

“Digging deep,
Shining a light”

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MARCH 2024/ VOLUME 37, NO. 7

FREE

SERVING PORTLAND'S NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOODS SINCE 1986 [f nwexaminer](#)

13th Avenue closures send mixed messages

Street plazas help restaurants, harm retailers, residents

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

Historic Northwest 13th Avenue was central to early Portland shipping, warehousing and industry. It still has an important role in commerce today, though instead of being a place where men worked hard all day, the street is now commandeered by temporary structures where revelers drink and dine well into the night.

The city of Portland not merely tolerates but promotes the potential of entertainment to make 13th Avenue an engine for revitalizing the Pearl District.

Tensions between historic character and temporary structures; noisy bar patrons and the disrupted sleepers in nearby condominiums; hospitality venues and retailers; and cars versus pedestrians reflect the complexity of issues the community juggles.

Yet, in a city known for silos of isolated jurisdiction, the Portland Bureau of Transportation alone sets the rules, and PBOT considers Northwest 13th Avenue a jewel in its Street Plaza program. The program puts plazas first, while motor vehicles come in second at best. Traffic is banned on two blocks of the street so privately controlled dining facilities can sprawl across most of its width, their further extension limited only by the fire department's need for an aisle to reach emergencies.

What began as a temporary tactic to save urban life and enterprises during the pandemic has taken on a grander purpose, as reflected on the city's website:

“PBOT's Public Street Plazas are community-oriented public spaces where business and community activities are clustered, using the full width or part of a city street. Rather



A sign on Northwest Everett Street keeps motorists from entering the 13th Avenue Historic District. The city sees the strategy as bringing people and vitality to streets, but some retailers and property owners on 13th say it is doing the opposite.

than just a place to pass through, these sections of city streets become neighborhood destinations.”

From the agency's point of view, it's working.

“Street plazas have been embraced by communities as outdoor spaces to socialize, share a coffee or a meal, enjoy

Cont'd on page 6



Penkin brings wealth of neighborhood experience

Most of which he isn't sharing

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

After chairing the Pearl District Neighborhood Association for seven years, Stan Penkin is stepping down to pursue higher office: a seat on the Portland City Council.

No neighborhood association president in the areas covered by the NW Examiner since the 1980s has served longer than Penkin. And his activism has gone far beyond neighborhood affairs. He co-founded Oregon artPAC, was president of the Oregon Children's Theater, chairs Home Share Oregon and co-founded the Northwest Neighborhood Community Conservancy, a pioneering nonprofit providing security and humanitarian services throughout the Pearl District.

He was appointed the first chair of the city's Arts Oversight Committee. He also founded and chaired the Portland Public Safety Action Coalition and served on the board of the Neighbors West/Northwest coalition, one of the few organizations he refused to chair.

While neighborhood activism has consumed more of his time than his other civic roles, it is the topic treated most briefly among the four

planks of his campaign platform. Yet this is where grassroots record is best revealed, thanks to open meetings requirements and the consistent presence of a reporter at PDNA events.

Penkin's first big test as PDNA president was the proposed Fremont Place Apartments, a 17-story building that was to block views of the Fremont Bridge. He organized several special public meetings to marshal political opposition, renting a Portland Center Stage auditorium to handle the large crowds.

The Portland City Council ultimately approved the project, putting PDNA on the spot to either appeal the decision to the state or accept defeat. A special board meeting was called in April 2018 to weigh the options, but instead Penkin kicked it off by announcing a breakthrough.

Penkin said he had just come from a meeting with Lincoln Property Co. representatives, who were willing to pay about \$35,000 for PDNA's public backing of the project.

“I think it's a huge victory,” he told his board.

Cont'd on page 8



Stan Penkin has led one of the city's most active neighborhood associations since 2017.

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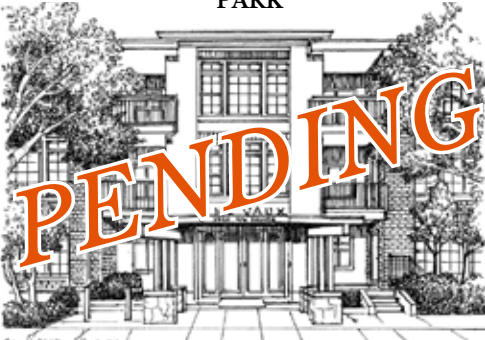
2436 NW Savier St

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 /
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**NEAR VIBRANT NW 23RD & WALLACE
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2350 NW Savier St. #B336

This sophisticated and meticulously maintained 3rd floor unit boasts east facing windows, high ceilings and a delightful covered patio. The open layout between the kitchen, dining and living areas offers function and connection. Thoughtfully updated, this unit has Caribbean rosewood flooring, LED lighting and updated Samsung stainless appliances with granite countertops in the kitchen. The spa-like bath, remodeled by Neil Kelly, features double sinks with Pental quartz counters, Daltile floor and a walk-in shower with custom glass door. The bedroom features a walk-in closet and adjacent in-unit laundry. This complex was designed by renowned architects Ankrom Moisan and consists of two buildings with a scale that complements the surrounding 100+ year old neighborhood. Located just above vibrant NW 23rd Avenue and near the recently developed Slabtown neighborhood. Walk to cafes, coffee, New Seasons, Wallace Park, streetcar, library and Forest Park trails.

**1 Bedroom / 1 Bath / 770 SF
1 Parking Space & 1 Storage Unit
RMLS #24054525
\$429,000**

**URBAN OASIS IN THE HISTORIC
CAMPBELL TOWNHOMES**



1719 NW Irving St.

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 of 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 Townhomes—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.

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-A. Siegel

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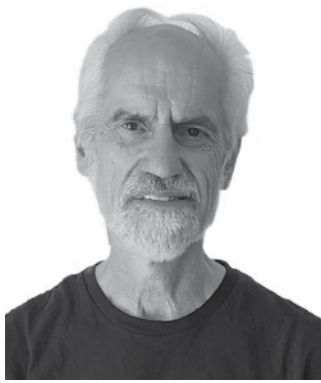


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Rigged system may not reach intended results

The first precept grasped by young humans may be a sense of injustice. A 2010 article by Yale psychology Professor Paul Bloom published in the New York Times, “The Moral Life of Babies,” described research in which babies as young as one year showing anger toward puppets impeding other puppets, even in one case smacking the “naughty” puppet on the head. And don’t get them started should an authority figure reward a naughty puppet. Hell hath no fury like an indignant infant.

Crying foul is in our DNA. I recall grade school classmates whining, “That’s not fair,” to which one teacher blithely retorted, “Life isn’t fair.”

While babies may come to a sense of injustice early, their notions about forming a more fair and productive society may lag a few decades. There’s a good reason our presidents must be 35 years—not 12 months—old.

The naïve crafters of Portland’s charter reform package adopted in 2022 played one note: Certain population groups cannot overcome past injustices on their own, so oppressive institutions and hierarchies must be overturned on their behalf. Those currently on top of the heap must be brought down, giving opportunity to the previously oppressed. They never mentioned “zero-sum game” while enacting that concept in total.

Like inverting a snow globe to put the snowflakes on top, such a reversal of poles in society would likewise create only temporary disruption until the old order settles in again.

The Charter Commission believed that giving citizens with limited resources and narrow voter appeal the chance to rule and even prevail over candidates supposedly born of privilege and therefore able to win over a majority of the electorate.



Turning our political system upside down will not naturally lead to a better world. Being among the “have nots” does not naturally endow one with the wisdom, skills or networks to solve complex problems. In some cases, underdogs may rise, perhaps parlaying special fortitude and empathy, but failure and suffering do not automatically create leaders.

So the Charter Commission naively conceived of a world in which people who “looked like us” would be in charge. They rigged the game, which apparently sounded righteous in their own circles, but they never discussed the social and political aspects of human nature, alternative political theories or how governments function.

The assumption was that those who had faced discrimination and institutional

bias should be moved to the front of the line without having to develop a compelling theory about how local government can right wrongs and serve the common good. The art of compromise—finding common ground with people who disagree with you—was not what they were about.

I doubt the new council will match the vision of Charter Commission members, three of whom are themselves candidates for seats they custom-ordered. Some among the 12 new council members may be on the radical left, but most of the declared candidates so far are of other stripes.

In District 4, four candidates have a history with neighborhood associations, the sector the Charter Commission tried to mute by creating districts much broader than any neighborhood. One

commission member explained that large districts would pit neighborhoods against each other, each concerned only with what is in their own backyard.

That critique will be put to a test in this year’s election. Are neighborhoods narrow self-interest groups, or are they people who believe in good government for all? Perhaps the neighborhood vote will be a minor factor, indistinguishable among broader themes. Politics is all about careful plans that vanish in the fog of elections, after all.

One immutable truth about our new local system of government is that lowering the bar for elective office will lower the standard for all aspirants, not merely those it was intended to boost. Fair is fair, as even the youngest among us would recognize. ■

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.

Measure results

Your editorial, “The Great Homeless Divide” [February] cited the primary drivers of homelessness as lack of available housing and mental health/addiction.

Here’s the problem: Though, as put so well by Alan Evans of Bybee Lakes Hope Center, “If you take a sick person and put them in a house, you get a sick house.” This has happened time and time again, and is too often ignored, despite its obviousness and the result-

ing waste of resources—which is colossal. Therefore, it makes no sense to put housing first, except for cases where the homelessness is caused by a string of bad luck, such as when some poor soul has spent all they have to aid a dying relative.

I would love to see the city and county work together to do better data-based triage of the homeless (as is done at Bybee Lakes Hope Center) so that the homeless can be quickly expedited into the channel that is right for them—making the most efficient use of the

limited funds available. There should be an army of trained professionals doing this and being held accountable through comprehensive data tracking—not the one-offs done by the small brigade of Loving One Another outreach folks.

I pick up the trash of the homeless every week, so I see first-hand the concrete results of our failed policies. When the county or city gives out tents, blankets, clothes, personal-care supplies, etc., guess what happens? Volunteers have to pick up the feces-

stained, sopping wet, no-longer-useable discards. In what universe does this make sense? Is it too much to ask that our tax-supported agencies consistently employ reasonable, data-backed and cost-effective strategies that truly respond to the needs of the vulnerable people among us?

Linda Witt
NW 11th Ave.

Cont’d on page 5

Jean Hoffman



Jean Hoffman, a Kings Hill resident who was active in civic affairs, died Jan. 23 at age 98. Jean Irwin was born July 31, 1925, and grew up in Lake Oswego. She and her twin sister, Joan, both became interior decorators and operated an antique store called Jo-Je. She married Eric Hoffman Sr., who was president of Hoffman Construction Co. He died in 2016. She was a member of the Town Club, Portland Garden Club, Portland Art Museum and Multnomah Athletic Club. She is survived by her daughters, Joan Hoffman, Susan Hoffman and Sally Miller. Her son, Eric Jr., died in 2020.

Margaret Wood



Margaret "Peggy" Louise Wood, the first female trustee of the Multnomah Athletic Club in 1983, died of ovarian cancer on Feb. 7 at age 84. Margaret Colton was born Sept. 25, 1939, in Portland and attended All Saints Elementary School and Holy Child Academy. She graduated from Oregon State University in 1962. She began her career as an English teacher and later was a financial executive with the Hallock Modey marketing firm. She chaired the boards of the Oregon State University Foundation and the OSU Alumni and the Women's Board at Waverly Country Club. She volunteered for the Junior League of Portland, Kappa Alpha Theta Sorority, Catholic Charities and the Town Club. She married Joseph F. Wood in 1962; he died in 2017. She is survived by her daughters, Mary Wood and Maureen Colburn; sons, Matthew, Michael and Mitchell; brother, Graham Colton; 15 grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Frieda Gass Cohen



Frieda Gass Cohen, a 1938 graduate of Lincoln High School and lifelong member of Congregation Shaarie Torah, died Jan. 24 at age 103. Frieda Gass was born July 25, 1920, and was a lifelong member of Shaarie Torah. She is survived by her son, Rick; daughter, Susan Branch; six grandchildren; and one great-grandchild. She was predeceased by her husband, Benjamin Cohen.

Barbara Maplethorpe



Barbara Jean Maplethorpe, a graduate of Sylvan Grade School and Lincoln High School, died Jan. 24 at age 95. Barbara Eversole was born Nov. 3, 1928, in Kenton, Ohio. Her family moved to Portland, where she graduated from high school in 1946. She attended the University of Oregon and graduated with a degree in business from Marylhurst College in 1981. She worked as a legal secretary, a secretary to University of Oregon football coach Jim Aiken and retired as the fiscal manager of the Sherwood School District. She was an officer for United Methodist Women and Sherwood Rebekah Lodge and was active in the Philanthropic Educational Organization, the Order of the Eastern Star and Sherwood Old Town Rotary. She was predeceased by her husband, William Maplethorpe; daughters, Bari Jo Bowen and Bonita Maplethorpe; and brother, James Eversole. She is survived by her son, William Maplethorpe; seven grandchildren; and 17 great-grandchildren.

Richard 'Kris' Kriesien Jr.



Richard "Kris" Ernest Kriesien Jr., a longtime Raleigh Hills resident and 1960 Lincoln High School graduate, died Jan. 28 of esophageal cancer at age 81. He was born on July 22, 1942, in Burns and moved with his family to Portland when he was 10. At Lincoln, he excelled in swimming. After serving in the Marine Corps in Hawaii, he married Margaret Gooding and returned to Portland, where they lived in the Raleigh Hills neighborhood for all but two years. He graduated from Portland State University with a degree in accounting in 1968. He worked as a partner in Campbell Crane & Rigging for 26 years before retiring in 2004. He was a

lifelong member of the Multnomah Athletic Club. He survived by his wife, Maggie; sons, Brian and Kevin; daughter, Sarah Hodson; and eight grandchildren.

Donald H. Holman Jr.



Donald Huntington Holman Jr., a fifth-generation Oregonian who graduated from Sylvan Grade School and Lincoln High School, died Jan. 17 at age 86. He attended Claremont Men's College and the University of Oregon, earning an MBA. He served in the Army before a career in home-building, lending and construction supplies. He was a member of the Multnomah Athletic Club. He married Rosemary Barry in 1968; she died in 2020. He is survived by his children, Hunt, Lara and Franni; siblings Berkeley and Susan; and five grandchildren.

Death notices:

BEN AARON, 64, member of Congregation Shaarie Torah.

ELAINE BRADY-MAHONEY, 80, member of Multnomah Athletic Club.

REV. STEPHANIE HJELT, 76, attended Lincoln High School.

REV. KIMBERLY HJELT, 76, attended Lincoln High School.

RICHARD D. MCMAHON, 88, Lincoln High School graduate.

CARLA MEILSTRUP, 91, 1950 Lincoln High School graduate

ROBERT CAMERON MITCHELL, 69, Lincoln High School graduate.

TED RUBENSTEIN, 91, member of Multnomah Athletic Club.

ALAN TEMPLER, 79, member of Congregation Beth Israel.

FRANK M. WARREN, 84, 1957 Lincoln High School graduate.

Corrections

Last month's story about murals in St. Mary's Cathedral mistakenly included two photos of stained glass windows in another building. Also, an image identified as Mary Magdalene was in fact Adam and Eve. The errors were the fault of the editor, not the story's author, Karla Powell.

The Northwest Examiner publishes obituaries of people who lived, worked or had other substantial connections to our readership area, which includes Northwest Portland, Goose Hollow, Sauvie Island and areas north of Highway 26. If you have information about a death in our area, please contact us at allan@nwexaminer.com. Photographs are also welcomed. There is no charge for obituaries in the Examiner.

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Left: Centro de las Aires in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, was a prison in the 19th century.

Below: Centro Cultural Recoleta in Buenos Aires was created from an 18th century monastery.



Idea for Montgomery Park

Montgomery Park could be converted entirely to housing by removing the 1980s atrium to gain air and light to each apartment.

It could become a center of culture and the arts like the Centro Cultural Recoleta in Buenos Aires, created within a labyrinth of buildings that was a monastery in the 1700s, or the Centro de las Aires in San Luis Potosí, Mexico, created from a massive complex of stone buildings that was a prison in the 19th century.

I am currently in San Luis Potosí, and I am thoroughly impressed with the Centro. I stayed in Buenos Aires last year and loved going to the Recoleta center on weekends to take in the random energy and activities. In both cities, the cultural centers are a hive of activity involving all art forms, exhibitions and impromptu performance spaces.

How are such cultural centers funded in countries that are not known for their wealth?

The low auction price that Montgomery Park sold for could offer Portland an opportunity to create something remarkable: housing on top of a cultural center.

Dennis Harper
NW 18th Ave.

Needs economic diversity

Your “Density Without Design” article last month reminded me of another ‘D’ word—diversity (as in an economically diverse mix of uses). Housing is just one land use among many (occupations, retail services, institutions, park spaces, etc.).

“Density Without diversity” creates a travel demand met mostly by driving cars. Public transit at best is unreliable, time consuming or impossible. The more traffic high-density development generates, the more arduous it becomes

to cross streets on foot and more dangerous to ride a bicycle. High-density urban development, much like low-density suburban development, is just as much car-dependent and worse. Far too many motorists throughout Portland exceed posted speed limits by 5 to 10 mph routinely hang right turns like they’re on a race track obstacle course, and if they speed up recklessly to beat the light.

Planners prioritize any rubber-stamped sardine can apartment block development ahead of public health and safety, ahead of urban and environmental impact and ahead of suspiciously obsolete transit system.

Art Lewellan
NW Ninth Ave.

Weinstein for council

I was pleased to see the story last month, “This newcomer has been there before” [February], about Bob Weinstein, who is running for Portland City Council in District 4.

I have known Weinstein for several years, trust him completely and I think he’s extraordinarily qualified.

As a former school superintendent and four-term mayor, Bob brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of addressing complex issues. He is committed to solve the most pressing issues that affect our quality of life, such as public safety, homelessness, transportation, and sensible spending and tax policies. We need leaders like Bob who can navigate the challenges we face and work tirelessly to shape a better future for our community.

Bob embodies the leadership that Portland needs. I’m going to vote for Bob, and I encourage all voters in District 4 to do so.

Paul Block
NW Raleigh St.

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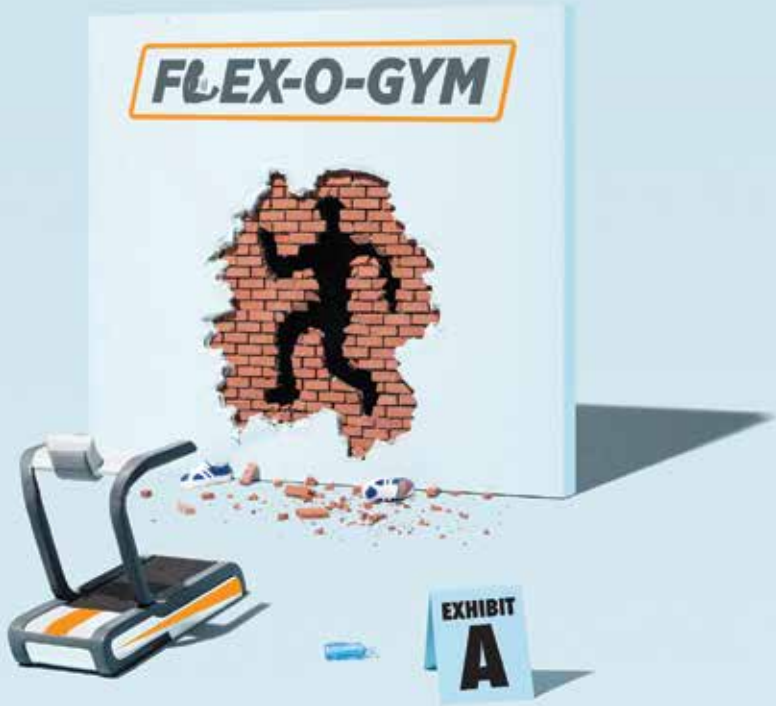
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Above: The River Pig structure extends across most of the street.

Upper left: “Every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night, cars park and blare their stereos, rev their engines, loiter, talk and drink outside their cars, and sometimes pee on the street,” said Chris Hahn, president of the Irving Street Lofts homeowners association.

Lower left: Street plazas draw more patrons in warm months, but nearby condominium residents complain of late-night noise and disturbances year round.

“13th Avenue” cont’d from page 1

music, or simply sit and relax with others.”

Photos on the website show children playing in the sun, shoppers strolling and diners socializing.

For Debbie Thomas, owner of a commercial and residential real estate company located on 13th Avenue, all the flowery rhetoric is countermanded by two words, “street closed,” guarding the blocks where plazas bloom.

The message repels potential customers of all other types of businesses, casting doubts that doors of retailers may be likewise closed.

Thomas is one of a growing number of community members who say the idyllic vision for 13th Avenue has gotten out of hand, that the street has purposes more vital to the community than boosting one type of business.

Who asked for this?

Furthermore, many are saying the whole scheme was foisted upon them without their consent.

“Who the hell asked for this?” Thomas said.

She is one of a chorus of business and property owners along the street who say they weren’t included in a five-year dialogue in which PBOT, academia and

“(The plaza program) has been jammed down peoples’ throats.”
— Property owner
Al Solheim

the neighborhood association incubated a shared but narrow vision.

“We didn’t get notification of any of this,” Thomas said.

Al Solheim, who owns several buildings on 13th, underwrote the application that put the street on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987. He chaired the advisory council that wrote the design guidelines adopted by the City Council in 1996.

“Everything that’s been done has been done without the engagement of property owners,” Solheim said. “Never has anyone, to my knowledge, asked their opinions or sent them notices.”

For that he blames PBOT and the Pearl District Neighborhood Association Planning and Transportation Committee. Accommodations to current problems can be worked out, he said, but the process must involve collaboration and the guidance of urban planners.

The plaza program “has been jammed down peoples’ throats,” he said.

Solheim’s discontents go beyond the street plazas to a wave of street diverters, intermittent one-way streets and bike lanes across the district.

“Just because you’re a PBOT planner doesn’t mean you should be planning a reconfigured street,” he said. “PBOT should be responding to a well-thought-out plan instead of just slap-dashing along.”

‘Best street in U.S.’

Solheim has been singing this tune since 2019. That’s when a Portland State University class led by a Seattle architect proposed the Pearl Promenade Project to “make Northwest 13th Avenue the best street in the United States.” Architect Josh Meharry said devoting the street to pedestrians and community programming was “far and away the best opportunity.”

Solheim heard the initial pitch and advised restraint, warning of unintended consequences and the need for professional evaluation, not merely the energy of activists. He reminded early dreamers that businesses on the street had not been included in the discussion.

But a PBOT planner in 2019 assured that “this is very early in the process,”

that changes proposed would be temporary and would have to withstand engineering review. Similar reassurances were offered as 13th Avenue’s transformation gained momentum. The pandemic elevated saving restaurants to the top of recovery priorities, a spot they have not relinquished as the economic pressures continue to force eateries to close.

Ramzy Hattar, owner of River Pig Saloon and Papi Chulos, which both have large street dining structures on 13th, said that appearances to the contrary, “we’re struggling” financially and in dealing with extraordinary crime problems.

While the street structures and their patrons are visible signs of life, negative effects on retailers are less obvious.

Dan Bozich, president of Urban Works Real Estate, spelled out the consequences of a restaurant-centric approach to 13th Avenue in a 500-word document.

The plaza approach, which includes banning traffic on two blocks of 13th (between Everett and Flanders and between Glisan and Irving streets) is no longer appropriate, Bozich wrote.

“While these temporary permits and accommodations were necessary to sustain restaurants and bars in the district at the time, we are now feeling the negative effects of the 13th Avenue street closures

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Above left: Northwest 13th Avenue circa 1984-85 before the Pearl District got its name.

Above right: Northwest 13th Avenue looking south, circa 1930.

Right: Unmanaged public seating sometimes attracts unwelcome occupants.

long after the pandemic restrictions have been lifted. Not only have these blocks remained closed to vehicular traffic for four years, their closure has also affected general travel and parking ability in the Pearl District as a whole.

Bozich wrote that street closures and other traffic restrictions make it difficult for customers to park near 13th Avenue.

“As a result of the street closures, retail businesses feel the impacts of frus-

Residents of Irving Street Lofts suffer a different kind of dissatisfaction from the street plazas.

Chris Hahn is president of the homeowners association at the 86-unit building, the first large-scale conversion of a warehouse into residential use in the Pearl District in 1989. Hahn’s problem is not so much the plaza installations themselves but the late-night patrons who congregate in the vicinity until and after the last bar closes at 2 a.m. “driven by a dining experience or alcohol and playing music and partying.”

“People here like the idea of local establishments on Northwest 13th, but not the idea of noise, garbage, puke, pee, etc.,” he said.

“Don’t conflate that behavior with the plaza,” countered David Dysert, chair of the PDNA planning committee.

Dysert called the nuisance activity primarily a police problem.

‘It’s not working’

But attempts to keep a lid on blowback have broken down. Sarah Figliozi, who supervises PBOT’s plaza program, has called a series of meetings with 13th Avenue community stakeholders.

“We’re not meeting our goals,” Figliozi told nine people who attended last month’s meeting.



She admitted that the program had been guilty of not making changes as issues arose and quick corrective action is now imperative.

“We want to focus on what we can do now,” said Figliozi, before running down a list of problems on the block between Hoyt and Irving streets (the most problematic of the two plaza blocks) identified at the first meeting: Lack of a central vision, excessive size of the plazas, poor plaza design, nighttime noise impacting neighbors and lack of parking.

“That closure is not working,” plaza program coordinator Megan Doherty conceded. “Everything is on the table.”

Four options to modify that block were presented. The two drawing most favor at the meeting were the most modest, returning parking to the northern half of the block and reducing the dining structures to the width of a parking lane.

“We’re not looking for consensus,” Figliozi said, just input on things that could be implemented within six weeks.

While she agrees with charges that the plaza program did not consider 13th Avenue’s wider policy vision, that issue cannot stand in the way of more immediate fixes. ■

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“That closure is not working.” — Portland Plaza Program Coordinator Mega Doherty

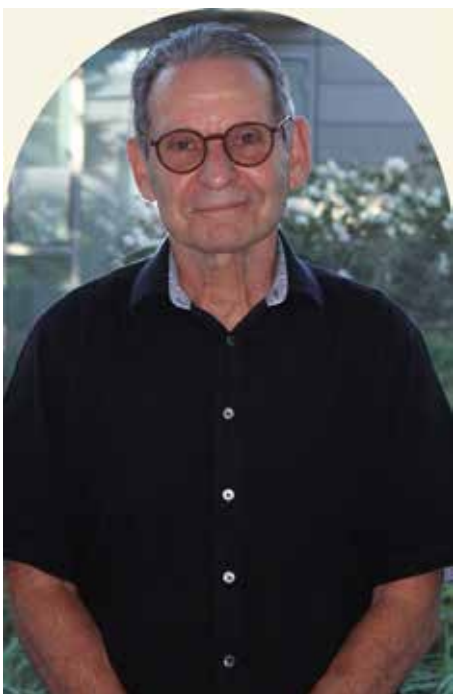
trated consumers and lack of consumer activity in the district. The Pearl District is home to the largest concentration of high-end furniture stores in the city. Retailers such as Design Within Reach, Room and Board, Joybird and Blu Dot are suffering from lack of customers willing to drive into the district to shop. Similarly, clothing retailers Filson, Revolv and Keen are among the many businesses expressing dissatisfaction with the lack of parking and drivability in the neighborhood.”

Your nomination please ...

The 29th annual NW Examiner Community Awards will be held on Saturday, Oct. 19, at The Watermark at the Pearl. We will again be honoring about 10 individuals/organizations that have made life in our neighborhoods better.

The selection process begins with nominations from readers. If you know a person or group making a difference in the neighborhoods served by the NW Examiner (Northwest Portland and adjacent Southwest neighborhoods), send us a message. Tell us what makes them special. A nomination form will be included in a coming issue of the newspaper, or send an email this month to allan@nwexaminer.com.





Far left: Stan Penkin (left) and Ken Thrasher spoke on the Northwest Community Conservancy at a recent meeting of the Pearl Rotary.

Left: Penkin's campaign website features a more youthful image of the candidate.

"Penkin brings" cont'd from page 1

Many in the room didn't see it that way.

"It feels like this came out of nowhere," said PDNA board officer Bill Bagnall, explaining that he knew nothing of a meeting with attorneys or the possibility of a compromise.

The deal required PDNA to testify in favor of the project.

"I had to reread it to make sure that's what it said," Bagnall said. "I didn't know that we would sell out and compromise."

Penkin said secrecy was called for lest PDNA "tip its hand" by discussing negotiations in an open meeting.

Ed O'Rourke, a board member whose homeowners' association voted to continue the fight, wanted to know who had asked for the money, and Penkin said he did.

That crossed an ethical line for O'Rourke and many on his board, including several who nevertheless voted for the arrangement.

"The optics are terrible," he said.

Making the deal in private was also unacceptable.

"In a vacuum with a few people, we're cutting a side deal," O'Rourke said. "It doesn't give the community a chance to weigh in on how they really feel."

"I don't think we should call it a victory," board member Dave Mitchell added. "It looks like a financial payoff."

Board member Jan Valentine said the PDNA should return the money with or without extracting a concession.

"Did they bribe us?" Valentine wanted to know.

Board member Sarah Hoeber had the same concern.

"Let's take the financial thing off the

plate," she said.

In the end, the board voted 9-5 with one abstention to approve the deal Penkin brought them.

Six years later, candidate Penkin reflected on the lessons of the Fremont Place settlement.

"It was an uncomfortable conversation," he admitted, though insisting "it was totally out in the open."

Even so, this was a special circumstance.

"A difficult conversation with a developer and a lawyer in the room—that's not something you can talk about in public," Penkin said.

"I'm not afraid of a tough conversation, never have been," he assured.

But sensing when privacy is the better part of valor has marked his behavior at several tense junctures during his presidency.

As crime and disorder spread across the central city, Penkin broadened his reach, launching the independent Westside Public Safety Action Committee in 2019 (later renamed the Portland Public Safety Action Committee), a nonprofit not subject to open meetings requirements and to which reporters had access by invitation only. He said he preferred this arrangement to allow participants to "speak freely."

Last year, Penkin ruled that PDNA board meetings would be held only every other month despite consistently full agendas. That pushed more decisions onto a more select number who are on the Executive Committee, whose meeting schedule is not on the PDNA website and had not been covered by a reporter for years.

As PDNA's representative to Neighbors West/Northwest, he gave his board brief and anodyne reports on coalition action, sharing neither intense controversies nor positions he was taking. Three years ago, that caught up with him and he apologized to his neighborhood board, which had only learned about his volatile statements by reading them in the paper.

Since the Fremont Place Apartments matter, Penkin has not championed other issues that could draw NIMBY (not in my backyard) charges. He finally came out against continued operation of the River District Navigation Center on Northwest Naito Parkway after holding off livability complaints of neighbors for years. Otherwise, he has stepped back from challenging development projects.

Penkin's high moments have been marked by large public forums bringing together local and even state officials to address topics such as crime, behavioral health and public safety. About 500 people attended a Livability Summit at the Armory to hear the mayor, the county chair, the deputy police chief and other city officials address neighborhood concerns. Penkin got them on stage by promising they would not have to field angry

questions from the audience, a deal he kept by passing on only written questions and accepting noncommittal answers.

An online Behavioral Health Forum he moderated and helped organize last fall drew about 400 people, featuring panelists from the city, county, Metro and the state Legislature who had not come together at one time before. It built momentum for reconsideration of drug decriminalization and treatment resources in the state.

His campaign for a District 4 council seat puts homelessness and public safety as his top priority.

"We must ensure we have enforcement and accountability ... no longer allowing open-air drug dealing and bringing greater resolve to providing treatment options for those who are addicted and mentally ill. We also must hold accountable those who break our windows, spread graffiti, break into our buildings and trash our streets."

Supporting small business is his second priority. He supports "tax credits and reimbursements for such things as business losses due to a large storm or for broken windows."

Before taking leadership roles in safety and livability issues, Penkin was known in Portland for supporting the arts. The City Council declared Stan Penkin Day in 2017 in recognition of his "commitment to the community and leadership with the arts."

"Arts and culture speak to the heart, soul and spirit of a community," he wrote. "While the arts, including culinary arts, are a major driver of economic development, including jobs, it also fosters community, creativity, innovation and pride."

In the one area where he might have offered original insights—neighborhoods—he instead punted, issuing two commonly heard sentiments: "Known for decades across the country as the model for public engagement, support for neighborhoods has slowly eroded in the past few years. This is not good for our city and must be corrected."

How would he reverse the decline in neighborhood support? By increased funding, and if so, through what administrative structure? Is the proposed system consolidating seven neighborhood coalitions into four workable? How does he view the recently adopted city ordinance reducing public notice and neighborhood involvement in development review? If he has views and strategies on such topics, he is not sharing them with voters. ■

Editor's note:

In 2020, Stan Penkin introduced a motion that banned Allan Classen from attendance at Neighbors West/Northwest meetings for allegedly reporting comments made in a confidential session. He rescinded the motion two months later.

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"[Higher fees] will likely shut down most of the outdoor seating in the city."
— Jim Kennett, co-owner, Hotel Cafe

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Above: Three connected Street Seat installations filled most of a block on Northwest 21st Avenue between Irving and Johnson streets.

Right: The Hostel Café had a street tent in the early months of the pandemic, later replacing it with a more permanent covered shelter.



Many restaurants opt out of Street Seats program as costs rise

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

During the pandemic, the city invited restaurants and bars to use the street as an extension of their businesses without fees or the enforcement of rules.

Many businesses took advantage of the Street Seats program, but the free-for-all ended with interim rules in 2022, and last fall the Portland Bureau of Transportation enacted a formal fee structure and design standards.

It now costs at least \$800 for an application and permit, plus \$750-\$1,000 per year for each parking space claimed. Seasonal May-October permits cost \$400 per year.

(This is separate from sidewalk seating, which costs \$9 annually per linear foot occupied.)

The new rules persuaded Jim Kennett, co-owner of the Hostel Café at Northwest 18th and Glisan streets, to remove the covered shelter he had been using since the COVID pandemic.

In addition to the rising rates, Kennett would have had to put a more permanent roof on his custom-built 8x40-foot shelter, compounding the infeasibility of the whole venture.

“Do the people who made this decision on pricing realize they will likely shut down most of the outdoor seating in the city?” he wrote in an email. “Most restaurants can’t take on these costs. It’s a shame, because the outdoor seating in Portland gives the city such a great vibe.”

Papa Haydn also recently removed its large street enclosure at Northwest 23rd and Irving streets.

Function PDX, a popup brewery at 919 NW 23rd Ave., took out its street shelter last fall after the new policies were adopted.

“The benefits didn’t outweigh the costs,” owner Casey Armstrong said.

In addition to fees, the shelter attracted campers, graffiti and maintenance burdens.

“It just became more hassle than anything else,” said Armstrong, adding that his backyard patio provided more comfortable and controllable space.

Most of the east side of Northwest 21st Avenue between Irving and Johnson streets had three connected Street Seats shelters. Coffee Time, R&R Bar and Bhuna Restaurant all pulled the plug last year.

“By late last winter we realized we either needed to take it down or spend the money to build something more substantial,” Coffee Time owner Susan Thomas said. “Since the city had announced it was in the process of creating a new fee structure and building guidelines ... we felt it was easier just to remove the seating.”

Nob Hill Bar & Grill owner Greg Hermens is waiting for details from PBOT before deciding what to do with his shelters on both Northwest 23rd and Lovejoy streets.

Although costs for use of the parking lane are rising, Hermens said they are still well below the price per square foot of indoor space.

PBOT spokesperson Dylan Rivera said there were 80 street seating permits in the Northwest and Pearl district during the 2022-23 permit cycle. This year, there are 37. That roughly matches the citywide decline during the same period, from 399 down to 180.

Rivera conceded that some businesses have used street space without applying for a permit.

Most restaurant operators interviewed felt their street seating attracted additional customers.

Bristol Kelley, who operated The Abbey Bar on Northwest 21st and 23rd avenues from 2014-19, surveyed operators of 15 eateries in the district. Most found Street Seating popular with patrons and valuable to their businesses.

“It brings a feeling of liveliness and community to walk down the street and see people eating and enjoying themselves,” Kelley said, echoing a common sentiment.

But Street Seat operators are sensitive to the rising fees and say they may drop out of the program if costs and regulations go further.

More than one complained of the lack of guidance in erected structures that won’t fall down.

Slabtown resident Wendy Hawkins has been a fan of the Street Seats program, but she senses that the placements “are not used much anymore,” and are often occupied by non-customers.

Hawkins, who is a member of the Northwest District Association Planning Committee, surmised that restaurants short on staffing may find serving outdoor tables less efficient than confining patrons to a smaller space.

Several members of the committee said many shelters are unattractive and are poorly maintained.

One restaurant owner thought the installations “make Northwest look like a shantytown” and should not be allowed.

Committee co-Chair Steve Pinger said the average parking meter in the district collects about \$800 in annual revenue, nearly the cost of operating a Street Seat. Committee member Roger Vrilakas found it reasonable that businesses pay the approximate market rate for their use of the public right of way, a view shared by many of the restaurant owners surveyed by Kelley.

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“[Higher fees] will likely shut down most of the outdoor seating in the city.”
— Jim Kennett, co-owner, Hotel Cafe

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The Love Shack interior mimics an “upscale beach bar.”

THE LOVE SHACK (above), a cocktail bar associated with G-Love restaurant next door at Northwest 21st and Savier streets, opened last month. The décor evokes an “upscale beach bar.’ At the center of the space, a palm-covered palapa shelter and woven rattan pendant hang from the ceiling over four wood-lined booths.

LA REAL TAQUERIA, with locations in Tigard and Newberg, opened in the former Los Gorditos space at 922 NW Davis St. last month. It’s open until 2 a.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

The Portland Bureau of Transportation has launched a **FOOD TRUCK PILOT PROGRAM**, permitting mobile food trucks to park and vend from city streets. A truck will stop by the NV Apartments, 1261 NW Overton St., on Thursdays from 5 p.m.-7:30 p.m. “This pilot project is another step in increasing the vitality and livability of our central city,” Transportation Commissioner Mingus Mapps said.

Two restaurants owned by Micah Camden’s MMMCo, **SUPERDELUXE** in the Heartline Building at 850 NW 13th Ave. and **BOXER RAMEN** at Northwest 23rd and Savier streets, are in Chapter 11 reorganization. Camden said the debt reconfigurations were necessitated by losses during the COVID pandemic, and both restaurants will continue to operate. The company also owns Kinnamons Bakery, 1241 NW Johnson St., and Baes Fried Chicken, 225 SW Ash St.



Shoe company makes grand opening

An international retailer opened on Northwest 23 rd Avenue in a big way.

Zurich-based On Inc., an athletic shoe competitor to Nike, celebrated its U.S. headquarters store last month in the 3,400 square foot space formerly occupied by 23Hoyt with a party featuring DJ music, VIP guests and oyster snacks.

Founded in Switzerland in 2010, On opened is American headquarters in a small Pearl office in 2013. The company went public in 2021, and sales have spiked since. The company now leases 60,000 square feet in the Tanner Point building for about 250 employees. It is touted as the fastest growing running shoe brand in the United States since 2016.

The store at Northwest 23rd and Hoyt sells the company’s full line of products, which includes apparel and shoes for running, trail running, tennis and everyday wear.

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Vol. 30, No. 3 “News You Can’t Always Believe” March 2024

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Fentanyl poisoning gives Pearl pet owners a scare



Gabrielle Starr is delighted that Vera made a full recovery, but realizes there could have been a different outcome had the seven-month old bichon not gotten immediate medical intervention.

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

Vera, a seven-month-old bichon, fell unconscious after consuming a substance off a Pearl District street.

“She just lay on the street and wouldn’t move,” said Curtis Holloway, who carried her home.

“Her head was limp,” said Holloway’s wife, Gabrielle Starr. “She was unable to hold it up. Her whole body was limp.”

They took Vera to Northwest Neighborhood Veterinary Hospital, where she perked up immediately after receiving a dose of Narcan.

“I had seen a feature on KOIN 6 News about dogs ingesting opioids on the street, and I was very thankful that I had seen it, because it gave me a good idea about what could be going on with our little Vera,” Starr said.

A follow-up visit at DoveLewis Veterinary Emergency & Specialty Hospital confirmed that she had most likely ingested fentanyl. She was held overnight and returned home the next day.

“There were no lasting issues, or appearance of any harm, the next day for our little fuzz ball,” Starr said.

“Fentanyl’s fast action can lead to tragic outcomes for animals and requires pet owners to seek veterinary care immediately,” DoveLewis spokesperson Molly Laird said.

Tess Payne, director of community engagement at DoveLewis, added, “We’re observing an increase in cases related to fentanyl toxicity,” though it’s not a daily occurrence, as is swallowing prescription drugs or household products.

“We started treating cases years ago when fentanyl patches began being prescribed because dogs eat them from their family’s garbage after use,” Payne said. “We don’t want pet owners to be frightened of walking their dogs. It’s far more likely that a pet would ingest a drug or toxin inside of their own home than on a walk.”

She was unable to confirm whether any pets have died at DoveLewis from fentanyl poisoning.

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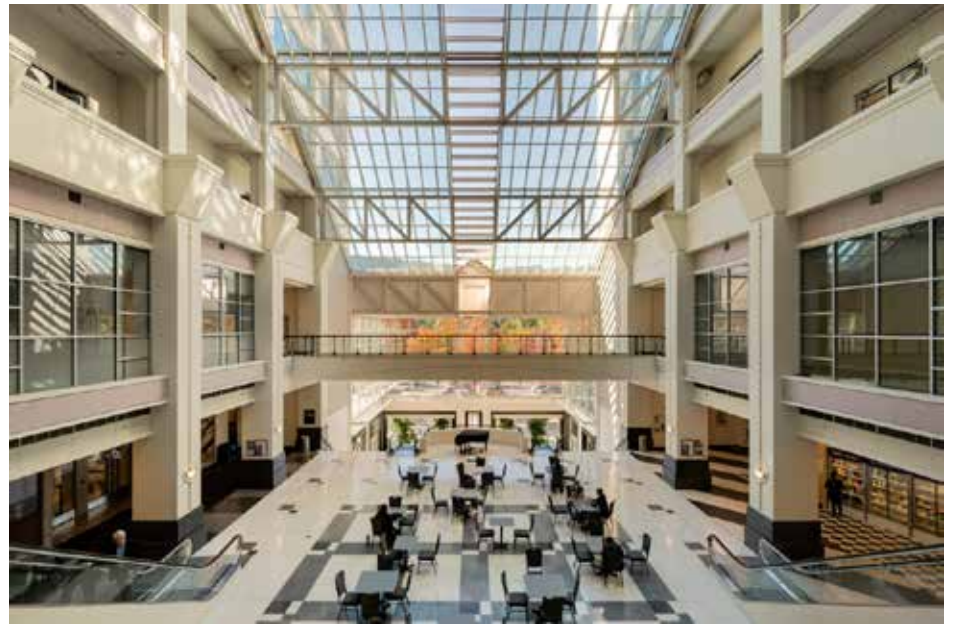
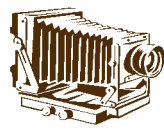
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Top: Montgomery Ward circa 1927.

Above left: Unico Property Group had bold plans to remodel Montgomery Park and turn the surrounding blocks into a mixed-use district.

Above right: The atrium was the main feature of the 1980s transformation of the Montgomery Ward warehouse and store into the Montgomery Park office building.

Hard times come again

BY FRED LEESON

Portland’s urban core clearly isn’t what it used to be. A recent consultant’s report suggested that office vacancies will hit 40 percent this year, and it might be higher already with unexpired leases going unused. Fewer workers downtown mean fewer business opportunities for others.

A dramatic example is the nine-story Montgomery Park building, which sold for \$255 million in 2019. It was flipped recently back to the lender for \$37.7 million.

“The bargain price points to the woeful state of Portland’s commercial real estate market,” wrote The Oregonian business reporter Jeff Manning.

Montgomery Park joins Jackson Tower, the J.K. Gill Building and the Loyalty Building as prominent office sites that have been turned back to their lenders without winning any alternative bids. Clearly, big-money investors currently are keeping their wallets in their pockets.

Swept away with the pandemic was a plan approved by the Portland Historic Landmarks Commission to revitalize the old Montgomery Ward building by adding a glassy western entrance and several retail and restaurant spaces. Plans once approved by the

commission for renovating four other historic sites in or near downtown also appear to be dead or on hold. (Notable examples include re-use proposals for the former Multnomah County Courthouse and First Church of Christ Scientist.)

For the most part, central cities evolve organically. Offices bring workers who eat lunch, drink coffee, go to bars and restaurants after work and frequent nearby retail shops. All those ancillary enterprises suffer and close when workers and shoppers disappear.

What also is lost is the communal experience Portlanders used to feel by shopping at the major department stores, going to movie theaters and concerts. As people become more entrenched and isolated on their cell-phones and computers, what Portland—and other cities—lose is a “sense of place” that makes a city feel different and special.

What does the future hold? The “pandemic-induced deterioration” does not appear to have speedy solutions. Substantial numbers of workers have found it preferable to work from home, and internet-based shopping shows no signs of ebbing. Downtown and its important historic buildings could take on much more of a ghost town feel unless smart minds can conceive of ways to make the urban core vibrant again.

Faced with the glut of new shopping opportunities in the suburbs, Portland more than 50 years ago launched a wide-ranging Downtown Plan aimed at retaining its urban importance. Its major conclusions at the time led to the creation of Waterfront Park, the downtown transit malls and development regulations that sought to place taller buildings in the heart of the core—all good ideas at the time.

Now it might be time to gather concerned citizens and smart minds from many specialties to undertake a new long-range plan, taking into consideration the unavoidable consequences of the current trends.

What’s at stake is the loss of urban reputation that could lead to someone speaking of Portland (to borrow the famous line from Gertrude Stein): “There is no there there.”

It would be a communal loss ranging beyond our pocketbooks.

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Last month's story about a couple battling fentanyl addiction and living in a tent along Northwest 16th Avenue has a positive update. With the assistance of Leif Spencer of Loving One Another (right), Joshua and Kristen were accepted in a shelter within about two days.



Northwest Logie Trail Road between Northwest Skyline Boulevard and Highway 30 was closed for two weeks in February due to a landslide. Heavy rains following severe ice and winds weakened trees and destabilized hillsides.



Sarah Faik, senior at Lincoln High School, is the Portland Pearl Rotary student of the month for February. She founded Lincoln's first environmental justice committee and is a member of seven other school organizations. The daughter of Moroccan immigrants who received doctorates in New York, she plans to be a surgeon.



Jerry A. Mijangos, 27, of California (left) was arrested for the third time in about two years for graffiti he painted on many central city properties. The Portland Police Central Precinct Neighborhood Response Team, in coordination with the Multnomah County District Attorney's Strategic Prosecution and Services Unit, considers him one of the city's most prolific graffiti vandals.



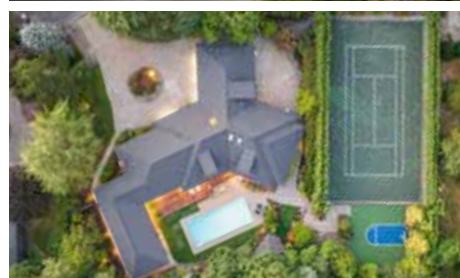
Lion dancers will parade Saturday, March 2, in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Portland Chinatown Museum at 127 NW Third Ave., from 6-8 p.m. The party will include live music from Yat Sing Music Club, complimentary tea and snacks from Taiji Teahouse & Cafe, an artists-led tour by Re:Generation and a silent auction. Admission is free.



The recently formed Friends of Couch Park held a Valentine's Day party despite bitter weather last month. Photo by Kerry Duff



A man barricaded himself in an apartment in the 2600 block of Northwest Upshur Street on Feb. 23, triggering an hours-long standoff before Portland Police Bureau tactical teams arrested him peacefully. Armed with a knife, the man had tried earlier to enter a house on Northwest 28th Place, but fled after a gun was fired at him.



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1,461 SF • 3 BD • 2 BA | **ML# 24109363**
The Apa Clarke Team 503.806.9773

Oregon City **\$479,900**
1,110 SF • 3 BD • NEW ROOF | **ML# 24146157**
The Spears Team 503.522.8269