

“Digging deep,
Shining a light”

INSIDE



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My time
of trial



Roman Shvarts in a photo posted on the Food Front website.

Though members want to sell ... Co-op leader beliebes in resurrection

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

The spirit of Food Front Cooperative Grocery endures a year after the store ran out of money and closed its doors.

Because the co-op holds title to the building and parking lot at 2375 NW Thurman St., loyal owner-members and directors of the corporation hope to parlay their asset into some future role for the organization—perhaps even reincarnation as a grocer.

Despite indications that an overwhelming share of co-op members want to sell out to a Market of Choice, the dream does not die easily. Spurning a straightforward offer from the Oregon-based family owned grocer that could have wiped

out the co-op's looming debt and provided the neighborhood with a quality food store, the co-op board is chasing an amorphous deal with Skylab Architecture Principal Jeff Kovel and local restaurant creator Kurt Huffman.

The board is postponing its decision in order to accommodate the timing of Kovel, who has downsized his vision since he and Market of Choice owner Rick Wright presented competing plans to Food Front members last November. No deadline for that proposal has been established, and promises of a finished document have fallen through.

However long it takes, Food Front President Roman Shvarts waits

Cont'd on page 6

Parking meetings to resume

Explanations for six-month break cover the map

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

Was the city's six-month shutdown of its parking advisory committee in the Northwest District a tempest in a teapot or an alarming breach in City Hall's duty to citizens?

As meetings of the Northwest Parking Stakeholders Advisory Committee resume this month, there is no consensus on what happened or why. In fact, the Portland Bureau of Transportation's reasons for shelving the committee were a contradiction from the start. Was the shutdown

called because citizens were quarrelsome and hard to manage or because the bureau was short of funds to provide staffing?

The PBOT letter announcing the suspension last October cited both reasons, while simultaneously suspending two other parking advisory bodies having no behavioral issues. Was it just about the money?

That's what a representative of Mingus Mapps, commissioner of PBOT, told the Northwest District Association last month. NWDA has four seats on the SAC, which

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City Commissioner Mingus Mapps had nothing to add after months of silence.

Two locals in state and county races



Vadim Mozyrsky for
Multnomah County
District 1 – page 10



Peter Grabiell for
State House
District 33 – page 13

LIGHT-FILLED LIVING IN PRIME NW FLATS LOCATION



2436 NW Savier Street

Located in one of the most coveted parts of the Northwest District, this 1906 City House has Victorian influences combined with modern systematic updates. Updates include newer roof, gas furnace, and deck off kitchen. Three bedrooms and a full bath on the 2nd floor with a main floor bedroom and full bath lends options for versatile living. An unfinished basement with exterior access offers potential galore!

A long driveway allows parking of up to three to four cars so one may leave the car and take advantage of the stellar location, less than 2 blocks to both NW 23rd Avenue, Thurman's boutiques, cafes, and bakeries, and 2 blocks to the newly revitalized Slabtown neighborhood. Wallace Park is a half a block away.

4 bedrooms / 2 full baths
3,202 Total SF / (Approx.)
5,000 SF Lot (Approx.)
RMLS #24395576
\$795,000

VICTORIAN CONDO IN THE HISTORIC ALPHABET DISTRICT



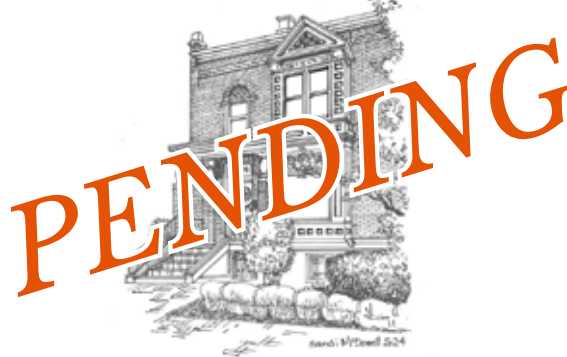
225 NW 18th Avenue

San Francisco style right here in our own big little city of Portland, OR. This condo is an elegant restoration of a grand 1884 Victorian Townhouse. Hear the bells of St. Mary's, children's laughter at the school across the street and birdsong in your front garden. The historic Porter E. Brigham house was converted to 4 condos in 1978 resulting in a seamless blend of yesteryear with modern conveniences. Special architectural features include bay windows, 11' ceilings on main level, 2 fireplaces, 4 sets of pocket doors, plaster ceiling medallions and vintage hardware. The kitchen and baths were masterfully re-done in 2021 incorporating travertine and quartz, wood floors, cherry cabinets and Restoration light fixtures.

Conveniently located between the artsy Pearl District, Nob Hill shopping and City center, enjoy a 99 walk score. Includes 1 year lease for garage parking next door.

3 bedrooms / 2 & 1/2 baths / 2 decks
2,503 Total SF (Approx.) + 532 SF (Approx.)
unfinished attic storage
RMLS #2445584
\$712,000

URBAN OASIS IN THE HISTORIC CAMPBELL CONDOMINIUMS



1719 NW Irving Street

The spark that ignited the Preservation Movement resulting in the Historic Alphabet District. Stepping inside 1719 is a sensory experience, full of architectural delights. The dining room has an original fireplace with original Egyptian Revival faceplate. Old growth wood floors lead to the kitchen, which has been masterfully updated in keeping with the character if a century old home. The primary bedroom is an inviting space to unwind after a long day.

The lower level offers a spacious bonus/family room, full bath and small non-conforming bedroom, and separate outside entry making it ideal for guest quarters. The common courtyard—exclusively enjoyed by the six residences of the Campbell Condominiums—is a secret oasis in the city, complete with planting beds, a dining area set beneath a pergola, and gas fire pit.

Conveniently located between NW 23rd Ave and the vibrant Pearl District, living here you could walk to a new cafe or restaurant every day for a month and not visit the same business twice.

3+ bedrooms / 2 & 1/2 baths
3,317 Finished SF (Approx.)
RMLS #24006525
\$975,000

COASTAL COTTAGE MEETS MODERN ARTS & CRAFTS



2814 NW Raleigh Street

Designed by architect Don Merkt and built by Green Gables Design.

Open floor plan with lots of natural light. Abundant clear vertical grain fir woodwork throughout the home. This home has artisan touches with hand forged iron hardware by blacksmith Berkeley Tack.

The living room opens out to a level patio for container gardening and entertaining. 3 blocks to Forest Park and NW 23rd Avenue. This is truly a one-of-a-kind home.

3 bedrooms / 2 full baths / 1,947 SF (Approx.)
5,000 SF Lot (Approx.) / RMLS #24258928
\$795,000

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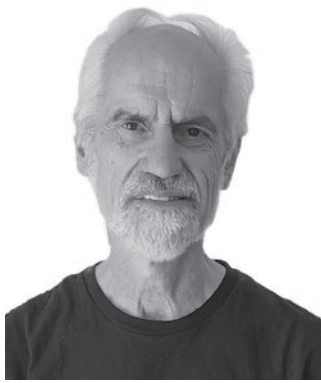
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Democracy’s dark passenger

It has been said that Americans default to democracy. Even in small groups, they see “majority wins” as the core of fair decision-making. “Fair” and “democratic” are virtually synonymous, used in tandem more for emphasis than further clarification.

The concept prevails across the political spectrum. The internal governance rules of the American Communist Party and the Ku Klux Klan could have been exchanged without disrupting either group.

I have seen this democratic instinct while covering scores of neighborhood associations and other grass-roots groups. Individuals have sometimes overridden the will of the majority, but it is not something they boasted about.

There is, however, an equally strong instinct at work, and it flows in the opposite direction—the desire for the approval of peers; cliquishness, if you will. Once individuals are accepted into a leadership cadre, they are loath to reveal its secrets or undermine its leader. Doing so would risk expulsion from the honored circle and loss of social standing. Their duty of loyalty is applied as loyalty to their peers.

In the worst cases, this cohesiveness might be likened to the “honor among thieves,” compelling all participants to keep silent lest their own part in a dishonorable scheme be revealed.

The antidote to this vicious cycle is something I understood as an adolescent, though never committed it to words. It is the willingness to go against the crowd, to say no to something one considers deeply wrong.

Like many teenagers, I coveted the approval of peers. I did not want to stand out by wearing the wrong clothes,



using the wrong words or appearing awkward before the trendsetters. Yet even then, the people I most admired were those bold enough to be themselves without shame or apology.

I knew this as a youth but still have to battle the instinct. That resistance has led to greater comradeship and friendships than could be imagined by pursuing the in crowd.

The benefits of standing tall are not merely personal. The engaged and independent-minded citizen is rarer and more precious to our nation and communities than leadership. They see approaching dangers or call us to higher principles when others demure.

Call them the loyal opposition, but their

loyalty is not to their peers, allies, party or any individual. It is to the higher mission of the body or society to which they belong. Americans take an oath to the Constitution, not the president.

Lately I’ve been thinking about board members of the Food Front Cooperative Grocery, who pledged to uphold seven high-minded, worthy principles. Yet these directors would not speak out when things were going wrong, when the interests of the membership were subjugated to the will and authority of their leaders. The names changed over the decades, but the pattern endured.

What gives the dissenter, the whistleblower or the leaker of confidential information the right to assert one’s

own conscience or beliefs? They do not have such a right. They can be punished for the laws and norms they break, deserving leniency perhaps but not immunity. Their legitimacy is in this vulnerability. Who is more trustworthy than someone with nothing to gain but everything to lose?

One can at once be both morally right and ethically wrong. Right on the level of their higher purpose but wrong in the sense of abrogating the just rules of society.

We seek a leader who will save us from our current calamity. We should be searching as Diogenes of old for one honest man. ■

Readers Reply

Letters can be sent to: allan@nwexaminer.com or 1209 NW Sixth Ave., #303 Portland, OR 97204. Letters should be 300 words or fewer; include a name and a street of residence. Deadline: third Saturday of the month.

Penkin slighted

I worked closely with Stan Penkin as Pearl District Neighborhood Association secretary for years until I moved in 2022. Although your recounting of the Fremont Place discussion aligns with my recollection of the meeting, I’m disappointed that the article cherry picks events to paint an unfair picture of what Penkin stands for and has accomplished as PDNA president. Penkin and I may have disagreed on issues, but the reason I continued as a volunteer was because I knew he wanted our neighborhood and city to thrive.

As your article noted, Penkin is not afraid of tough conversations, and he’s not afraid of hard work or of bringing people together. He has always been open to opposing opinions to help build consensus for the benefit of all residents. Also, I’m disappointed to see the “more youthful image” caption that essentially mocks his age. Of all the “-isms” that are inappropriate and should be relegated to the past, ageism appears to be the one you are still comfortable embracing. That caption is shallow and serves no purpose in a discussion about a candidate’s abilities to serve. I hope that voters considering Penkin’s

commitment to Portland will look at the full range of his accomplishments and not just those the editor chose to feature. Bill Bagnall Wilsonville

Settlement on up and up

Thank you for devoting so many column inches to Stan Penkin’s candidacy for City Council. I must, though, disagree with your characterization of his work on the Fremont Place Apartments dispute. The Pearl District Neighborhood Association challenged this project because it was too big and too close

to the river, choking pedestrian traffic along the greenway walk. Both the chair of the Design Commission and city commissioners themselves agreed (based on their first vote to reject the project). While the project did not change, the commissioners emphatically did when it came up for a second vote. So the neighborhood had a choice—to undertake a very speculative appeal or settle. I took part in the meeting with lawyers and the developer in which we hammered out a proposed settlement. The developer reimbursed the neighborhood for the legal fees it incurred to fight the project and also agreed to

Cont’d on page 5



Gary F. Lee



Gary F. Lee, commonly referred to as the mayor of Chinatown, died Nov. 22 at age 94. Lee was born on Oct. 19, 1929, and grew up in Chinatown and graduated from Benson High School in 1948. He served in the Army during the Korean War. He worked for the US Postal Service for 37 years before retiring in 1990. He co-found-

ed the Chinese Old Timers of Portland, a social group that held luncheons. He is survived by his wife, Lily; son, Doug; daughter, Marci; and five grandchildren. A celebration of life will be held on Sunday, April 21, 1-4 p.m., at Golden Horse Restaurant in Chinatown.

R. David Nackerud



R. David Nackerud, a former resident of Arlington Heights, died Oct. 26 from complications of Parkinson's disease at age 87. He was born on Sept. 12, 1936, in Walnut Grove, Minn. After serving in the Army for three years, he graduated from the University of Minnesota with a teaching degree. He was a teacher

and assistant principal for 15 years. He worked in the computer software industry while living in New York City. He married Susan Marthens in 1985, and they lived in Massachusetts and Washington, D.C., before moving to Portland in 1996. He is survived by his wife, Susan; daughters, Gayle Prest, Judy Wagner and Lisa Ryan; brothers, Bruce and Jay; sisters, Mariann Averill and Diane Crick; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren. A gathering will be held Sunday, April 14. For details, contact rdnevent@yahoo.com.

John M. Thompson



John Melton Thompson, who worked most of his career at Irving Street Pharmacy and lived a block away, died on Feb. 8 at age 93. He was born on Sept. 13, 1930, in Columbia, S.C., and received a bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina in 1951. After service in the Navy, he received a degree in pharmacy from the Univer-

sity of Washington in 1961. He continued working at the Safeway Pharmacy in Lloyd Center until he was 88. He is survived by his sister, Sandra Fontanella.

Carolyn Sheldon



Carolyn Sheldon, an educator, civic activist and longtime Northwest District resident, died March 9 at age 87. Carolyn Bengtson was born on Aug. 12, 1936, in Manchester, Conn. She graduated from Manchester High School and attended Tufts University and Old Dominion University. She married George "Bing" Sheldon Jr. in

1957, and they lived in Copenhagen for three years before moving to Portland in the 1960s. They lived on Northwest 24th Avenue and for many years on Northwest Quimby Street. She worked as a teacher, school counselor and administrator with Portland Public Schools. She served on the boards of Morrison Center, Children First, the Governor's Task Force on Early Childhood Education, Juvenile Corrections and Alternatives and Special Youth Services, and was president of the American School Counselors Association. She also chaired the board of the Northwest Children's Theater. She is survived by her sons, Jonathan and Graham; daughter, Lory; sister, Barbara Heinz; and five grandchildren. Her husband, Bing, died in 2016. A celebration of life will be held in May.

James Linman Jr.



James Linman Jr., who taught mathematics at Lincoln High School for 26 years, died on Dec. 18 from ALS at age 70. He was born on March 30, 1953, in San Antonio. His family moved to Rochester, Minn., where he graduated from high school in 1971. He graduated from the University of Washington and taught in Walla

Walla, Wash., before moving to Portland. At Lincoln, he headed the math department, was assistant athletic director and coached the math team. He was active in the Portland Rose Society for more than 40 years and was awarded its Lifetime Achievement Award in 2019. He volunteered for the American Red Cross. He married Irene in 1985. He is survived by his wife, Irene; daughters, Julie and Frances; and siblings John, Jean and Jeff.

Frederick Alan Blank



Frederick Blank, a member of the Congregation Beth Israel board, died on March 8 at age 73. He was born on Nov. 1, 1950, in Portland, where he spent his entire life. He attended Bridlemile Elementary School, Wilson High School and the University of Oregon, graduating with a bachelor's degree in 1972. He worked with his

father at Blank's Home Furnishing before a long career in wealth management at Morgan Stanley. He was a member at the Multnomah Athletic Club, Portland Golf Club and Astoria Golf Club. He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Bettina Blank; daughter, Lisa Wynn; son, Alexander; brothers, Bruce and Owen; and three grandchildren.

Patricia P. Peterson



Patricia P. Peterson, a member of Trinity Episcopal Church, died on March 10 at age 97. She was born in Portland on Jan. 11, 1927, and attended schools in Portland. She graduated from the University of Washington. She married Ron in 1952, and they formed a real estate company, Security Investment. In 2006, they

created the Peterson Fund at Providence Hospital. She is survived by her son, James; daughter, Nancy Diane; two grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. She was predeceased by her husband, Ron.

Mitsue Takasumi

Mitsue Takasumi, who grew up in Portland's Chinatown, died on March 13 at age 100. She was born on Feb. 17, 1924, in Portland and attended Girls Poly High School. In 1942, she was sent to the Minidoka Internment Camp in Hunt, Idaho, where she graduated from high school in 1943. After World War II, she returned to Portland, where she married Masao "Mas" Takasumi. They moved to Hood River, where they raised their family on an orchard. She also worked at Jantzen Sportswear. She was involved with the Asbury United Methodist Church and Ladies Auxiliary of VFW. She is survived by sons, Dennis and Bob; daughter, Myra; nine grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

Jerry E. Hudson

Jerry E. Hudson, the former president of Willamette University and a resident of Southwest Market Street Drive for about 15 years, died on March 9 at age 86. Hudson was born on March 3, 1938, in Chattanooga, Tenn., and raised in Baltimore. He received a bachelor's degree from David Lipscomb University and a master's degree and doctorate in American history at Tulane University. He was president of Hamline University in St. Paul, Minn., before heading Willamette University from 1980-1997. He served as executive vice president of the Collins Foundation from 1997-2008 and was later interim president of Marylhurst University. He later chaired the Oregon Historical Society. He married Myra Ann Jared in 1957. He is survived by his wife, Ann; and daughters, Judith Matarazzo, Laura Velgersdyk, Janet Crothers and Angela Doran; 11 grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

Death notices

PETER C. ADAMS, 81, employee of ESCO 1974-2011.

OWEN BENTLEY JR., 96, 1945 graduate of Lincoln High School.

LORRAINE HELLER, 92, attended Lincoln High School.

VIRGINIA (POLK) FINCH, senior warden of Trinity Episcopal Church.

WILLIAM POSEY, 91, member of Multnomah Athletic Club.

MAHLON "AL" TELLIN, 89, 1952 graduate of Lincoln High School.

RENA TONKIN, 97, member of Temple Beth Israel.

BEVERLEY WINN, 66, member of the Multnomah Athletic Club.

BESSIE (POLK) WILLIAMS, 90, longtime worker at Lincoln High School.

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widen the greenway walk to more than twice its original proposal, after which the neighborhood would drop its objection.

There was no bribe, the neighborhood did not profit, and nothing was unethical. As a retired attorney who handled hundreds of lawsuits throughout my career, this is the way most suits end. The proposed settlement was presented to the neighborhood board, which approved it by a margin of almost 2 to 1. End of story.

And by the way—the next time you stroll down the greenway walk, you can thank Penkin for being responsible enough to have created a sufficiently wide walkway for you to avoid getting hit by a bicycle.

Larry Mazer
NW Naito Parkway

Penkin for City Council

I heartily endorse Stan Penkin for City Council District 4. Stan is a leader and person of action. As chair of Pearl District Neighborhood Association, his leadership role for HomeShare and as a founding board member of the Northwest Community Conservancy, Penkin has always focused on what’s important for Portland: livability, growing successful businesses and having a strong education and arts culture.

His creativity, drive and results-oriented approach is helping tackle many of Portland’s challenges, including reducing homelessness, cutting drug use and cleaning up our city. He is helping make Portland a better place to live. Join me in supporting Penkin for City Council.

Ken Thrasher
NW Lovejoy St.

13th Avenue confusing

The carving up of Northwest 13th Avenue for an extended “plaza” is described inconsistently by different sources promoting the First Thursday Street Gallery.

Portland Living on the Cheap: “The event takes place at NW 13th Avenue between NW Hoyt and NW Kearney streets.”

Urban Art Network (a sponsor): “The First Thursday Street Gallery is from April to October, on the first Thursday of each month. City blocks are closed off in Northwest Portland on 13th street between Irving and Lovejoy.”

No matter how you read it, having a business that needs to accept deliveries can be difficult. Depending upon whom you believe, it sounds safe to say that the entire length of 13th north of Everett could be out of commission for art and food.

In fact, the street is fully or partially closed between Everett and Irving streets.

I get the impression that, with the Portland Bureau of Transportation increasingly reimagining streets to take advantage of federal grants, businesses and the public have taken a backseat to the false narrative that creating more entertainment venues is more important.

Mike Taylor
NW Northrup St.

Pedestrian zones can work

As an architect with a deep interest in the thoughts of urbanist Jane Jacobs, I have quietly advocated for pedestrianization of various streets in our central city. So when the COVID pandemic led to the closure of Northwest 13th Avenue to cars, I was hopeful that the city would develop a well-conceived plan to make it a pleasant pedestrian environment rather than a hodge podge of temporary street closure signs and barriers, as well as permanent Home Depot-inspired dining structures that gobble up the right of way.

I just spent February in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, a gorgeous historic city with a population somewhat greater than Portland. The city has a nine-square-block pedestrian zone centered on its cathedral and central plaza. Radiating out are many secondary pedestrian streets. All of the pedestrian ways are lively with people of all ages well into the evening. Businesses benefit from the foot traffic.

I now am in Puebla, Mexico, another gorgeous historic city with a population more than double Portland’s. Since my last visit five years ago, the city has extended a couple of pedestrian streets, and I now see an incredibly more vital and pleasant environment. Locals tell me that the pedestrianization has been controversial. Operators of taxis and hotels, for example, were opposed.

In German and Italian cities with pedestrian areas, deliveries to shops and restaurants take place in the morning before businesses open. Taxis are allowed at very slow speeds. Restaurants and bars are required to close their outdoor areas at 10 p.m. to avoid disturbing residents.

Accommodations can be made to make pedestrianization work for all, creating areas that are safer for walkers, free of revving engines and less tainted by engine exhaust.

Dennis Harper
NW 18th Ave.

Credit not cash

Gov. Tina Kotek’s 30-day emergency suspension of bottle redemption services at Safeway and Plaid Pantry in downtown Portland may have some effect on the on-street drug problem. But it reveals other problems.

Oregon’s famous Bottle Bill has reduced litter and conserved resources, but its application now has unintended consequences. Returning bottles and cans should net only a paper receipt with a barcode of the refunded amount. That receipt could be scanned at checkout, reducing the cost of groceries purchased.

Redeemers of bottles and cans might need cash for living expenses, but money saved by lowering food bills can be applied to other things. A credit refund system would eliminate immediate cash payments, as happens with the current BottleDrop system.

Often, cases of bottled water are purchased, their contents immediately dumped out and wasted, so empty bottles can be returned for cash, circumventing the purpose of the Oregon Trail Card. A cashless system would eliminate water dumping.

There will be costs to transition to such a system, but grocery stores already have handheld devices to print labels with a barcode, and checkout stands have barcode readers.

Ironically, House Bill 1036, the Bottle Bill, was adopted in 1971 with the support of one grocer: John Piacentini, founding owner of Plaid Pantry stores.


Bob Wright
SW 11th Ave.

PBOT workers impress


I read with interest the story on the Plaza Program in the Pearl [“13th Avenue closures send mixed messages,” March]. As a neighbor along Northwest 13th Avenue, I can attest that there are numerous problems associated with late-night patrons along that corridor.

What particularly impressed me, however, were the comments from Sarah Figliozi and Megan Doherty from the Portland Bureau of Transportation. They are examples of how representatives of local government should operate. When something is not working, evaluate it and try to fix it. Kudos to them for trying to do exactly that.

John Hershey
NW Irving St.







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came in high in my opinion given current market positions, we will never know for sure what the price is until we field bonafide offers. To date, we have soft ideas of concepts with prices. When I mentioned that one board member lost their mind.

This is why co-ops fail. All puffed up visionary wants and no ability to pay. No real business awareness. The intersection of communal fantasy and its just business.

Tom and I resigned last week. First Tom, he had enough of the round robin commentary going nowhere, ignoring the membership survey overwhelmingly supporting the MOC choice. I made one more board meeting last Tuesday and resigned Wednesday after a contentious session.

I volunteered a lot of time getting Food Front to a space where it's stabilized. The rest is up to members and the new board.

Michael W. Grivas



Mike Grivas chaired the Food Front board for most of the year, then resigned unexpectedly last month. This email (left) from Grivas was sent to former board member Tory Orzech March 20.

“The board never intended December’s survey to represent an official vote or basis for any specific course of action.”
— Roman Shvarts, Food Front President

“Food Front” cont'd from page 1

optimistically while ignoring Market of Choice. Shvarts told co-op members in March that he has had no further contact with Wright since November and has no assurance that his offer still stands.

Meanwhile, he is in regular contact with Kovel, whose proposal floats somewhere between a concept and set of goals. At the March meeting, Kovel described a European-style produce market with 10-foot-wide open stalls, as well as small shops that could be rented to vendors of ready-to-eat foods, wine, pastry, flowers, meat, seafood, coffee, etc.

Kovel, a resident of Willamette Heights, knows Food Front’s history and culture.

He opened his presentation with a recitation of the co-op’s founding tenets and posed the question: “How can we revitalize the mission of Food Front?”

The vision for the site involves a total of about 18 stalls and enclosed retail spaces, of which two have committed tenants and two have potential operators. Open space that could be used for live music, gatherings or dining is also part of the concept.

Huffman, the founder and CEO of ChefStable, has opened or partnered in more than 60 restaurants. He is curating the ready-to-eat food part of the scheme, which is to include at least two businesses he owns:

Olympia Provisions, a Huffman restaurant on Southeast Division Street describing itself as a “destination for refined European-style dishes.”

Dos Hermanos, a Mexican bakery on Southeast Stark Street, of which Huffman is the primary investor.

A wine bar by Huffman’s ChefStable is listed as a possibility.

Fresh produce, the primary thrust of the open market, is a blank spot in the lineup, though Food Front is penciled in as the possible vendor or at least a connector to a possible green grocer.

Accommodating a sufficient array of businesses would involve expanding the existing Food Front building over all or part of the parking lot.

The Skylab proposal would keep Food Front alive, at least on paper, as a part-owner in the redevelopment. Shvarts said Kovel is willing to retire Food Front’s

debt of about \$1 million and assign \$2.3 million as credit for transferring the real estate to the new venture. This minority ownership stake would give Food Front “a seat at the table” to see that the market runs “as we would like,” Shvarts said.

In such an arrangement, the co-op would be entitled to a share of profits while being responsible for potential losses.

Shvarts believes this is a much better deal than selling to Market of Choice.

“They’re offering hundreds of thousands more than Market of Choice,” he said.

Shvarts characterized Wright’s offer of \$1.9 million as forcing the co-op to “take a haircut,” receiving less than the informal \$2.3 million-\$2.7 million appraisal the board commissioned last year.

Outsider rises

A year ago, Shvarts was on the outside. Born in Russia, he immigrated to Portland as a child and studied business at the University of Oregon. After Food Front closed last year, he launched a site on Discord, an instant messaging program, to rally

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One of several images of European markets in a PowerPoint presented to Food Front members by Skylab Architecture Principal Jeff Kovel (left).

beleaguered members and employees of the co-op who did not trust the board of directors.

He was appointed to fill a vacancy on the board last summer and became president when former President Mike Grivas and two others resigned in March. Shvarts kicked off the March Food Front meeting by announcing the three resignations with no explanation beyond “the people who resigned felt it was the right time to do it.”

Shvarts is now the senior member of a board of four, the others all appointed in November.

Deadline looms

Shvarts and his band of rookies must balance the surety of prompt action against holding out for a more fickle suitor. There is a risk in keeping the door open for Kovel too long.

Food Front remains solvent only because it obtained a hard money loan backed by the value of its real estate. The \$1 million loan involves monthly payments on interest until mid-2025, when the remaining balance must be retired. Failure to satisfy the terms would strip

Food Front of its only asset.

“The closer they get to that deadline, the less negotiating leverage they have,” said Ed Carpenter, a longtime member and owner of commercial property directly west of the co-op. “Buyers know that, and they can name their price.”

“I don’t disagree with that,” Grivas said.

Although Grivas appreciates Kovel’s need to hone his multifaceted proposal, he has grown impatient with the delay.

“It’s taking too damn long,” he said. “I would never have recommended going so long.”

The delay works in Kovel’s favor. As months pass, Food Front’s predicament compounds. Should he pull out or for any reason or be unable to put together a group of investors, the co-op would have to find an alternative under fire-sale conditions.

In February, Shvarts announced publicly that “we’re not under any duress and we’re not worried” about completing a deal in time. He told members in mid-March that “we have about a year to decide.”

Continued on page 8

Members react on chat

While the Food Front board of directors has refused to release data or commentary from a membership survey taken in December, participants in the March membership meeting offered an array of opinions on the chat section.

Below are comments posted by non-board members on the Market of Choice vs. redevelopment:

Phil Selinger

“I’m more interested in outcomes rather than whether Food Front remains a distinct player. Maybe Food Front needs to get out of the way, since we have very little to no expertise at this point.”

Vimala

“Food Front should just sell outright to Market of Choice and shouldn’t be trying to be involved as an investor in the name of the co-op.”

Hilda Welch

“This proposal seems to be geared toward those of upper middle income. What happens to our initial vision of good food for all?”

Tim Miller

“It seems to me that Jeff Kovel’s concept has indeed built in quite a bit of soul and opportunities for small vendors, community space, etc.”

Clark Hays

“We agree as well. It could be a very positive outcome for the community.”

Sally Cross

“It is at least consistent with Food Front’s original intention to address access to quality food.”

Steve Pinger

“We are being asked to commit to a

development team to allow them to further explore a speculative idea with no framework commitment from them of budget, schedule or performance. The details need to have been figured out!”

Sharon

“We could become more like a foundation and continue to support and donate to good causes if this is successful. We would also continue to have a say in the direction of the project.”

Katharine Cahn

“I love the creativity of this and the cooperative community value base that we could be involved however we wanted, but would be free of the debt. Much more imaginative and flexible than just one market with one owner.”

Toren Orzeck

“Losing the parking is a giant mistake.”

Susan Stone

“If we don’t want a condo on the property, don’t we need to ask ourselves who is more likely to succeed? Market of Choice, which made a solid 10-year commitment and offered money for the property, or Skylab, which is floating lofty but not-yet-defined plans that revolve around a Food Front that continues to have problems even getting a slate of board members?”



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Make A Difference in Your Neighborhood

Serve on the Board of the Northwest District Association

2024 Annual Meeting and Elections

6:00pm Monday May 20th, 2024

Candidates must be members of the Northwest District Association (NWDA):

<https://www.northwestdistrictassociation.org/>

Membership is open to all residents, property owners, and representatives of businesses or organizations in the district, and is free. To join: <https://airtable.com/shroPHr8EleFFeM4T>

To vote at the annual meeting, you must be registered as a member of the NWDA by completion of online balloting on May 17, 2024. Online balloting will run from May 13 to May 17. Instructions will be included in the next notice, published in the NW Examiner May issue.

To be on the ballot, you must declare your candidacy for Director or for President

by 5:00 PM, Monday, Apr 22th to:

Send declarations of candidacy or inquiries about becoming a member to:

contact@northwestdistrictassociation.org



Jeff Kovel shared photos of the Halles de Biarritz in Spain as “the ideal cornerstone for what we’re doing here.”

“Food Front” cont’d from page 8

No schedule or deadline for making a decision has been announced. Shvarts is not worried about the fact that Kovel and Huffman have not signed a contract or deposited earnest money to lock in their commitment.

“They’ll pay as soon as necessary,” Shvarts said.

A second survey asking members to choose between the two options was sent out March 27. Shvarts said it would be used to “inform the upcoming vote and sale of the property. We will take into account the preferences and opinions expressed below when deciding the future.”

Survey buried

At least three former board members and a few regular members do not feel Shvarts lived up to that standard in handling a member survey conducted in December. All now agree that Market of Choice came out on top over a redevelopment deal assembled by Kovel, although Shvarts interpreted it as “there is no consensus with what the owners want.” What hasn’t been said publicly is that the survey results were not a close call. Market of Choice came out on top “overwhelmingly,” according to emails shared among board members.

Shvarts told the Examiner: “We chose not to release the raw data, as it was supplemented with comments that provided more profound insights into participants’ preferences.”

No reason was given as to why those profound comments could not have been released.

“The board never intended December’s survey to represent an official vote or basis for any specific course of action,” he wrote the NW Examiner in an email.

There may be another reason for keeping the results under the table.

Shvarts has refused requests from several sources to release the full results of that survey.

Will results of the survey currently underway relegate the earlier one to ancient history?

Shvarts is making a push to see that survey 2 comes out to his liking, championing Kovel’s option at multiple public settings.

He told the Northwest District Association Planning Committee in February that Kovel and Huffman “have the talent and desire to make it work” and their proposal “allows Food Front to continue.”

“He already has a plan and the people, and he’s going to bring it in,” Shvarts said, promising the “final vision” in two weeks.

In contrast, Market of Choice’s offer is “30 percent below market value.

“If someone offered us 30 percent below market value for our houses, we wouldn’t be jumping up and down,” he said.

Furthermore, “Market of Choice focuses on larger stores. This is an experiment for them. ... their only smaller market failed.”

To Food Front members in March, Shvarts would not concede that Market

Former director accuses co-op board of deception, financial misdeeds

Tory Orzeck resigned from the Food Front board of directors last summer, but he continued to share his opinions on the course of the organization privately.

Two days after the co-op’s March 26 meeting of members, he poured out his frustration in an email to the entire board. He shared that message with the NW Examiner, excerpts from which are quoted and paraphrased below:

“After the December survey, I was told Skylab’s first Urban Farm Concept and Market of Choice had tied. When I asked for the numerical results, I got nothing.

“I have it on good account that the previous survey results were overwhelmingly in favor of MOC. Your current actions are deceptive and serving the self-interests of the board rather than the Food Front member/owners.

“You are engaging in financial malpractice. You are set to go against the Food Front members’ interest and give away the building for \$750,000 [after subtracting for debt retirement]. This all for a future minority equity stake, the profit of which the members are likely never to see. And, there’s no guarantee of profit.

“The most recent survey distributed March 27 is totally deceptive.

“The survey asks members whether they prefer a co-op business model or a corporately owned business model. Of course, most smart, open-minded people would



Tory Orzeck

prefer a co-op.

“This is another survey of desires, but not realities.

“Neither Skylab nor ChefStable know how to run a grocery store. The margins in grocery are much lower than restaurant or specialty event catering.

“Market of Choice knows how to run a grocery store. They have 12 of them. They have 12 times the buying power, and any marketing they do is for all their Oregon stores. Their marketing cost per square foot is low.”

“At least with Market of Choice, we get a great store that will be tuned to the neighborhood and wants of the customers. Rick Wright, CEO, says local and organic are his [emphasis].

“The Skylab concept is just a concept. No pro forma was shown, one or two locked in tenants. No business plan was presented. What happens to Food Front’s equity if this model can’t find the tenants they want?”

—Allan Classen

of Choice would likely open a store sooner and with more surety than the Skylab partnership.

Board Treasurer Sanela Ruznic, recently using Fusionary as a surname, fully supports Shvarts’ way of thinking.

“We don’t have any say in the Market of Choice option if we sell,” she wrote. “We are looking into continuing Food Front Existence.”

In the most recent survey question-

naire, Shvarts played another card. Instead of referring to the Kovel-Huffman partnership as the Skylab redevelopment plan or “community-minded redevelopment,” as in the December survey, it was listed as “Food Front market.”

Food Front will not control the plan. It may not have anything to sell in the future project. But as a naming gesture, it was shrewd. It reached for the hearts of the membership, if in name only. ■

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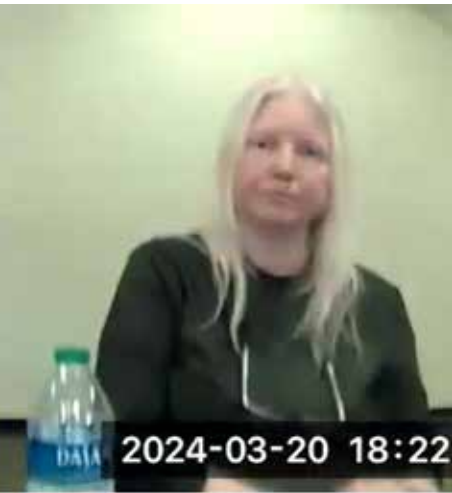
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Northwest Parking Stakeholders Committee members Rick Michaelson (left), Amy Spreadborough and Todd Zarnitz were candid in an informal session called last month.

"Parking meetings" cont'd from page 1

was established by a 2013 City Council ordinance to advise the city on parking policies in the district.

"We wanted to ensure that the bureau was able to support the advisory committee to the best of its ability," policy adviser Cynthia Castro said.

If it were merely about the money, would staff support to resume meetings resolve the matter? Or did "the pause," as PBOT officials call it, instill distrust that could carry over? Is the fracture so deep that only city charter reform coming next year could mend the split?

NWDA board and SAC member Steve Pinger says the problem goes beyond funding, even if the final straw was a budget item. He said PBOT staff members had grown increasingly testy when their proposals met resistance, reaching their limit when the committee placed conditions on support for a spending resolution.

"For me, it was mainly from the financial consideration," Castro replied. "That's why I can say the resolution did not have a bearing on my decision."

SAC members may have spurred the resumption of official monthly meetings by calling one on their own, which was attended by Erika Nebel, PBOT's parking division manager.

Nebel wrote the Oct. 18 letter stating that working with the committee had grown "frustrating and disappointing" around issues such as "respect for fellow members and staff."

She revealed a different attitude last month.

"My intention is not to scold the SAC," she said at the rump session. "I do appreciate you guys letting me sit in and listen to what you have to say."

"It struck us, obviously, that if we want you guys to listen to us, it's a two-way street and we need to listen to you too. That's part of our intentions for the first meeting as well."

Rebuilding the relationship may be more complicated.

Rick Michaelson, who chaired the SAC for its first 10 years until PBOT enacted bylaws limiting terms of service, said the bureau has increasingly controlled the agenda. For instance, an original parking district goal was to increase off-street parking capacity, a direction PBOT discouraged with a series of prerequisites that could not be satisfied.

"To have policy changes made without us having known until we read it in our reports: It doesn't work," Michaelson said.

No project divided the sides like PBOT's proposal to

remove up to 30 street trees along Northwest 21st and 23rd avenues to make room for wider sections of curbs near intersections. The SAC would not support the project, and neighbors tied yellow ribbons around the targeted trees, creating scenes for news coverage. PBOT backed down, announcing that virtually all of the trees could be saved after all.

To PBOT, it was an example of SAC obstructionism; to SAC members, it demonstrated that resistance saved the bureau from an ill-conceived project and benefited the community.

At an NWDA board meeting earlier last month attended by Castro, board member Richard Gronostajski said, "Any disagreement with PBOT was thought to be interfering rather than suggesting potential better ways for

"If you're on an advisory committee and you can never tell the [bureau] that they're wrong, what's the point?"

**— Rick Michaelson,
Former Parking SAC chair**

them to do things."

Saving the street trees "is just one example of how important the parking SAC is," Gronostajski said. "Having input from the neighborhood is a really important thing, but PBOT seems to ... feel that they know better."

Throughout the two meetings last month, PBOT staff heard the same message.

"There's a difference between a stakeholder advisory committee and a stakeholder cheerleading committee," said NWDA President and SAC member Todd Zarnitz, "and I think they wanted the latter."

"If you're on an advisory committee and you can never tell the [staff] that they're wrong, what's the point?" Michaelson added.

For months, neighborhood representatives sought an explanation from Mapps, who was elected to the City Council in 2020 on a pro-neighborhood platform. They invited him or an aide to meetings without getting a response. Finally, Castro came to the March NWDA board meeting.

Castro downplayed the dispute and the commissioner's role in it.

She spoke of maintaining a "good working relationship" with neighborhoods.

"We value the neighborhood association system quite a bit," she said.

Meanwhile, the NW Examiner had also been trying to reach Mapps with a list of questions:

Why did he give his approval to the SAC shut down?

Why did this happen without contact with the affected neighborhood representatives or their associations?

Why has he failed to respond to so many efforts to reach him?

How can he know PBOT's position is justified without hearing from the other side?

Has he changed his views on the importance of neighborhood and citizen input since he was elected?

Mapps finally agreed to an in-person interview in March, but offered no specifics. He is aware of PBOT's reputation for unresponsiveness to citizens, but his attention during the meeting went in another direction—the bureau's funding crisis and the inevitability of staff cuts.

Mapps revealed no specific knowledge of the SAC-PBOT breakdown or why he came down where he did.

"I have to make tough choices," he said simply.

He apologized if his actions or those of PBOT had caused harm, which he said was not his intent. He reaffirmed his respect for neighborhood associations.

He had one complaint about news coverage of the issue. He felt it unfair to describe the cancellation period as indefinite when there was always intent to resume meetings. ■

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Cultural Center Annual Membership Meeting Slated for April 23, 2024

The Northwest Neighborhood Cultural Center (NNCC) will hold its annual membership meeting at 6:00 PM on Tuesday, April 23, 2024. As has been our practice for the past two years, the meeting will take place as a Zoom hosted teleconference. Members of record as of March 15, 2024 who wish to attend the meeting will need to register in advance. Please watch our web site www.nnccpdx.com for more information about this meeting and the advance registration process.

Director nominees for the terms beginning in 2024 will be elected. The new Board will elect officers for 2024 immediately following the membership meeting. An update on the status of the pending sale of the building, the Northwest Neighborhoods Fund and related matters will be presented.

If any member of the corporation wishes to nominate persons for Directors other than those proposed by the Nominating Committee, said member shall do so by delivering to the Secretary not less than ten (10) days prior to the Annual Meeting a petition signed by at least ten (10) members naming the nominee or nominees and stating that each nominee has agreed to serve if elected. The Secretary shall state at the Annual Meeting, prior to the election of directors, the names and qualifications of those nominated by petition. Nominating petitions may be delivered to the NNCC Secretary by US Mail at Northwest Neighborhood Cultural Center, P.O. Box 96116, Portland, Oregon 97296-6116.

Candidate Vadim Mozyrsky says county is where solutions lie

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

To neighborhood activists waiting a generation for one of their own to rise to power, Vadim Mozyrsky showed promise.

After becoming president of both the Goose Hollow Foothills League and the Neighbors West/Northwest coalition last year, he called for and co-organized a citywide gathering of neighborhood leaders to plot a people-powered direction for Portland, one springing from the grass roots instead of reacting to dictates from above.

More than 100 people from 60-plus neighborhood associations attended the summit last spring, the largest gathering of Portland neighborhood activists in years. But Mozyrsky’s pledge to “create an action plan” to address four key topics fizzled. There was no follow-up, no systematic updating of participants or preserving of contact information to launch future action.

Mozyrsky blames his co-organizer, T.J. Browning, a 30-year veteran of neighborhood leadership, who saw the matter quite differently.

Now Mozyrsky oversees the transition of Neighbors West/Northwest from an 11 member coalition into a body to represent more than 30 neighborhood associations on both sides of the Willamette River. The process was directed by the Portland Office of Community & Civic Life, an agency whose

anti-neighborhood history Mozyrsky has addressed in strong terms. But if he had a better idea for strengthening the role for neighborhoods under the city’s new charter, he did not reveal it.

While he might not have the makings of a neighborhood champion, voters face a different question in the May primary: Is he the best candidate for Multnomah County Council District 1, a seat now held by Sharon Meieran, who is termed out?

Mozyrsky chose the county race over another crack at City Council, having finished slightly behind ultimate winner Rene Gonzalez in the 2022 city primaries. The issues most plaguing Portland’s future—homelessness, mental health, addiction, street crime and affordable housing—can be more effectively handled by the county, which has squandered enormous resources without advancing solutions, he said.

“We have the funding for first-rate behavioral health and addiction services, but implementation is lacking and too few people can actually connect to services,” he said. “Our public safety system is failing us too, without the resources to intervene before tragedy strikes, followed by a dysfunctional system for prosecuting and defending those accused of crimes.”

Natives of Kyiv, Ukraine, Mozyrsky’s family immigrated to the United States



Vadim Mozyrsky has learned about neighborhood people from his volunteer work in Goose Hollow.

when he was 7. He graduated from college and law school on scholarships, worked for the federal government administering the Affordable Care Act and in 2013 moved to Portland, where he is an administrative law judge for the Social Security Administration.

In that role here and in two other states, he has heard disputes over disability claims. The majority of applicants have histories of drug abuse, he said. That perspective makes him wary of the county’s commitment to the “housing-first” strategy, which puts the building of more housing above treatment of mental health, addiction and shelter services.

He supports increased law enforcement staffing and criminal sanctions for illegal drug use, which give addicts an incentive to accept treatment to avoid incarceration.

Mozyrsky’s approach is reminiscent of good government city reformers of the early 1900s—high-minded people perhaps less attuned to the lives and politics of ordinary citizens.

That’s where he said his neighborhood work has helped. He has seen volunteers take on local cleanups and outreach to homeless people, normally the role of local governments, which instead often obstruct their efforts.

Mozyrsky sees neighborhood associations, such as his own in Goose Hollow Foothills League, as “a broad range of people who are all trying to work together to seek solutions,” not the wealthy homeowners’ groups labeled by some politicians.

“My volunteer efforts, ranging from organizing neighborhood events to serving on boards of directors to being appointed to citywide commissions and leadership positions, have given me a unique perspective on how to listen, bridge divides and solve difficult problems together,” he said.

Mozyrsky is endorsed by downtown property owners, labor unions, Future Portland PAC, the CEO of Bybee Lakes Hope Center, many neighborhood representatives and three candidates for Portland City Council. Should he win, he may have an ally in City Hall to help bridge the city-county chasm blocking effective governance in many areas.

If not transforming the neighborhood groups he serves, Mozyrsky said his grass-roots experience has helped him see where government programs miss their mark, how that affects everyday lives and imagine the changes that lead to better outcomes. ■

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NOBBY NEWS

Vol. 30, No. 4 “News You Can’t Always Believe” April 2024

Was it only an accident?

A vehicle tipped on its side was seen at the corner of Northwest 22nd and Hoyt streets last month, and then was gone 48 hours later leaving only a dented piece of metal. No cars, utility poles, building or vegetation was damaged. No resident in the area has reported seeing or hearing how the vehicle got there or how it vanished.

Could it have been an alien aircraft, whose operators returned to retrieve it under the cover of darkness?

The special Nob Hill Bar & Grill Task Force to Investigate Unknown Aerial Phenomena, made famous by its work collecting loose screws possibly associated with the Boeing aircraft that lost a door plug earlier this year, has been commissioned.



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GREATER NORTHWEST PORTLAND DEVELOPMENT MAP

CITY MARKET

City Market, 735 NW 21st Ave., a collection of independent food vendors under one roof, closed in 2019. Property owner Randy Arvidson has no plans to revive the business. Willamette Week featured the building recently in its series on mysterious real estate vacancies.



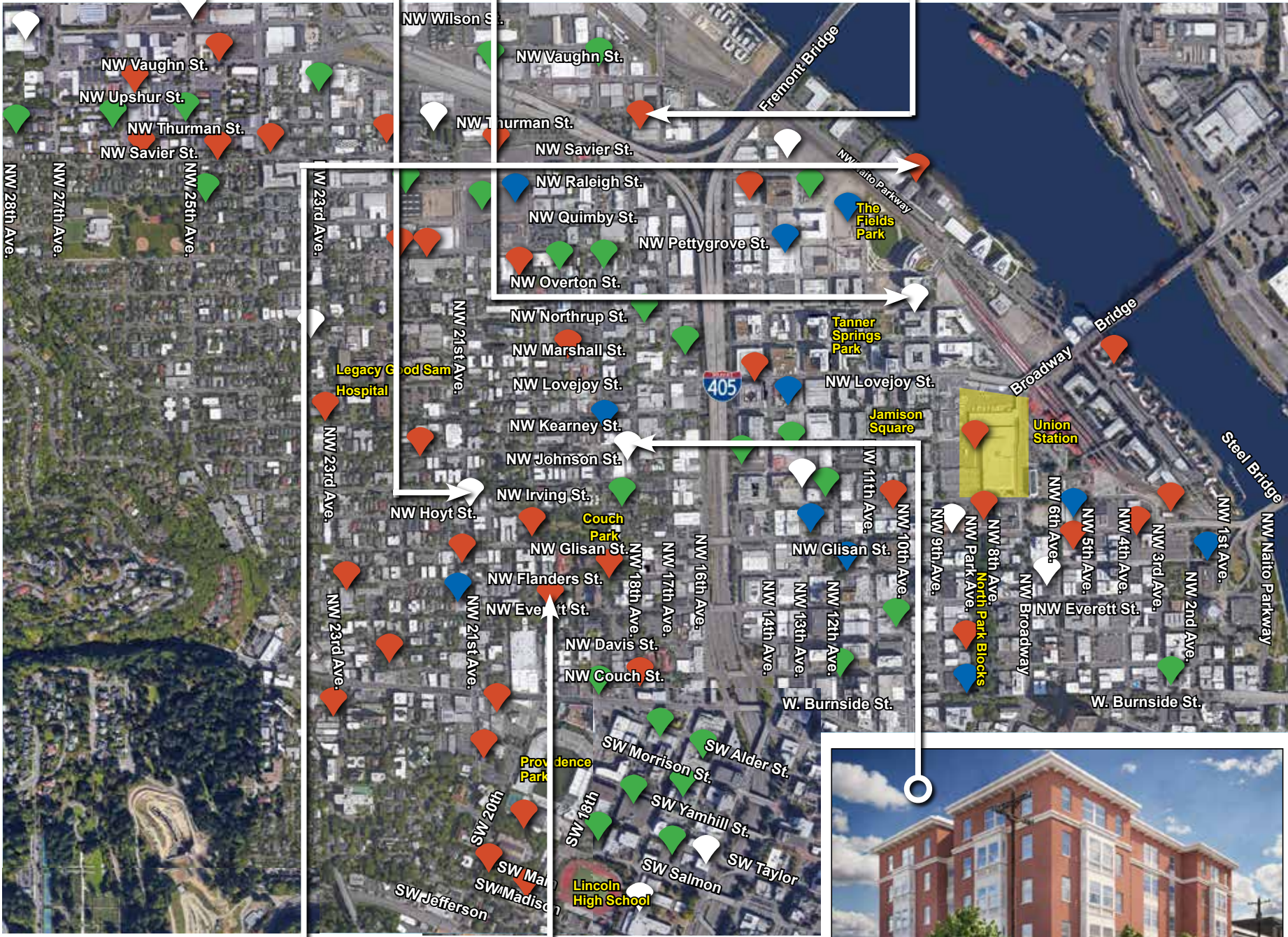
THE COSMOPOLITAN

Owners of condominiums at Northwest 10th and Northrup face \$31 million in repair costs on an HVAC system that has failed repeatedly since the 28-story tower was completed in 2016. A lawsuit filed against the homeowners association caused withdrawal of a loan offer to finance the repairs.



PREMIER GEAR BUILDING

Vanessa Sturgeon's plans for a 16-bed locked-down mental health facility in the remodeled Premier Gear building at Northwest 17th and Northrup streets are complicated by what else might go into the 60,000-square-foot building. The possibility of 80 units of supportive housing having less control over residents troubles operators of the nearby Childpeace Montessori School and other neighbors.



THE SUTTON (FREMONT PLACE)

Most apartments in The Sutton, 1550 NW Naito Parkway, remain vacant more than a year after the 236-unit high-rise was finished, as evidenced by how few lights are on in the evenings. Rents range from \$1,542 to \$4,801 a month.



NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOOD CULTURAL CENTER

Members of the Northwest Neighborhood Cultural Center will hold an annual meeting Tuesday, April 23, at 6 p.m., via Zoom. Additional information will be posted at nncppdx.com. A tentative sale of the building is on hold as the developer, Founders Developments of Las Vegas, seeks funding for remodeling and construction of an adjacent hotel.



EMMONS PLACE

The opening of this building, providing deeply affordable housing at Northwest 18th and Johnson streets, was celebrated by a network of agencies and public officials last month. The project was partly funded by \$20 million from the Portland Housing Bond. The project includes 98 studio units for low-income seniors and 48 units of permanent supportive housing for seniors exiting homelessness.



Proposed Under Review In Construction Other

For an interactive and continually updated version of this map, visit: NextPortland.com

Also see the development map maintained by the Goose Hollow Foothills League: goosehollow.org/images/GooseHollowDevelopmentMap.pdf



Allan Classen with the settlement check in front of his former home at Old Forestry Commons.

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

I am not one to live in fear. Most criticism, hostility or threats of libel suits I take in stride.

But I was brought down by worry last year over an issue I have not shared with readers: the possibility of facing a jury trial without representation. Arguing a point on paper or in person is one thing, but I knew facing cross examination by an attorney knowing the law and tricks of the trade would not be pretty. My lawyer friends advised against going it alone, but reaching for a life raft and paying an attorney thousands of dollars presented another problem. The cost could eat up more than the value of my claim.

I sued the homeowners association of Old Forestry Commons at Northwest 28th and Upshur streets, where Joleen and I had lived for 32 years. In preparing our unit for sale, many structural problems were uncovered, including water damage and dry rot in the wall in my office. Only when our painter noticed faint stains and traced them to their source did anyone know the scope of damage.

In condominiums, generally, the HOA is responsible for roofing, siding and the exterior, while unit owners are responsible for the interior. Interior damage caused by water intruding from the outside is the HOA's fault. The damage in this case extended to the adjoining unit, further complicating the affair.

The HOA president toured our home and pooh-pooched my list of concerns, such as a large buildup of moss on our roof and a sliding door installed by the HOA that had warped over the years due to improper installation. The HOA was willing to patch the deck, but that was all. No one from the HOA or its management company was even interested in looking at the damage inside the wall. The president advised me to fix everything at our expense and then submit a claim to the HOA.

Eventually we did that. But at the HOA's insistence, we had to first submit claims on our homeowners' policy. That involved separately filed claims for each defect, complicating and delaying things about three months. We hired a major remediation company to take potentially hazardous materials to a laboratory and fully remove the mold in the attic and rebuild the office wall from inside out. All of this was not cheap, nor was it fast. Work began in January 2023 and was

not completed to the point where we could put the unit on the market until mid-September. Repairs and remodeling cost nearly \$100,000 and that came atop buying a new condo and handling all costs associated with covering the mortgage, HOA dues and taxes of the old unit we were trying to sell. Every month we were putting out about \$4,000 in fixed costs plus piles of bills from four contractors.

All this was eating through most of our savings and investments, and with no certainty of a sale date, no end was in sight. Any relief hoped for from our insurance and the HOA came to nothing. We covered all expenses, including to the adjacent unit, out of pocket because time was of the essence. Delaying a sale was always the greatest peril. (The Upshur unit sold in December.)

Our HOA officers could easily assess our financial pit. Our 21-year-old car was breaking down before their eyes as we were unable to replace it or repair the dents and scrapes. They knew we were maintaining two properties at once.

The HOA's attorney offered to settle for \$7,000. Many times I regretted turning it down. I could not stomach the thought of accepting a concocted figure apparently based on our weak bargaining position. Our provable losses from the leak the HOA had acknowledged was its responsibility were nearly \$10,000. Other items may have been open to legitimate debate, but repairing the consequences of the deck leak should have been automatic.

Learning that attorneys are not interested in condo cases involving such modest (for them) sums, I took it to Small Claims Court despite its \$10,000 maximum recovery cap. While \$7,000 in the hand might seem better than \$10,000 in the bush, we wanted a decision rendered by a neutral third party, even if it might turn out to be no more than the HOA's offer. A principle was involved.

Small Claims Court provided a new round of frustration. Just serving papers to the defendants took months. The longtime president of the HOA refused to accept the letter. After finally overcoming that obstacle, the HOA's attorney exercised his prerogative to move the case to a jury trial in Civil Court. We had 10 days to respond or the case would be dismissed. We might even have to pay their legal fees.

Figuring out how to produce a legal summons was waking me up at night, capping the worst extended period of stress in my life. Why did I have to go through this? My energies are better spent putting out a newspaper every month, something I know how to do.

I had recently read "Man's Search for Meaning" by Viktor Frankl and found his call to "be worthy of your suffering" enlightening. This ordeal was not a distraction from my career mission—it was its essence. Challenging arbitrary, unaccountable power crushing those without a voice has been my cause from the start. I have written about bullying behavior from the behind the protections granted journalists. If I could say, "I feel your pain," it has been mostly in the figurative sense.

My time of trial

On HOAs, legal traps and worthy suffering

Comments from the other side

Throughout my battle with the Old Forestry Commons Homeowners' Association, I did not remind my adversaries that I publish a newspaper. Threatening or promising coverage for private gain is unethical.

But after the settlement, I asked some of the parties why they acted as they did.

I asked Jason Grosz, attorney at Vial Fotheringham LLP, how the \$7,000 offer was derived and why he did not file an answer to my claim.

Grosz said the amount was based on the HOA's responsibility to all of its members. He said he was unaware of the damage inside the wall, having relied on information provided by HOA representatives.

He said the case was settled because the cost of a trial would have exceeded the likely return. He also disputed that I had won because the settlement agreement did not include an admission of fault.

I asked Matt Martel, president of the HOA, why he did not look at the damage inside our walls. He did not address that point, but wrote, "I suspect you are going to write a story based on your experience. I also expect that it will be your version of the facts and events and you will omit details that do not support your narrative."

I asked former HOA President Charlie Martin why he would not accept service of the legal papers and if that action was consistent with his duty to put the interests of HOA members above his own? "I honestly don't understand either of these questions," he replied.

Finally, I asked Community Management Inc. if they learned any lessons from this case. I wanted to know if the responsibility owed HOA members vanishes when an owner suffers losses. I have not received an answer.

— Allan Classen

nomah County Courthouse, my seventh such trip in this saga, and filed it. That's all it took. The HOA's attorney asked for more time but never countered. We were entitled to a default judgment. The HOA's insurance company offered to pay the full claim. I insisted on including our court fees and a \$345 "prevailing party fee." We got it.

We did not prevail on the strength of my arguments (which were never heard by a court) or the skill of my maneuvers. In fact, I barely stumbled across the finish line. We won because we did not give up, a worthy lesson for all suffering underdogs.

As I imagined closing arguments I would make to a jury, I pulled together these thoughts. I did not have to finish preparing that speech, but I know my last three words were going to be, "Not in America!" ■

COMMENT ON NWEXAMINER.COM
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Grabiel looks for balance on skewed terrain

Savier resident running for state House District 33



Coach Pete Grabiel (left rear) with the Ice Cream Trucks, named by the 7-year-olds, including his daughter, on the Chapman School soccer team

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

Pete Grabiel had seen enough while coaching his daughter's second grade soccer team at Chapman School one day last year.

The ball rolled near an intoxicated man who had stumbled onto the playing field, where he fell flat on his face and remained inert. One girl ran up to the ball lying near him, kicked it and then hopped over his body as if it were part of the field.

"We're normalizing extreme behavior," said Grabiel, reflecting on the wider community's default to tolerance. "We've lost the balance."

For most of Grabiel's 44 years, he has seen himself as a liberal. He voted for Bernie Sanders in the 2016 Democratic primary and four years later picked Elizabeth Warren.

He has worked for nonprofit environmental organizations most of his career, culminating in a nine-year quest drafting language for the 2016 Kigali Amendment, the international agreement phasing out fluorinated hydrocarbons, one of the six major greenhouse gases.

Yet, running for the Northwest/North Portland state legislative seat 33, to be vacated by Maxine Dexter, he failed to gain the endorsement of the Oregon League of Conservation Voters.

He found it more than ironic that the only candidate who had accomplished something to save the earth could not gain the favor of the state's leading conservation political action group.

"I was told the reason I did not get the endorsement (and that they would go so far as endorsing an opponent), despite my environmental background and the lack of an environmental background for either of my opponents, was that my 'other values' did not align with the organization.

"The only significant point of contention that came up during my interview was my support for reforming Measure 110 to reintroduce the criminal justice system as one of the policy tools ... to get more people into treatment."

Last month, the Legislature overwhelmingly rolled back Oregon's four-year experiment with decriminalization. Some corners of political universe, how-

ever, did not get the message that Grabiel's position represents the bipartisan mainstream.

Grabiel's platform has four planks, two of which have a law-and-order tone:

- Reform Measure 110 to end open-air drug use without consequences.
- Reform mental health laws to allow mandatory treatment for seriously mentally ill individuals.

His other priorities would find sympathies among liberals:

- Fund emergency drug detoxification centers and state mental health facilities.
- Implementing a cap-and-trade system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Local issues that have caught his eye include the Oregon Bottle Bill. Neighbors in St. Johns, which is part of District 33, are fighting the relocation of a bottle redemption facility to their community. The community impact of such facilities has become a statewide issue, causing Gov. Tina Kotek to institute a 30-day moratorium on redemption services at Safeway and Plaid Pantry on Southwest Jefferson Street in downtown.

Grabiel believes the addiction-enabling consequences of cash payouts at redemption centers overshadow the program's original intent. That contrasts with the stance of Dexter, who opposed revising the Bottle Bill, considering it an important source of support for low-income people and "a win-win for the environment."

We don't need to redeem containers for cash, Grabiel countered, noting that curbside recycling programs achieve similar rates of return without abetting the illegal drug market.

Lack of preparation for the growing threat of a major fire in Forest Park also bothers him. He is in touch with volunteers for the Portland Fire & Rescue's Firewise program, who help clean up combustible materials near homes and

open spaces. But he sees no agency taking responsibility for an evacuation or fire suppression under circumstances resembling those in Lahaina, Hawaii, before its catastrophic fire last summer.

"Who's in charge?" he wonders.

Another neighborhood problem that motivates him is the camping and trash under Interstate 405 ramps. Last year, he attended a neighborhood meeting discussing a possible dog park as one solution, though the Oregon Department of Transportation declared the idea a non-starter.

ODOT has to do better, he said.

"The state cannot have property in the middle of the city and then blight it," he told members of the Northwest District Association.

Grabiel grew up in a family of 10. His father immigrated from Mexico to the United States as a child speaking no English, but he became the first Latino state representative in his Southern California district. His mother had worked with the poor in Calcutta. Their example put him on a course of "commitment to mission-driven work."

Grabiel put himself through the University of California, Berkeley, and the George Washington University law school. He worked for nonprofit environmental law firms in Washington, D.C., Sydney and London before moving to Portland eight years ago.

In private practice here, he and his partner won a \$61 million jury verdict against a major national accounting firm on behalf of two Oregon families. He intends to continue legal work on the side as the part-time legislative schedule permits.

He lives with his wife, Leela, and daughter, Lola, on Northwest Savier Street at the edge of Forest Park. He runs in the park regularly and competes in marathons.

Family life has put him in touch with concerns of a less global nature. He met City Commissioner and mayoral candidate Rene Gonzalez through their shared roles as youth soccer league leaders. Both were troubled by the extended closure of public schools after the COVID pandemic, the issue that pushed Gonzalez into running for the City Council two years ago. ■

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Snapshots



Portland Police are looking for three large men in connection with the beating of a man on the 900 block of Northwest 13th Avenue on Feb. 24 at 9:30 p.m. The victim remained in a coma for a week and suffers memory loss and delirium. The attack may have been associated with a classic car meet-up. Detectives are looking for a large white truck with bright blue neon lights. Anyone with information is asked to contact Matthew.Brown@police.portlandoregon.gov and reference case number 24-46215.



Plans to improve the firefighters memorial at Southwest 19th and Alder streets are promoted by the David Campbell Memorial Association and its president, Don Porth (center). The association was founded to honor Fire Chief Campbell, who died in the line of duty in 1911. The project includes a Fallen Firefighter Plaza and may also host the bronze goose formerly on the Goose Hollow MAX platform. The Goose Hollow Foothills League, represented by its president, Vadim Mozysky (left) and board member Tiffany Hammer, supports the project. Photo by Wesley Mahan



Bronze plaques to be mounted along Southwest Salmon Street commemorate the listing of the South Park Blocks on the National Register of Historic Places. The plaques and their installation are underwritten by the Downtown Neighborhood Association. Portland Parks & Recreation, which plans to remove some historic elements in the park, opposed the nomination and is charging the association \$750 to install them.



Pearl resident Linda Witt was awarded a medal by the Laurent Bili, ambassador of France to the United States, last month at the Heathman Hotel. She was honored for her work in French language and culture over three decades with institutions that include the Alliance Française organizations in Seattle and Portland, the French International School and the French-American Chamber of Commerce of the Pacific Northwest.



A median barrier at Northwest 24th and Vaughn street prevents westbound traffic from turning left into the Northwest neighborhood. The barrier, intended to make bike and pedestrian crossings on Vaughn safer, has drawn complaints from neighbors concerning traffic congestion that extends onto Interstate 405. Photo by Wesley Mahan



Susan Emmons with Trell Anderson, executive director of Northwest Housing Advocates. Emmons, who was executive director of Northwest Pilot Project for 31 years, was honored last month at the dedication of Emmons Place, a 146-unit affordable apartment building at Northwest 18th and Johnson streets developed by Northwest Housing Advocates.



Improvements to the south entry into Washington Park should be completed this year. The \$5.8 million project includes \$300,000 from System Development Charges collected on housing construction.



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