forges a new identity

by STEVE LAW  
The Tribune

When Rob Hergenrader opened his Mocha Master coffee shop on Foster Road six years ago, he could tell some of his customers were hooked on meth.

It wasn't a very good neighborhood, Hergenrader recalled, with "a lot of meth and theft and graffiti."

But in the past couple of years, it seems, the meth addicts along Foster have been replaced by caffeine addicts.

Oh, sure, there are still several windowless, smoky taverns along Foster between Southeast 50th and 90th. There's still a pawnshop, a "Gentlemen's Club," an adult video store and a cocktail bar offering "stripper karaoke" on Sundays. You can still shop for guns and beer-logo mirrors on Foster.

But there's an unmistakable transition under way in what has long been one of Portland's seediest commercial arteries.

Cava, which opened in October, may be the first Foster Road restaurant to attract foodies and other diners from miles away. There's also a hip new tattoo parlor, a trendy breakfast spot (Bar Carlo) a trendy nightclub (Sling-shot Lounge), and several new cafes and coffee shops.

You can now buy sushi on Foster and 82nd Avenue. You can even spot Martha Stewart's smiling face — no lie — on a billboard near 90th Avenue, pitching her line of "easy and elegant wines."

And Hergenrader's drive-through coffee shop, under the



Angela Kelly (left) and Valerie Young, owners of Speedboat Coffee, serve up smoothies, pastries, bagels and caffeine and plan to add sidewalk seating.

tutelage of new owner-operators from Seattle and Brooklyn, is undergoing a renaissance of its own.

Any day, co-managers Angela Kelly and Valerie Young said, a spiffy new sign will go up heralding Foster's newest attraction: Speedboat Coffee.

The sisters-in-law took over from Hergenrader 2 1/2 months ago, and are transforming his former coffee shop into a lively neighborhood hangout.

The interior is decked out with vintage photos and paraphernalia with a speedboat theme. Kelly and Young are fantasizing about mounting a real motorboat on the roof. The

theme was chosen because it evokes an image of fast service, Kelly said, an important asset for a coffee shop relying on drive-through business.

They also hope to lure more customers in to sit for a spell. Outdoor seating is being added on the wide sidewalk along Foster. They'll expand their hours into early evening, supplementing their popular smoothies and coffee drinks with a new menu of soups, sandwiches and paninis.

Walls are painted bright lime and tangerine, what Kelly called "caffeinated colors." A children's playroom was added, bringing in a steady flow of moms with their kids.

Before the May 9 grand opening, the place already had attracted a new crop of customers to add to the regulars.

"It's vibing," said Laura Richards, 20, who came in recently for her daily java. "Every time I come here I meet people," she said, including a young man who promised to help with her physics homework.

Lorraine Wood, 30, who's worked at the coffee shop for 4 1/2 years, said she's noticed Foster developing a more pedestrian-friendly ambience.

"I've seen a big boost in women with strollers walking down the neighborhood," she said.

Foster is changing much like other Portland neighborhoods, said Byron Estes, senior development manager for the Portland Development Commission. Young families are moving in, lured by affordable housing.

"That always brings new life to a neighborhood," he said. But it hasn't brought an avalanche of

mixed-use development around Foster and 90th.

There is a plan afoot to extend the Lents Urban Renewal Area westward along Foster, to encompass the business artery all the way to 50th Avenue and Powell Boulevard. The urban renewal area now stops at 78th Avenue.

If the expansion is approved this summer, Estes said, the PDC would focus on providing business loans and storefront improvements for Foster businesses. The agency also could pursue beautification projects, such as adding street trees and improving sidewalks.

Alyssa Starelli, a real estate agent who was sipping coffee last Friday at Speedboat, said she'd like to see a median strip down Foster to make it more walkable.

Foster was a "no man's land" in the early 1990s, said Starelli, who lives in nearby Brentwood-Darlington. But the area's reputation has slowed its neighborhood improvements.

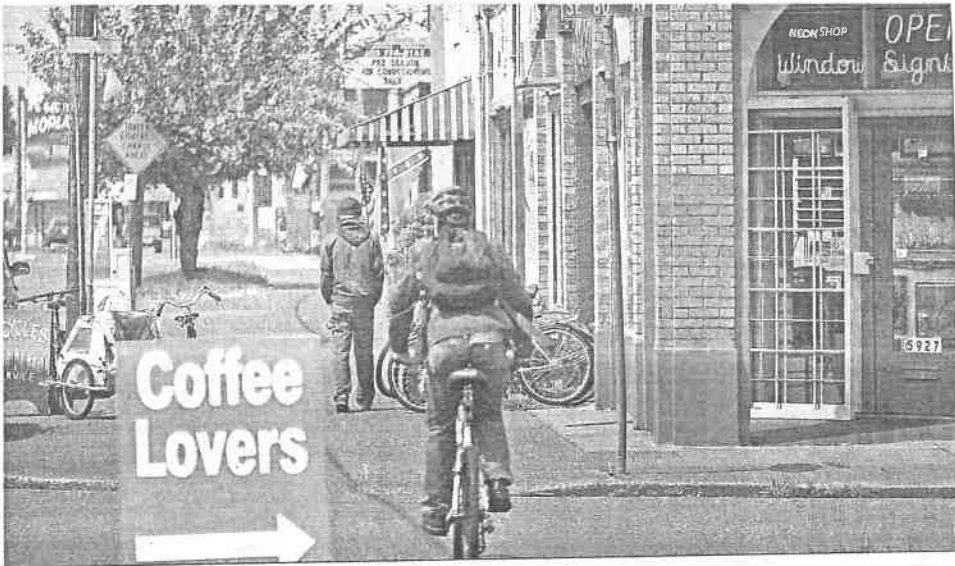
**"It's vibing. Every time I come here I meet people."**  
— Laura Richards



Artist Laura Caswell paints

Portland Tribune (Thursday, May 8, 2008)





Southeast Foster Road, previously inhabited by pawn shops and fast food restaurants, is showing signs of new vitality. New businesses like Speedboat Coffee are popping up and encouraging locals to hang around. TRIBUNE PHOTOS: KATIE HARTLEY

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**SOUTHEAST**



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"That always brings new life to a neighborhood," he said. But it hasn't brought an avalanche of growth or anything approaching gentrification, Estes observed.

The PDC is celebrating some success stories with its redevelopment in the Lents neighborhood to the east, including a new

mixed-use development around Foster and 90th.

There is a plan afoot to extend the Lents Urban Renewal Area westward along Foster, to encompass the business artery all the way to 50th Avenue and Powell Boulevard. The urban renewal area now stops at 78th Avenue.

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"The whole Foster-Powell area is considered Felony Flats," she said, "but there's no felony any more."

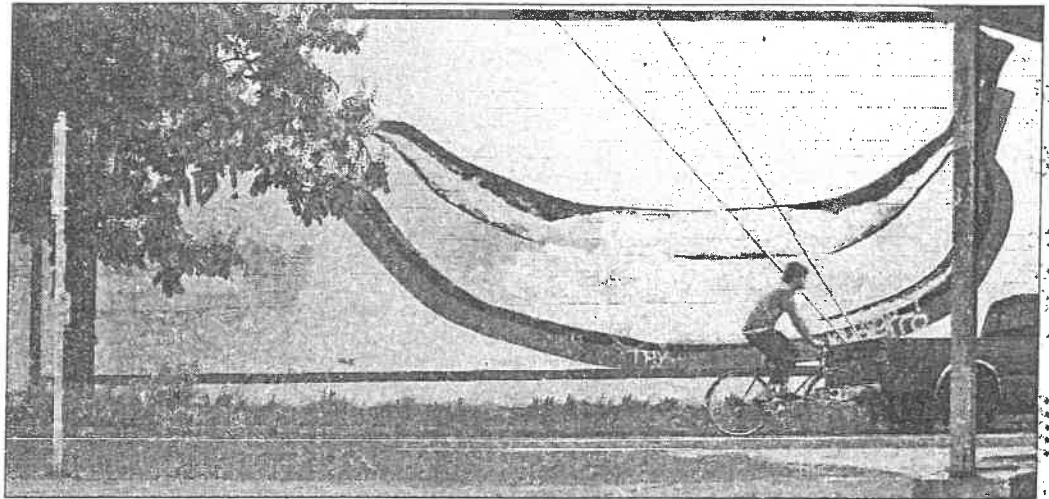
stevelaw@portlandtribune.com

**"It's vibing. Every time I come here I meet people."**  
— Laura Richards



Artist Laura Caswell paints a mural of a scene from Granada, Spain, on the side of Euro Classic Furniture store.

Portland Tribune Thursday, May 8, 2008



TRIBUNE PHOTO: ANNI TRACY

The banana mural, painted in 1982 at Southeast 11th Avenue and Division Street, is one of Portland's oldest. The mural is signed by the anonymous Gorilla Wallflare, who also claims two other unauthorized murals in the city.

Every Friday in Stumptown Stumper, the Portland Tribune offers a trivia question and answer to help you boost your Rose City IQ.

**Q:** Where in Portland can you find a mural of a giant banana?

**A:** This mural, on the side of a discount retail shop at 1125 S.E. Division St., dates to 1982, which makes it one of the oldest in the city, according to the Regional Arts and Culture Council.

The 18-foot-by-50-foot piece, called "Art fills a void," stands out for several other reasons as well.

At first it appears to be just a banana, randomly sketched to fill a blank wall. Then, if you're an arts and music junkie, you might recall that the banana looks eerily similar to Andy Warhol's cover art for the 1967 debut album by the Velvet Underground and Nico. The words, "Peel Slowly and See," appeared in tiny print next to the banana, and a tab on the original album could be peeled back to reveal a pink banana underneath.

So who's behind this many-layered mural? The anonymous artist or artists signed the piece "Gorilla Wallflare," suggesting it might be an act of guerrilla activism.

One post on the public art blog, [www.pdxartwork.blogspot.com](http://www.pdxartwork.blogspot.com), gives some insight. It was written by an apparent insider by the name of "Otto Phokuz" (a play on "auto-focus" or "out-of-focus?"), who describes himself on his MySpace page as an 80-year-old photographer who lives in Portland.

"The original concept was in protest to war in Nicaragua at the time, however at the last

minute the 'art fills the void' was added to keep it out of the political arena," Phokuz writes.

"Another title considered was 'Viva mi banana.' The mural was done just to fill the blank space of an otherwise dull, blank wall. It just so happens that the banana theme fit with the whole gorilla wallflare idea. After all, gorillas have to eat too, you know."

Phokuz adds that Gorilla Wallflare painted two other unauthorized murals around town, which since have been covered up or destroyed as the buildings were torn down.

"This mural," he says, "was painted on a Sunday by the two founding members of the team. Yes it was inspired by Andy Warhol."

Are these founding members still around? Will there be any more protest murals? Stumper wants to know.

Next week's Stumper: The McMenamins Kennedy School restaurant and pub first opened as an elementary school in Northeast Portland in 1913. John F. Kennedy wasn't born yet, so whom was it named after?

Have a Stumper? Send it to [jenniferanderson@portlandtribune.com](mailto:jenniferanderson@portlandtribune.com).

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# Mural Show Honors Black Artists

The Portland Mural Show features African American artists through June 28 at the Olympic Mills Commerce Center, 107 SE Washington St. in downtown Portland.

Artworks by nationally acclaimed local painter, quilter and visual artist Adriene Cruz and the late painter Charlotte Lewis are given a special focus in this exhibit.

Cruz is especially known for painting the interior and exterior of the Northeast Health Center in vibrant colors and African Adinkra motifs. She frequently collaborated with Lewis, whose work is also seen in a gallery of its own adjacent to the main Mural Show.

Organizers say some featured works in this show are from private collections and haven't been seen in public for years, including the 1988 mural titled "Struggle & Hope."

The piece was reassembled at this show after more than 15 years in storage. Designed by lead artist Bill Garnett (1939-2004) and painted by over 50 Portland community volunteers on a café wall in downtown Portland, this powerful anti-war imagery deserves to be seen. The mural was a project of the Portland Central America Solidarity Committee in the late 1980s, during the El Salvadoran Civil War.

Some highlights for this show are:

- Larry Kangas offers visual instruction (and a sample) on how to do a "pellon" (non-woven fabric) mural. Kangas used this technique for the 2007 Parkrose High School Community Center mural "Horses Through History and World Cultures". This 1,600 square foot mural depicts the many cultures and nationalities of the Parkrose High School student body and neighborhoods.
- An historical mural created in 1992 by a multi-racial collective working with Portland American Friends Service Committee and ALANA, to protest Operation



Adriene Cruz

Desert Storm (the first Iraq War) and of the U.S. Quincentenary celebration of Columbus and his "discovery" of America.

- Painting and sculpture by Toma Villa, a Native American aerosol artist and graduate of Mt. Hood Community College.

- Plus work by artists and activists including Baba Wague Diakite, Ping Khaw, Martin Gonzalez, Robin Corbo and others.

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JUNE 11, 2008

PORTLAND, OREGON

VOLUME XXX, No. 23

# THE SKANNER

CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO SHAPE A BETTER FUTURE NOW

IN

Math, Sc

Editorial:

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# METRO

**B**  
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## Mural idea takes flight in big way

### The lone heron on a Southeast Portland wall will be joined by other fauna and flora

By TARA BALLENGER  
THE OREGONIAN

The 70-foot painted great blue heron that overlooks the Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge in Southeast Portland is about to get some company.

Later this month, the 3,500-square-foot watercolor-style mural on the west side of the Portland Memorial Mausoleum will be retouched and expanded with images of flora and native migratory birds on west- and south-facing walls.

When completed in mid-September, the 45,000-square-foot artwork will be one of the largest murals in the United States, said Mike Houck, director of the Urban Greenspaces Institute, which is helping lead the project. It's intended to show the beauty of nature to everyone from bicyclists and runners on the Springwater Corridor Trail to motorists heading south on Interstate 5.

"The idea is to have something that is not garish and does not stand out with superbright colors," Houck said. "The scale is so big that it will capture people's imagination."

The work is being coordinated by Urban Greenspaces Institute and Art FX Murals, a Portland company that paints murals for clients across the nation. They're the same team that created the original mural in 1991.

"It's something nice for the city that's going to be permanent," said Shane Bennett, a lead Art FX artist for the project. "Most of the murals we do are advertisements and just get painted over."

This time, there will be an educational component, too. TrackersNW, an organization that teaches outdoors skills to young people, will recruit high school students to help paint under the supervision of Art FX. School-age children also will be able to participate in one-day art workshops and excursions into the wildlife refuge as part of the project, Houck says.

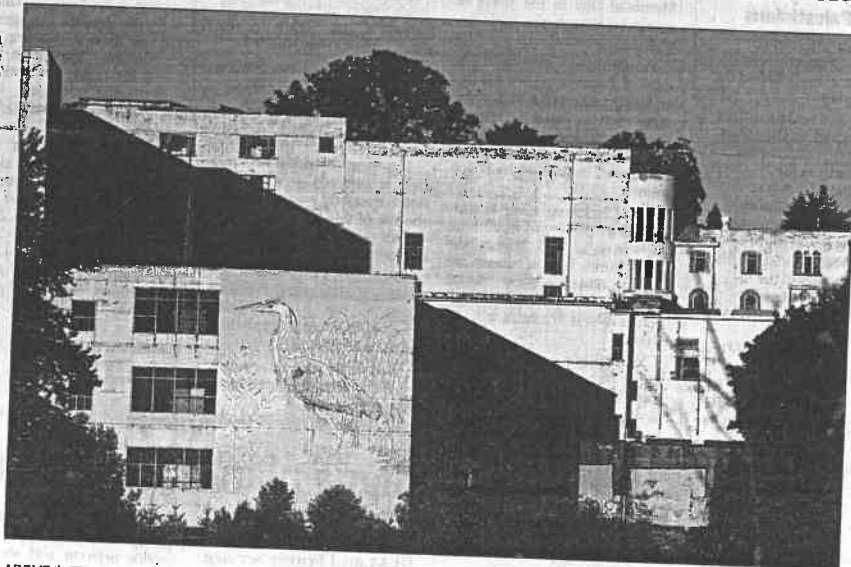
Much of the project's cost is being donated. Art FX is providing \$150,000 in services. The owners of the mausoleum, in addition to donating the wall space, are giving several thousand dollars. Portland's Miller Paint is providing the paint, as it did in 1991.

"We talked to people whose family members have memorials there," said Dave Schroeder, who manages the mausoleum. "Everyone we spoke to was very positive about it."

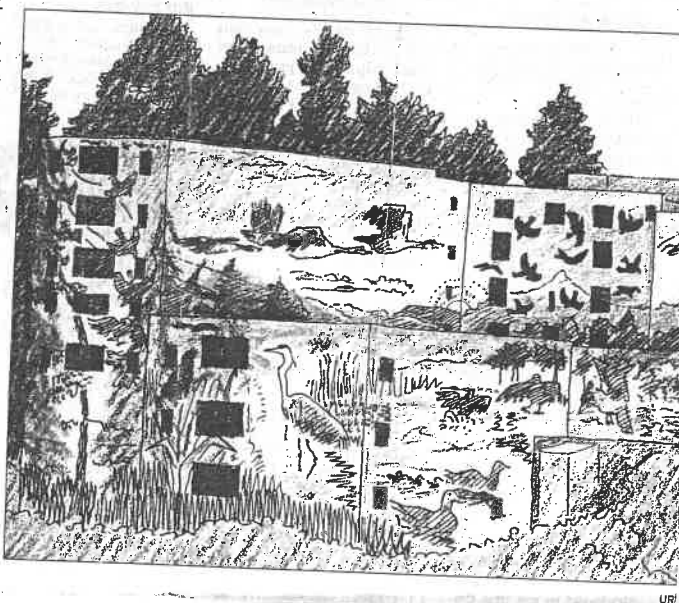
The mausoleum, he added, was built in 1901 and has been added to in phases since then. "The back of the building is not too attractive the way it is now."

The Urban Greenspaces Institute, a nonprofit that works to bring nature to

Please see **MURAL**, Page B3



ABOVE | The expansion of the heron mural that overlooks the Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge in Southeast Portland will feature a wetland motif with various migratory birds and will cover eight wall surfaces.  
BELOW | When the mural is finished in the fall, it will be one of the biggest in the country, said Mike Houck, director of the Urban Greenspaces Institute.



### METRO

## Mural: Neighborhood group's letter supports it

Continued from Page B1

the city by preserving habitat and promoting eco-friendly construction and renovation projects, lined up donations to cover the \$68,000 remaining after donated services. They include \$20,000 from the Spirit Mountain Community Fund, which donates a portion of profits from the Spirit Mountain Casino on behalf of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

"Our tribal council and trus-

tees have a passion for the natural environment and were really wanting to highlight nature, especially in the urban setting," said Shelley Hansc, the fund's director.

Donations also came from the city's Bureau of Environmental Services, the Region Arts and Culture Council, and the Oregon Community Foundation.

The neighborhood association — the Sellwood Moreland Improvement League — also wrote a letter of support after Houck gave a presentation at the project.

"It will add to the artistic quality of Oaks Bottom," said Eric Norberg, the league's secretary.

Tara Ballenger: 503-294-7611; taraballenger@news.oregonian.com



Kids take cameras into their neighborhoods to meet neighbors and break down barriers. They come out with an understanding of their communities, and of themselves.

# You had me at Hello



The banners are posted on the sides of buildings throughout Portland and in several central Oregon communities. Each one represents a conversation, an experience shared by the interviewers and the subjects. Children came up with all the questions. And "questions," says photographer Julie Keefe, "that's what Hello Neighbor is all about. Getting comfortable. Getting uncomfortable."

By INARA VERZEMNIEKS  
THE OREGONIAN

## The banners appeared seemingly overnight,

massive portraits strung from the sides of buildings in downtown Madras, Bend, Roseburg, throughout Portland — along North Interstate, Mississippi Avenue, Southeast Stark.

The whole thing felt a little mysterious.

Who were the people featured on the banners?

What was this all about?

And it's funny, because the whole thing grew from questions — started with a series of interviews, actually.

And the banners, they're a kind of record of those conversations.

A map of encounters. Of interactions. A new way of looking at our neighborhoods. At ourselves.

A way to find each other.

*Me and my cousin were walking home one night. It was around 9 and we started walking up Mississippi when we saw a lot of people were gathering on the corner, outside of Sunlan. Of course being nosy, we wanted to know what was going on... There was a big crowd looking in the windows at all these photographs. It was a weird experience — to see that many people all out on the same corner, together. I live in the neighborhood and you just don't see that too often. It was really weird, but it was also really nice to see people from the neighborhood all gathered together, talking to each other. All because of these pictures.*

Tristan Irving, 17

*Talk about popular. I go by here late in the evening coming home, and there's people standing around and talking about those pictures. People stop all day long. I have people come in and say, 'That was*

*my friend in the window'... I've actually had a customer... who liked the saying around one of the pictures so much, they wanted to know where they could get a copy of the picture. They didn't even know the person....*

Kay Newell ("Oh, everyone just calls me the Lightbulb Lady"), owner of Sunlan Lighting, 3901 N. Mississippi Ave.

To get at the story behind the photographs, the first person you need to meet is Julie Keefe, a photographer who has worked with students from Caldera, a Portland-based nonprofit that for the past 12 years has offered young people long-term mentoring through the arts. Caldera holds summer arts retreats and offers arts education year-round at 10

Please see **MELLO**, Page O6



Photos by JULIE KEEFE (left), and CALDERA STUDENTS, OCKLEY GREEN SCHOOL (middle, right)

u had me at  
Hello

At a party in the Mississippi Ballroom, banner subjects, neighborhood residents and business owners mingled with staff from Caldera, the nonprofit that launched the Hello Neighbor project. Photographer Julie Keefe (left), who came up with the idea, hugs daughter Sophie Kllicker. Katie Weinstein (foreground), a Caldera staff member, greets a banner subject, Lisa Moore, assistant dean of multicultural affairs at Reed College, and her son, Essex. Moore, whose photograph hangs on the side of Boise-Eliot School, said of the project: "So much about the history of communities is written by adults and intense scholars. There are very few instances where you have real-life documentation of people's lives by children."

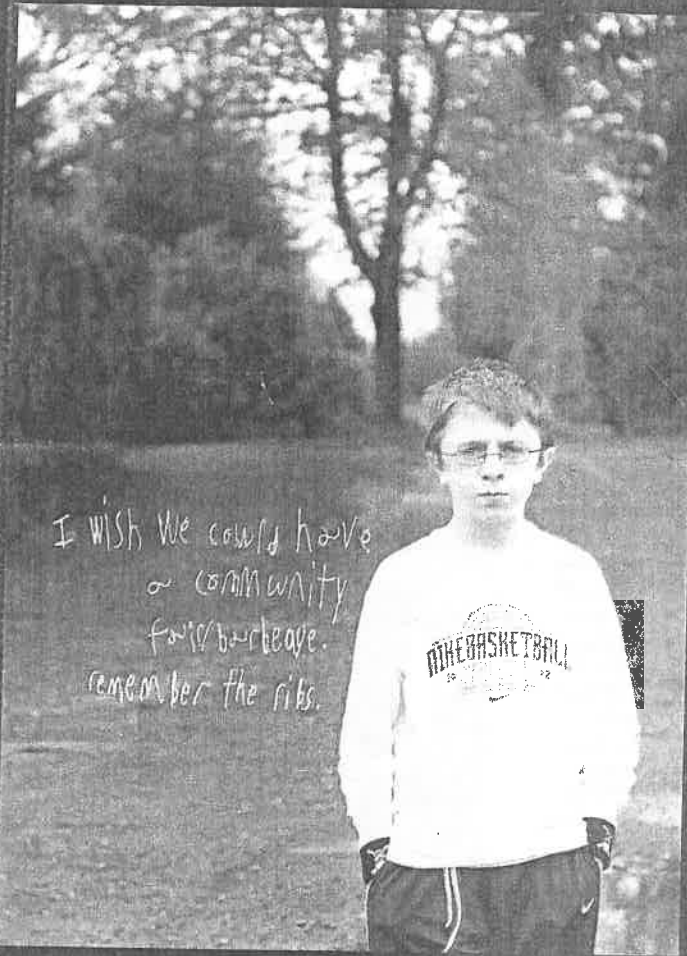
ROSS WILLIAM HAMILTON  
THE OREGONIAN





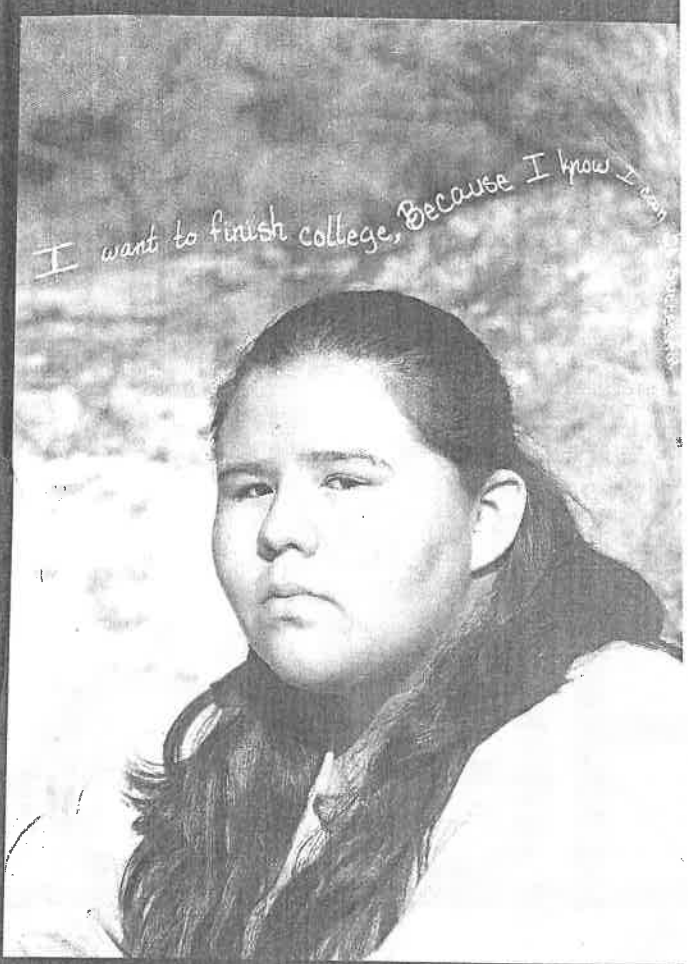
*In spite of the changes  
is my Neighborhood. It's where  
raised my family.*

**Lina Harris**



*I wish we could have  
a community  
fair/burleave.  
remember the ribs.*

**Micah Fletcher**



*I want to finish college, Because I know I can*

**Leanne Smith Lucero**

Photos by CALDERA STUDENT, SEI ACADEMY (left), and JULIE KEEFE (middle, right)



trade places for a moment and see how you like it. It just sickens me. . . . You can't even spare \$5? You have a living. Just having a conversation would make their day. And you don't even do that — you're too busy rushing off to work or to home. Your life isn't the only life around here. Maybe you should try doing something for other people.

**Q:** You feel very strongly about this.

**A:** Yeah, I'm just really sick of people not caring. . . .

**Q:** What do you think we were trying to do with (this project)?

**A:** I think what we were trying to do is just get everybody to try and learn about each other, be able to make the neighborhood and community more of a community, to fuse together and say, Hey — Hello. If it was me, I'd just come over to my house and have a barbecue and just talk to each other. Everybody's too busy rushing to work, rushing to school. . . . It's like, you know: Will you just stop for five minutes? . . .

**Micah Fletcher, 12**, student at Clark/Blinnmead School, as interviewed by Julie Keefe

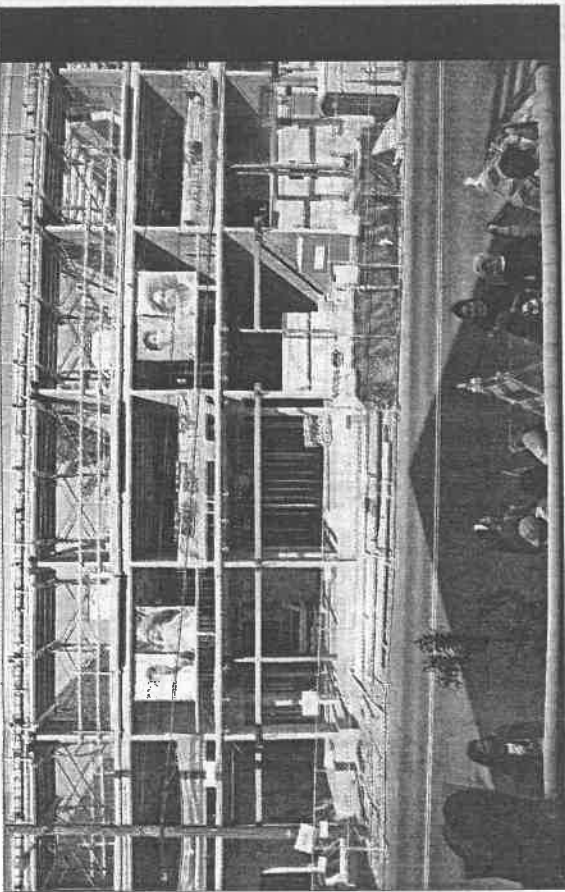
Inara Verzemnieks: 509-221-8201;  
inara@news.oregonian.com

Banners hang from the construction site of what will be the Mississippi Avenue Lofts. Asked what he learned from the project, Micah Fletcher, a Clark/Blinnmead School student, offered this: "You were learning about people in the community, but you were also learning about yourself in the process."

#### For more information

about the Hello Neighbor project, including maps of banner locations, go to [www.helloneighborproject.org](http://www.helloneighborproject.org)

ROSS WILLIAM HAMILTON/THE OREGONIAN



Continued from Page O1

schools in Portland and central Oregon, and Keefe is one of its teaching artists.

For some time now, Keefe had been thinking it would be interesting to have children document their neighborhoods. Particularly neighborhoods that had undergone a lot of change in recent years, lots of transition, whether through explosive growth, people looking for a place to live they can afford or long-time residents feeling priced out and pushed out. Was there a way to capture what these communities looked like, at this moment, through the eyes of their youngest residents?

And so, this year, with the help of fellow photographer and Caldera teacher Tyler Kohloff, Keefe decided to turn it into a project for the students at the schools Caldera serves, five in Portland, five in central Oregon.

The idea was simple: Middle school-aged teens would interview people in their community. They'd come up with all the questions. Then, after they were done, the students would take each person's picture and attach to it a quote, something that stood out to them from the conversation. Keefe would then interview the students and take their pictures. Finally, they'd hang all the photographs around the students' neighborhoods, as banners. A way of introducing the community to itself.

That was it, really. But, as everyone involved would soon discover, a simple question can trigger much more than you ever expected.

**Q:** What would you change about your community if you could change it?

**A:** If I could change it now? OK. . . . If I could go back, people that wanted to stay in the neighborhood could afford to stay in the neighborhood.

**Q:** How would you describe your community?

**A:** I could say part of the slogan that we have at my church: multicultural and multiracial. You wouldn't know at one time this neighborhood was predominantly black. It's a lot more mixed.

**Q:** What's your favorite hobby?

**A:** One of the things I enjoy most is working in my garden and working in my yard. My favorite slogan is, "Take the time to smell the roses." You've heard that expression before? My thing now is to take the time and arrange the roses.

**Q:** What inspires you?

**A:** I have a 6-year-old granddaughter and she inspires me a lot.

**Q:** What's the best part of you?

**A:** What's the best part of me? Oh. (Laughs) Let me see. What's the best part of me. I'm open, I'm honest. I'm friendly and I'm happy.

**Q: Were you a straight-A student? Should I follow your lead?**

**A:** Should you follow my lead? NO (laughs, doubling over). I wasn't a straight-A student. (Quiets) I think about it now and school was a little difficult for me because you know I came to school a long time ago, so there were a lot of things that had to happen before I was able to be in school all day, every day. Because the first two months of the school we always had to be out of school because we had to work to make sure we had the money for supplies. No, don't follow my lead. But I'd like to say to each and every one of you that something I never thought about when I was in school is that the teacher is there to teach you and it's your responsibility to ask questions. But we're afraid to ask questions. I think that's one of the things that happened to me. I didn't ask questions because . . . you don't want to feel like the kid who doesn't know what's going on.

**Q: Where did you go to high school?**

**A:** I'm a transplant. I was born and raised in Arkansas, and so I went to school down South.

**Q: What would you like your banner to say?**

**A:** Oh, I'd like it say that this is Gloria, somebody you can talk to, a friendly person. Somebody that's been around, that's here to help you.

**Q: Thank you.**

**A:** You're welcome.

**Gloria Harris**, a retired social worker and resident of the Bolse-Eliot neighborhood for 35 years, as interviewed by a group of students at SEI Academy. Photo in the window of Sunlan, 3901 N. Mississippi.

It was all new and unexpected territory, the places the interviews took them, Julie. The children. The members of the community.

**Q: What's the best birthday you remember?**

**A:** When I was 7, my great grandpa, he bought me a fishing pole for my birthday. It was my first fishing pole and the day after my birthday he took me fishing. Didn't catch anything, but it was fun.

**Q: Do you have any funny or favorite family traditions?**

**A:** On my brother's birthday every year, what we do, um, my grandma and my mom make these pudding pies, and then we go outside and have a pie fight. It's really fun except when you get pie stuck in your ear and in your hair...

**Q: So you're literally throwing pudding at each other?**

**A:** Uh-huh (smiles)

**Leanne Smith Lucero, 14**, Madras High School student, being interviewed by Julie Keefe. Banner had been hanging at Jefferson County Middle School, now above the hearth at Caldera's camp near Sisters.

Once you know these things about someone (the fishing pole and pie stories, the roses growing among memories of school days lost), even the familiar starts to look different. In North Portland, for example, a man many of the children

had seen out on his porch near Ockley Green School — they learned he had been born in that house, and it was while sitting on that very porch he had met the woman who was now his wife ("I married my best friend . . .").

Later, when Julie asked the children which interview they liked the most, again and again they mentioned this one, because it seemed to have recast the familiar in such a personal way, completely changed the way they read their surroundings. Now they carried a new map of their neighborhood in their heads. No longer was this just a house, one of dozens of houses they passed each day. It was *Mr. Washington's* house. And when they passed by now and saw him, they waved.

This went both ways.

For many of the adults, this was a rare opportunity to sit down and really talk to teenagers. As Gloria Harris said, later, "A lot of adults don't interact with adolescents — there's a fear there." And the adults were often happily startled by the things they were asked, for the insight this gave them into their questioners and themselves.

**Q: Who do you live with — and do you like them?**

**Q: Are your parents still together?**

**Q: Do you have any bad habits?**

**A:** Um. Oh my. Sometimes I don't mow the grass as often as I should . . .

It's funny, because as a society we tend to think of teenagers as the ones who are pulling away, going inside themselves, living in their heads, isolated.

And yet, in so many of the interviews — across communities — adults lamented that no one seems to know each other any more, no one takes the time to say hello, how grateful they were for the chance to talk like this.

Maybe we have it all mixed up. Maybe we're the ones who are lost, alone. The ones who desperately need some kind of map.

**OK. So here's an address:**  
1301 S.E. Stark St.

Go there, and look on the west side of the building.

Find the banner.

Now, cue this interview in your head:

**Q: What would be something somebody doesn't know about you that you wish they did?**

**A:** I want to save the poor people. I'm sick of seeing people just walk down the street and say, hey, look it's a hobo, and just walk away and even make fun of them. It's like, OK, let's

- Home
- about this blog
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## Portland Public Art

September 6, 2008

### Presented Without Comment 6

Posted by pdxart under Uncategorized



Blue dragon - Longfellow's Books

This painting is on the East exterior wall of Longfellow's Books on SE Division in Portland, Oregon.

#### Leave a Reply

Henrietta

Name

indenseofart@gmail.com Mail (will not be published)

Website

Submit Comment

# Concordia Mural Honors Community

opening  
bookstore  
Ainsworth

Concordia University has unveiled a community mural on the retail building at North 30th Street and Ainsworth Street to mark the grand opening of the new location of the Concordia University Bookstore, "The Bookstore," at that same location. The bookstore is operated by the Concordia University Bookstore Company.

The mural was created by Concordia University students under the direction of Larry Gross, art department and Greg Lewis, student adjunct faculty in the art department.

The mural was supported by community leader Marta Thrasher, who provided necessary funds to



A mural honors the ties between Concordia University and its neighborhood on the side of a retail building that now houses the Concordia University Bookstore at the intersection of Ainsworth Street and Northeast 30th Avenue.

PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

make the mural a reality, and the Regional Arts & Culture Council, which was involved through their public art group.

The mural, which took 18 months from conception to finality, was painted by six Concordia University students over 5 weekends. The mural was intended to communicate integrity and community and to accentuate Concordia University's expanding outreach into the north and northeast neighborhoods.

Concordia Executive Vice President Gary Withers said the location of the mural, where the campus meets the community, was a perfect fit.

"The mural is symbolic of Concordia University's relationship with the community and how powerful that relationship can be when the campus and the community come together to embrace their respective cultures and values," Withers said



## WORLD

# Blast walls frame not war but art

**Iraq** | Painters add some colorful life to Baghdad's gray, hulking concrete bomb barriers

By **JEFFREY FLEISHMAN**  
LA TIMES-WASHINGTON POST

BAGHDAD — They are the sullen architecture of the troop surge, gray armies shrinking the horizon.

Baghdad is a city of blast walls, towering mazelike from the Tigris to the battered, seething neighborhoods of Shula and Sadr City. Concrete sentinels of last year's troop buildup, they seal and sequester. They absorb explosions from car bombs, they bottle up bad guys.

The color of an angry sky, they aren't so pretty, but painters dispatched by Baghdad University's College of Fine Arts, commissioned by the government to decorate the walls, have in the past 20 months turned them into vast canvases for landscapes, portraits, abstracts, images from ancient Babylonia.

The wall on one street in Sadr City stretches nearly a mile. Motorcycle rickshaws zip past the paintings on each of its slabs: oases, mosques, women harvesting wheat, a hawk snatching a rabbit, all unraveling like scenes from an erratically edited film.

### "For the Iraqi people"

"We're painting these walls not for ourselves, but for the Iraqi people," said Asad Sagheer, an art teacher at the university who has infused walls with impressionism and historical realism. "We want to create a sense of beauty amid this violence. Every wall creates an internal feeling, the feeling of agony. So you have to create harmony over that agony with something you love."

Drive across the city and the



SAAD KHALAF/LOS ANGELES TIMES

**Wisam Rahdi, in his studio in the Karradah neighborhood, plans historical scenes to decorate Baghdad's blast walls.**

palette changes: sepia-toned kings of the past, the marshes of the south, the mountains of the north, the Tigris and Euphrates twisting between; and then, Caribbean-like colors rising from blowing garbage and dirt-bald lots: winged creatures, swans, peacocks, dolphins jumping.

The walls are quiet narratives looming over everyday life: Boys with plastic guns peek and play; girls rush to swing sets; black-draped women balance blocks of ice on their heads; and, just beyond, U.S. and Iraqi soldiers, with real guns, hunt insurgents and fuel their Humvees.

### "Only solution we have"

In his studio in the Karradah neighborhood, Wisam Rahdi, a sleepy-eyed man with a loquacious manner, talked about walls he's painted, but only after digressing into how he escaped Saddam Hussein's army by fleeing to Malta and speaking of the girl who was shot in the leg because she loved him. They were romantic tales, stories for another day; this is a time of concrete barriers and new armies.

"Painting them is the only so-

lution we have," he said. "The simple Iraqi, he has no other options. He accepts everything. We are like those imprisoned in a big cage. Whatever the jailer gives him, he accepts. So we must accept the walls, but by painting them, I'm trying to beautify a small part of something for those living among them."

The walls brought art and a new commerce to Sadr City. They have kept cars off certain roads, but the motorcycle rickshaws, carrying as many as six people, are permitted to drive along the walls between checkpoints.

### "The same hurt"

"They're trying to make them nice, but they're walls, blocking things," said Abu Baqr, sitting on his rickshaw. "We're worried they'll stay forever. If you paint them, it means they'll stay. It's better than looking at gray, but it means the same hurt."

"You could paint them with real gold," said another rickshaw driver, Ali Khudhuair, "but they're still a tight collar suffocating us."

### Bad for business

Down the street and along another wall, flies hummed around Zahra Abed's apples. She shooed them, but it did no good. Her fruit was rotting in her market stall. The walls were keeping shoppers out, and, as bad luck would have it, she has seven daughters, a dead husband and no sons to support her. She stood with her back to the wall, the market crowd thinning for the day, a few vendors left beneath the high sun.

"Business is down one-third because of the walls," she said. "A few days ago I threw away \$70 worth of fruit."

What is the color of Iraq? Sand and bone, muted browns. Dust. Sagheer, the teacher of fine arts, said Iraq is shaped by desert storms and 120-degree heat, and the painter must not go for too much color for fear of losing the nation's aesthetic. He said he is disturbed by what he sees painted on many blast walls.

"The proportion is wrong. The color palette is wrong. I consider this an insult," he said. "It's the work of lesser artists who are politically connected and given a wall to paint."

Every wall for him is a chance to leave a legacy. Sagheer's wall, near the French Cultural Center on the Tigris, runs along a military checkpoint and is painted with images from ancient Babylonia such as Nebuchadnezzar in his chariot. The colors are bled of vibrancy, as understated as parchment found in a chest buried in the sand.

"Images of Babylonia give us a feeling of our history and our patriotism," he said. "The French Cultural Center is a foreign institution on our land, so I wanted them to see my civilization. My desire is to reflect my country's heritage to foreigners and Iraqis. We need to show this is who we are."

## CN COMMUNITY NEWS



### Public mural takes shape at Tabor Commons

The community-owned Tabor Commons building and future home of Café au Play is being completely transformed by local mural artists John Early and Laura Bender. The colorful design covers three walls of the building and includes geometric elements and garden and bird motifs. They are transforming this former drug crime property into a community treasure! The Tabor Commons building is located in at 5633 SE Division Street, just east of the Dairy Queen.

Laura Bender and John Early--who live nearby in the Mt. Tabor Neighborhood-- developed the mural's collage-based, "contemporary urban folk art" design in cooperation with community members and Café au Play representatives.



A worker from the City Sign Co. Inc. peels away an old billboard ad in preparation for applying a new one along Southeast Stark Street near 146th Avenue. TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO: L.E. BASKOW

# Lettering on billboards too big

**A** solution to the billboard problem was proposed by a number of people back in 1998 (*Oops!*, Oct. 30).

According to the courts, any regulation of billboards has to apply equally to murals. Fine. Don't bother limiting the size of the billboards — limit the size of the lettering.

Whether it's a piece of art or an advertisement being painted, what if the size of the text could be no bigger than one square foot per letter?

Since lettering is what makes a billboard distracting to traffic, the problem is solved if the print's too small to read from the roadway. And if ad agencies choose to rent wall space just so they can paint colorful pictures, I'd have no complaint.

**S.W. Conser**  
*Southeast Portland*

## Government must serve residents' needs

When government directs people's behavior rather than accommodates their needs, we have unintended consequences (*Oops!*, Oct. 30).

For instance, we built Interstate 205 and consequently people use it. The economist Joe Cortright does not want to acknowledge its success.

The fact that traffic volumes on I-205 were met earlier than

expected is treated as a negative, even though government planners did not expect or envision the business expansion south of Portland all the way to Salem, resulting in a very positive economic effect.

Yes, the construction of I-205 is directly responsible for businesses locating, opening and hiring people in Oregon. I guess Cortright is more interested in manipulating behavior through economics rather than how simple things like building roads can stimulate economic expansion.

Since we no longer accommodate people's transportation needs and concentrate on directing their behavior away from cars, we do not add capacity.

We spend tax dollars on traffic circles, bike lanes, MAX, streetcars and speed bumps, yet traffic volume and freight traffic continues to increase despite government, individual and political special interest groups who want to control how we travel.

We avoid our responsibility to accommodate residents' needs and use their behavior against them, then we're surprised when these obstacles aren't effective.

How much have we spent on urban renewal, the MAX, streetcar and Westside Express Service?

The Columbia River Crossing is a bargain, and we will be able to measure the direct economic return through income tax revenue, gas tax revenue and PUC

fees when the project is complete.  
**Mark Gravengaard**  
*Northeast Portland*

## West side shouldn't detach downspouts

A story in the Portland Tribune discusses "the shortsightedness of Portland's storm-water disconnect policy" and blames Portland's Downspout Disconnection Program for West Hills landslides (*Oops!*, Oct. 30). We disagree.

In 1995, Portland began offering property owners incentives to disconnect downspouts from the sewer system and to redirect roof water to landscaped areas. It's a low-cost, effective method to help reduce combined sewer overflows to the Columbia Slough and Willamette River.

The city has disconnected more than 51,000 downspouts in 13 years through the Downspout Disconnection Program. Not a single one of them is on the west side of the Willamette River.

We actively market the Downspout Disconnection Program in inner east-side neighborhoods where downspout disconnection is a safe and effective method of storm-water management.

Because many neighborhoods west of the Willamette have slopes and soils that don't drain well, we have never promoted the program there.

Two years ago, Portland also

launched a storm-water discount program that allows property owners who manage storm water on-site to qualify for a storm-water management charge discount.

It's more difficult for West Hills properties to qualify for discounts because of problems with slopes and soils, and disconnecting downspouts usually isn't feasible in West Hills neighborhoods.

We encourage property owners with questions about on-site storm-water management that won't damage property to contact our storm-water discount program technical team at [www.clearriverrewards.com](http://www.clearriverrewards.com).

**Amber Clayton**  
Downspout Disconnection  
Program manager  
*Southwest Portland*

## More people results in more congestion

Freeways don't create congestion, density does. Peter Korn, you missed the most important factor in your Interstate 205 comment (*Oops!*, Oct. 30): how much the population in the metro area (including Washington) has grown.

Freeways don't create traffic. Population growth and density — and poor planning by Metro and Portland — does.

**Craig Flynn**  
*Northeast Portland*

# Overlook activists spark an art park

Forgotten' area to become a multiuse community space

JENNIFER ANDERSON  
Portland Tribune

Marci Macfarlane and Chris Radcliffe are used to people getting lost on the way to their house in North Portland's Overlook neighborhood. They live just west of Interstate Avenue on North Going Street, in a confusingly curvy book of homes along a highway and potholed road. The houses were demolished here in the 1970s to make way for a sound wall, which separates them from the industrial part of North Going Street leading to Swan Island. But between the sound wall and potholed road lies an unshaped stretch of grass, just under an acre, that's on the fast track to becoming the city's next park — a project the couple initiated themselves just a year ago. "It's pretty much been forgotten space," said Radcliffe, a visual artist who moved here last year from New Orleans. Before that, he lived in San Francisco, and was, he said, one of the people who helped start the famous Burning Man arts festival in Nevada's Black Rock Desert. For years, the little-known space has been used as overflow parking for neighbors, as well as open space for dog-walkers and schoolchildren by day and prostitutes and drug addicts by night. Macfarlane and Radcliffe took upon themselves to adopt the space, picking up garbage and try-

**"I like the idea of doing it on our own. It makes people much more interested."**  
— Marci Macfarlane, Overlook resident, on neighborhood involvement for a new park

ing to chase away the seedier elements by informally installing public works of art. Take, for example, the giant wicker sculpture of a woman's bodice, stuck in a large apple tree at the south end of the site and titled, "The lady at the end of the road." There's also a larger-than-life bird's nest made with leaves and branches; a sheet metal sculpture — soon to be replaced by a 16-foot metal Buddha sculpture; a giant iPod-inspired piece dangling from a tree branch; and a Mardi Gras tree, its branches laced with beaded necklaces and disco balls. The works have either been salvaged by Radcliffe and Macfarlane or donated by various artists. But the couple wants the space to be more than just an informal space for their funky installations. So they went to Metro late last year and applied for a North Portland rehabilitation and enhancement grant to turn the Pittman Addition, as it's called, into a public park. Their application was rejected. But Darcy Cronin, a facilities services specialist at the water bureau, heard about their effort, since she already had been looking into developing the space into a park.

"I was intrigued by it," said Cronin, whose master's thesis at Antioch University at Seattle was in "sustainable placemaking." "I came out and saw that people had definitely been there." So with Cronin's help and a \$20,000 city budget, the site is now on track to become Portland's next "hydro park," a piece of water bureau property in a park-deficient area that's developed into an inviting community space. The site includes a large underground water vault that serves Swan Island and the nearby Denver Tank. Under city Commissioner Randy Leonard, who oversees the water bureau, the city has created six hydro parks across town since 2006; this would be the first in North Portland. Cronin said it's a perfect site for a hydro park because the water bureau needs to retain that tank capacity, so the property will not be sold. The property also won't be developed into housing because it is zoned as open space — a designation that did not change when the city recently allowed 12-story buildings to be built along North Interstate Avenue and east to Interstate 5, which excludes this area.

In any case, neighbors are happy that the park will soon be a destination spot with a real sculpture garden, featuring a yearlong rotation of six or seven pieces by local artists. The hope is to put out a call to North Portland artists as well as involve the sculpture department at Portland State University. "I like the idea of doing it on our own," said Macfarlane, who's lived here since 1988. "It makes people much more interested." The park design isn't finalized yet — neighbors are set to meet



Overlook residents Chris Radcliffe and Marci Macfarlane initiated an effort to make a park out of a stretch of land in the neighborhood. They hope the new community space also will feature artwork such as this bronze sculpture by Dan Das Mann.

**NEIGHBORHOOD BEAT**  
**NORTH Overlook**

Dec. 18 to do just that. But after several public meetings and design workshops, it's slated to include amenities such as garbage cans, walking paths, tables and benches, native plantings, security patrols, water features of some sort and river rocks from the Bull Run watershed around the perimeter to keep vehicles off the property. Brian Borello, a local artist who's worked on similar grass-roots efforts around town for the City Repair Project, has helped facilitate the Pittman Addition public process. He's seen other projects after a few years but think one has staying power since not being forced on anyone generated by the neighborhood ground up. "What I've been trying to do is just create cool places, meaningful places in the neighborhood but using neighborhood resources," he said. "Using local talent, local ideas, trying to take a pride of place." The next planning meeting for the Pittman Addition Hydro Park is set for 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Overlook House, Melrose Ave.

jenniferanderson@portlandtribune.com



# Overlook activists spark an art park

*'Forgotten' area to become a multiuse community space*

By JENNIFER ANDERSON  
The Tribune

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TRIBUNE PHOTO: L.E. BASKOW

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**NEIGHBORHOOD BEAT**  
**NORTH Overlook**

Brian Borello, a local artist who's worked on similar grass-roots efforts around town for the City Repair Project, has helped facilitate the Pittman Addition public process.

He's seen other projects fail after a few years but thinks this one has staying power since it's not being forced on anyone, but generated by the neighbors from the ground up.

"What I've been trying to do is just create cool places, meaningful places in the neighborhoods, but using neighborhood resources," he said. "Using local talent, local ideas, trying to create a pride of place."

The next planning meeting for the Pittman Addition HydroPark is set for 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Dec. 18 at the Overlook House, 3839 N. Melrose Ave.

Jenniferanderson@portlandtribune.com

## INSIGHT

**MY VIEW** ● *A roster of east-side projects can restore Portland's creative cachet*

# City's art scene ripe for revitalization

By Sheridan Grippen

**M**ayor-elect Sam Adams' tenure as arts commissioner has seen the closing of seven art galleries. The avant-garde art community at Milepost 5 in Northeast Portland is facing increasingly sharp birthing pains, and most artists I know are taking second or third jobs to make a go of it.

Portland, the darling of the New York Times' food, travel and arts writers, has taken a hit and is losing its artistic cachet.

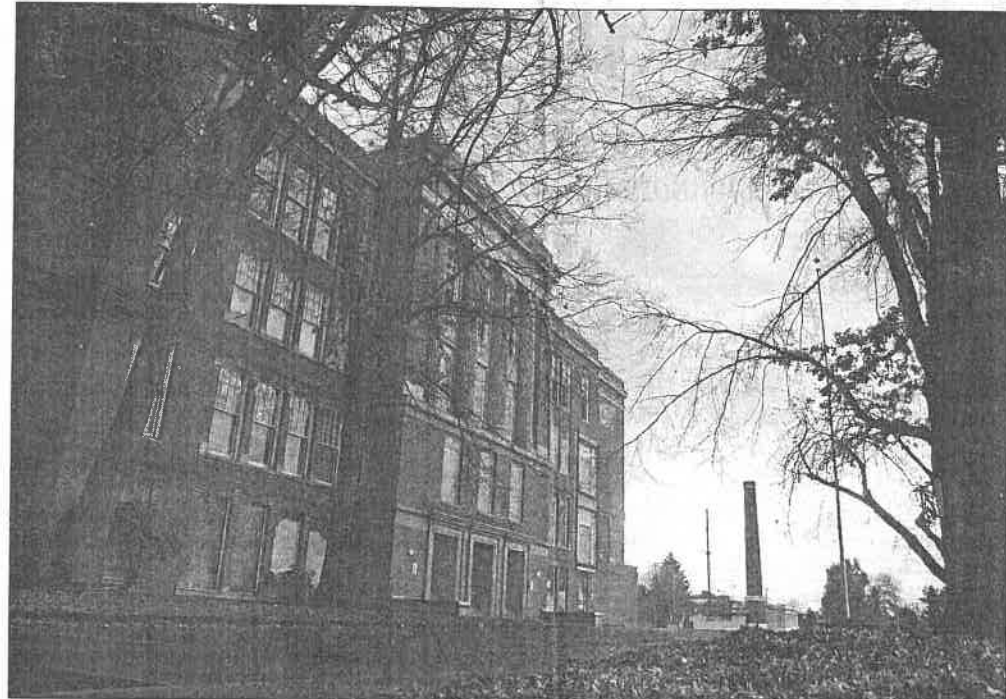
Adams says he wants to focus on economic development, public works and electric cars when he moves to the mayor's office next month. He declared this agenda as a "passion" in an Oregonian interview with Ryan Frank on Nov. 9, 2008. That is great and entirely appropriate for him as Portland's next mayor.

My passion as an artist is for the arts and our flagging regional art community. What we need is Rooseveltian in scope, well-funded and local in application.

The Civilian Conservation Corps, Works Progress Administration and the rest of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's alphabet agencies produced Timberline Lodge, beautifully elegant bridges and other lasting art projects across the country.

We need a local program that would link our students and parents to artists and artisans in their communities through collaborations, helping students to learn by doing art alongside older mentors.

For example, we are working on bringing students and par-



An activist artist has some inspiring ideas for the old Washington High School complex at Southeast 12th Avenue and Stark Street. TRIBUNE PHOTO: JONATHAN HOUSE

ents to studios such as East Burnside Street's Hipbone Studio, where students learn anatomy for artists and then paint and draw from a clothed model.

Jeff Burke, Hipbone's owner and an artist/model himself, has taught a class focusing on the anatomy of the head. A contingent of da Vinci Arts Middle School students and parents will repeat the exercise at Hipbone.

Another project we are working on is the traffic circle project.

Southeast Portland's Buckman Elementary students will collaborate with their teacher, Michael Simmons, and local artists to design a mural that will be mounted on the walls surrounding some of the traffic circles located near Buckman. District Traffic Engineer Peter Mason is working with us to smooth the way and help this

idea come to fruition.

The big idea is that students learn by doing art with artists. And the artists get paid for helping the students achieve their artistic vision.

Another project would be sited at the former Washington High School, an underutilized complex covering more than 6 acres near Southeast 12th Avenue and Stark Street.

We would like to promote a collaboration with Portland

While waiting for that day, Portland students could learn to do "green thumb" urban agricultural projects and neighbors could grow fruits and vegetables.

The other collaboration we envision is a sculpture park brought about by students, parents and artists working together at the site. Part of the site would also serve as a Saturday farmers and crafts market.

The former Washington High building itself would serve the greater community with a renovated space for theater, arts and craft shops, community meeting rooms, a local senior center and possibly even a headquarters for a Meals on Wheels program.

And our students can help create reusable, sustainable resources by collaborating with Portland Community College and the Portland school district in making small, wind-powered turbines and placing them on the roof of the school along with solar panels to help generate power for the building.

While not strictly an art program per se, this initiative would teach skills that students could use in the real world of green, sustainable energy that we are heading for with President-elect Barack Obama.

Let us invest in our students, our families and our artists. Let us identify fallow and underutilized resources and use them to enrich our lives and strengthen our neighborhoods.

We should be rethinking the "local," not abdicating the thinking process.

Carpe diem.

Sheridan Grippen is a painter and sculptor living in Southeast Portland.

# UPFRONT

## Mural morass inches toward regulation

By Fred Leeson  
SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

Artist Joe Cotter remembers the old days, when the biggest obstacle to painting an outdoor community mural was gaining permission of a building owner.

In the 1980s, murals sprouted in every Portland quadrant, covering blank building walls with colorful monuments to ethnic pride, neighborhood history, nature or sometimes just playful decoration.

"We wanted to do as many murals as possible," says Cotter, who has led many projects involving youths and volunteers. But the boom ended

when murals became caught in a legal crossfire between city government and the billboard industry.

Given Portland's restrictive sign regulations, the city's largest billboard company, Clear Channel Outdoor Inc., wondered why murals could proliferate but not billboards.

Now, well into a second decade of negotiation, litigation and code drafting, the city stands on the verge of a new era of mural activity. New regulations that try to distinguish

murals from signs are expected to be submitted to the City Council, possibly by summer.

After sign industry criticism,



Joe Cotter



Photos by FRED LEESON/SPECIAL TO THE OREGONIAN

Mural at the Community Cycling Center, 1700 N.E. Alberta St.

the city in 1991 tried to draw a distinction between signs and "painted wall decorations." To distinguish them from signs, the "decorations" — murals — could include no numbers, letters, logos or trademarks. Clear enough?

No. Clear Channel contended, and a Multnomah County judge agreed in 1998, that the Oregon Constitution's expansive free speech clause protects commercial speech every bit as much as non-commercial speech.

Translation: The city could

not look at the content of an image to determine whether it was a sign or a mural. So murals would have to follow the same rules as signs. The city quickly imposed a moratorium on murals.

But the game wasn't over. When the city and Clear Channel returned to court for a second round of litigation in 2007, Cotter intervened and asked the judge to consider the free speech rights of muralists. Based on Cotter's evidence, Judge Michael Marcus ruled that "wall paintings are traceable

to prehistory as a necessary and valuable avenue of human expression."

More important, the judge suggested that murals could be separated from billboards by their "distinct" traits, such as means of production, duration and absence of revenue generation.

Since then, the city has been working on regulations that would apply only to murals.

Key provisions: Murals would be hand-painted, be expected to last more than five years and be painted no higher than a building's second floor. A mural could generate no rent or revenue to the building owner.

Cotter, who has become more of a lawyer than he ever dreamed during the lengthy litigation, thinks the city is on the right track.

"I see a need for some of the regulations," he says, "but we'd like as few restrictions as possible."

Cotter is concerned about proposed rules that would define setbacks from wall edges and around windows and doors. Their purpose may be to protect architectural elements, but Cotter fears they would

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**UPFRONT**



This mural at North Interstate and Harding celebrates women's history. Text in the lower left corner (not shown) describes the significance of each woman.

restrict design possibilities.

"If you regulate for the worst-case scenario, that won't let you create the best possible art for a particular building," he says.

"It seems like there has to be a way to allow flexibility," says Lloyd Lindley, chairman of the Portland Design Commission, which will review the final scheme before it goes to the City Council. Lindley says some advisory group such as the design commission could rule on modifications if a muralist finds situations where the standard regulations would produce a less satisfactory result.

David Wark, another design commission member, likes the direction of the proposed rules.

"This is an important element to get in place for artistic expression and for ease of property owners." He also supports Lindley's idea for a speedy appeals system.

Since 2005, muralists have had the option of seeking approval from the Regional Arts and Culture Council, which maintains public art in the city.

Several murals have been completed since then, but the RACC's regulations require public ownership of the mural.



Artist Tom Cramer's mural at North Williams and Shaver was first painted in 1989, before the legal storm about murals, and then "restored" in 2003.

This includes an easement filed by the property owner in county property records.

"It's not a bad program," says Cotter, who has worked on some RACC-approved murals. "But

not everybody will go through the RACC procedures. It's not the same as just painting your wall."

Meanwhile, Clear Channel and the city are still fighting about an appeal of Judge

Marcus' decision. Cotter says the fight is mostly about billboards, not murals. He hopes he is done dressing up in suits and submitting court briefs. "It's excruciating," he says. ■

## West Hayden Island Annexation Process to Begin



The City of Portland and the Port of Portland will begin the West Hayden Island annexation process with the first Community Working Group meeting. Mayor Sam Adams and Port of Portland Executive Director Bill Wyatt will convene the group to look at annexing and creating a long term land use plan for West Hayden Island. The Community Working Group will meet monthly. All meetings are open to the public and will permit public comment.

**Monday, February 23, 2009 • 5:30 - 7:30 p.m.**

**Portland City Hall, Rose Room  
1221 SW 4th Ave. • Portland, OR**

**CONTACT: Alice Ann Wetzal, City of Portland, 503.823.9711**

Don't forget to join us for a town hall with Executive Director Bill Wyatt on February 26th from 7-8:30 p.m. at the former Hayden Island Yacht Club. For more information, visit [www.portofportland.com](http://www.portofportland.com).



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