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P.16

MARCH 2025/ VOLUME 38, NO. 7 **FREE** SERVING PORTLAND'S NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOODS SINCE 1986 [f nwexaminer](#)

District 4 City Council Members Eric Zimmerman, Olivia Clark and Mitch Green talked to a full house at a City Club of Portland forum last month.

# For the people, not bureaus

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

Portland's new city charter is already transformational by one measure: Westside neighborhood representatives are getting attention from their council members like never before.

"There's a breath of fresh air blowing down Fourth Avenue right now," said Roger Vrilakas, who is typically more jaded after 40 years of service on the Northwest District Association Planning Committee.

His neighborhood, in particular, is taking notice. All three of its District 4 council members have separately met with the committee in their first two months on the job, and their interest goes beyond mere attendance. The trio of first-time elected officials has largely adopted its constituents' sense of struggling against recalcitrant bureaus.

For instance, council member Mitch Green criticized the city's top-down handling of the

## Neighbors see something new, council members taking their side

Continued on page 6

## Homeless Sweeps and Body Parts R-US



The company that removes the city's homeless camps has an interesting sideline.

### What do these businesses have in common?

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

Lance Hamel owns two businesses that may be coming to 2705 NW Nicolai St., a nondescript warehouse next to Montgomery Park.

One is Rapid Response Bio-Clean, a company that contracts with the city of Portland to remove homeless encampments. The city paid Rapid Response more than \$12 million last year.

The other is Nari Bio LLC, an inchoate body donation service planning to sell human corpses for medical training.

What would such disparate enterprises be doing under one roof?

Las Hamel Investments LLC, a company registered to Lance Hamel, met with Portland Bureau

Continued on page 14



District Attorney Nathan Vasquez told KPTV Fox 12 his entire staff was outraged when they saw video of threats and intimidation against neighbors and vowed to launch an enforcement campaign.

## 'Quite frankly, I was outraged'

District Attorney Nathan Vasquez told KPTV Fox 12 last month that his entire staff was outraged upon seeing video of threats and intimidation against neighbors of a drug dealing hot spot at Northwest 19th and Couch streets.

Vasquez vowed an enforcement campaign in the area where weekly distribution of free handouts of drug paraphernalia, food and hygiene supplies for addicts have also attracted drug dealers.

Images of a masked gang threatening a resident trying to reach her home sent the DA over the top.

"That particular piece—that upset me," Vasquez told KPTV. "No person should be harassed or threatened in any manner. If we can identify people who are engaged in threatening behavior against neighbors, we will proceed with criminal charges on those people."

Before the month ended, Senior Deputy District Attorney Glen Ujifusa announced that "Portland People's Outreach Program has moved the location where they were giving out supplies. We continue to work with Portland Police on this issue and have a meeting scheduled with interested parties to discuss future steps."

Images on page 9 —>

INSIDE



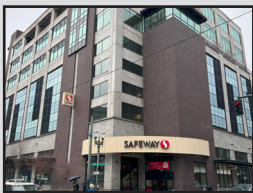
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Harm reduction test



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Public records redux



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Remembering our funniest writer



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Development Map



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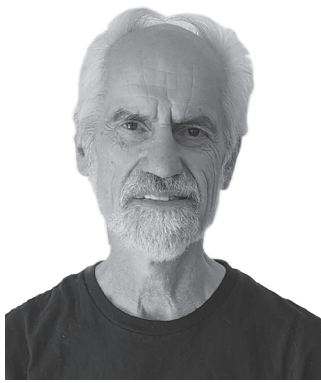


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# The test before us

An ideology fails when, in order to preserve it, one must stoop to the indefensible. Such a point has been reached at a corner in Northwest Portland, where a woman walking to her home was taunted by a band of masked men cackling at her vulnerability and braying, “Have a good night, Michelle,” “Where are all your friends now?” and “You better run.”

She retreated into the relative safety of her home, where she repeatedly receives phone calls threatening bodily harm or worse.

This is the test for Portlanders of all persuasions. Who in this scenario is entitled to the support of civil society: the woman or the thugs? A citizen sticking her neck out to be a good neighbor and speak up against depravity, or a band of anonymous men commandeering her street for drug trafficking?

I don’t know the names of the people behind the masks, obviously, and cannot ask them to explain themselves, but their behavior has defined them. For months people who look and act like them have swooped in after the Friday night drug paraphernalia handouts at Northwest 19th and Couch that draw addicts into one convenient marketplace for fentanyl fixes.

This should not be a difficult question, yet for months city and county officials, prominent religious leaders and the news media have come to the wrong conclusion. They have taken the side of individual liberty, the right to put any substance into one’s own body and remain free of all judgment, and an organization preaching these as paramount values. They call it “harm reduction.” But what if reducing harm to one harms another, or perhaps a whole neighborhood?

The head of a local congregation told me the neighbors were overreacting to the



unaesthetic appearance of tents on the sidewalks, and they should marshal up more forbearance.

Politicians have said nothing can be done; possession of illegal drugs was (note the verb tense) not a crime, and homelessness should not be criminalized.

Who knows what reporters and editors were thinking. Perhaps they saw nothing out of the ordinary going on here.

(It must be said that homelessness is a side issue. When homelessness and addiction intertwine, defenders of the current disorder choose the more sympathetic label.)

By choice or default, most Portland institutions have failed the test on this issue.

Two institutions did not fail us.

KPTV Fox 12 news has been reporting on the consequences of the Portland People’s Outreach Project giveaways since last

summer, collecting shocking videos of drug deals, open drug use, general chaos and the intimidating scene at Michelle Milla’s front gate. A recent three-part series opened eyes at the Multnomah County District Attorney’s office.

“Neighbors are facing a problem they say defies common sense; the distribution of pipes and needles to drug users in a Northwest Portland school zone,” reported KPTV’s Pete Ferryman, “But nothing has changed.”

Multnomah County District Attorney Nathan Vasquez saw the report and reacted with clear eyes.

“Quite frankly, I was outraged,” Vasquez told KPTV, “We saw people who just simply want some very basic courtesies and basic answers. What I saw in that recording is something that deeply concerns me in our community right now.”

The scene at the front gate went over the top.

“That particular piece, that upset me,” he said. “No person should be harassed or threatened in any manner. If we can identify people who are engaged in threatening behavior against neighbors, we will proceed with criminal charges on those people.”

I am not usually a law-and-order guy, but where there is no order, force, destruction and cruelty flourish. And without the ability to protect civic values or even our homes, we cannot make our city what we want it to be.

If that message comes from unexpected sources, it still needs to be heard. Truth spoken by the “wrong” messenger is still the truth. We will not be saved by fealty to threadbare ideologies that do not nreflect the reality in front of us. ■

COMMENT ON NWEXAMINER.SUBSTACK.COM or email: [allan@nwexaminer.com](mailto:allan@nwexaminer.com)

## Readers Reply

Letters can be sent to: [allan@nwexaminer.com](mailto:allan@nwexaminer.com) or 1209 SW 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.

### Saber-rattling

Let’s rattle the sabers and get the ignorant public worked up [“It could happen here,” March].

Forest Park is a fabulous park that walkers, runners and bicyclists use regularly, along with campers, homeless people and more. Google will tell you 90 percent of fires are started by humans from carelessness, smoking cigarettes, unauthorized camping, etc., so your article should state this.

Maybe 5 to 10 percent are started by utilities from fallen trees, breakers, electrocutions of animals and more, but these are usually fires near distribution

lines, not transmission lines.

Portland General Electric wants to cut trees to widen the path because it wants to reduce the chances of any fire and remove any chance of grounding. Maybe we should start with removing human traffic from Forest Park too.

Big bad PGE is trying to ensure that all cellphones, air conditioning, computers and electric cars will work in the future. If you all still want to remove all power lines from Forest Park, go ahead, but be sure to turn your cellphones and computers into the NW Examiner when they no longer work.

George Osgood

Editor’s note: Osgood is president of Beaverton-based P & R Technologies, “the industry leader in power line markers.”

### Where’s the outrage?

I am so distraught about PGE and Forest Park. It seemed so outlandish that I didn’t even take it seriously until I read your article. Those guys aren’t trained forest ecology experts. They don’t know the science of invasive species and fire control. The city hearings administrator isn’t trained in forest ecology. None of the city councilors will have any clue about this science.

Why isn’t Portland Parks & Recreation up in arms? Why didn’t the Forest Park Conservancy make sure this issue got the attention it desperately needed? Where is the rest of the media outrage?

I don’t understand why this has just been left to move forward when we’re all supposed to cherish Forest Park and prioritizing its preservation is codified in its stewardship agreement.

It’s too late to save it now.

Autumn Sharp  
NW 23rd Ave.

Cont’d on page 5

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## Thomas BeLusko



Thomas Christopher BeLusko Sr., who grew up in Northwest Portland and attended Cathedral Grade School, died at age 79 on Dec. 26, 2024, of pancreatic cancer. He was born on April 12, 1945. He graduated from Benson High School and the University of Portland. He served as an Air Force officer during the Korean War. He worked his entire career for the company founded by his father, Jos. V. BeLusko Co., in Northwest Portland. He married Susan Van Metre in 1969, and they lived for many years in Cedar Hills. She died in 2018. He is survived by his son, Thomas Jr.; brothers, Joseph, Charles and David; and one grandchild.

## Jan Secunda



Janis Patricia Secunda, a longtime Linnton resident and citizen activist, died at age 81 on Dec. 18, 2024, of cancer. She was born in Redlands, Calif., on Dec. 11, 1943. She attended 54 different schools, including Yakima Valley Community College. She worked as a fiber optics installer and manufacturer.

She cofounded the Linnton Environmental Group, which worked on soil and water conservation projects, including ivy removal and trail improvements in Forest Park. She is survived by her husband, John Shaw; children, Pat Bonner, Kim Bonner, Judah Secunda, Joe Secunda, Reed Secunda and Annie Dismore; brothers, Johnny and Michael VanSandt; 15 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

## Dr. Joseph D. Matarazzo



Dr. Joseph D. Matarazzo, a longtime Portland Heights resident who advised five U.S. presidents, died Jan. 23 at age 99. Giuseppe (Joseph) Dominic Matarazzo was born on Nov. 12, 1925 in Caiazzo, Italy. He emigrated to the United States at age 13 and attended public school in Schenectady, N.Y. After service in the Navy, he received a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Northwestern University in 1952. In 1957, he was recruited by Oregon Health Sciences University to establish a pioneering department of medical psychology. He served as the department's chair from 1957 to 1996, and remained a professor until 2006. Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Nixon, Reagan and George H.W. Bush consulted with him and/or offered him positions in the federal government. He was involved in the selection of Portland police officers for 20 years and trained laypeople in counseling at William Temple House. He married Ruth Gadbois in 1949; she died in 2020. He is survived by his son, Harris; daughters, Elizabeth Holman and Sara Matarazzo; five grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

## Glenn McMath



Glenn Doyle McMath, a sixth-generation Oregonian who grew up in Kings Heights and later chaired the Lincoln High School Alumni Association, died at age 63 on Jan 15 after a 19-month battle with pancreatic cancer. He was born in Portland on Dec. 2, 1961, and attended Chapman Grade School and Lincoln High School. He graduated from the University of Oregon in 1984 with a bachelor's degree in finance. After a 30-year career in medical products and equipment sales, he became a real estate broker in 2017, working for Windermere out of its Northwest 20th Avenue office. He was a member of the Multnomah Athletic Club. He married Dickey Beatty in 1990. He is survived by his wife, Dickey; daughter, Lucy, and sisters, Lisa Holzgang and Terry McMath. A celebration of life will be held at the Multnomah Athletic Club on Sunday, March 23, from 2:30-5 p.m.

## Death notices

**JOHN ARCHER**, 94, attended Lincoln High School.

**DAVID BARTELS**, 60, volunteer at Blanchet House.

**THOMAS BRADEN**, 84, Multnomah Athletic Club member.

**J. RANDOLPH DEWEESE**, 82, resident of Portland Heights and Goose Hollow.

**GERALD FULLMAN**, 97, Multnomah Athletic Club and Arlington Club member.

**KATHLEEN GRANT**, 71, counselor at Catlin Gabel School.

**DONALD JACKSON**, 73, member of Trinity Episcopal Cathedral.

**RICHARD E LAKEMAN**, 93, president of Pittock Mansion Society and Oregon School of Arts & Crafts.

**LORRAINE NAGEL**, 95, Multnomah Athletic Club member, soloist for Mello Macs.

**DUANE PAULSON**, 97, member of Multnomah Athletic Club.

**RONALD KENT RAGEN**, 89, 1953 Lincoln High School graduate and Multnomah Athletic Club member.

**STEVEN T. WATSON**, 71, Multnomah Athletic Club member.

**ELIZABETH E. JACOB**, 85, active in housing advocacy at First United Methodist Church.

**JOHN DOERFLER**, 86, Multnomah Athletic Club member.

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Reader Laura Curry points out that the “needle exchange” program making weekly stops on Northwest 19th Avenue does not collect used syringes, leading to discarded biowaste.

Fear of fire

When I saw the headline, “It Could Happen Here,” I wondered if President Donald Trump could fire local agencies, as he’s doing federally. I’ve feared a Forest Park fire would be set by Trump followers during his last administration. Could PGE put the wires underground without cutting trees down?

Sharon Joy  
NW Upshur St.

Not a needle exchange

The article on Jessica Vega Pederson’s Stadiumhood walk [“Multnomah County chair not in step with neighborhood activists,” March] noted her office’s refusal to condemn activities of the Portland People’s Outreach Project. The story included a quote from Pederson’s office: “Multnomah County’s Harm Reduction program does not ask someone’s organizational affiliation when collecting used or contaminated syringes at service sites.” This is misleading. I cannot state strongly enough that PPOP does not collect used needles. It is not a needle exchange: it is a handout.

Laura Curry  
NW 16th Ave.

Suggestion for co-op

I’m a longtime Food Front member and once served on the co-op’s board. Many members watched in dismay last year as the co-op board frittered away opportunities to attract another grocer to the Food Front property. Ultimately, the board proposed—and members overwhelmingly approved—the sale of the property to a real estate investment company. The sale should close in March and the co-op will net more than \$1 million. The question now is: What to do with the proceeds? One way or another, the money will be donated, and the co-op will go dark. Here’s a suggestion for the disbursal.

Send out a ballot giving members a choice of recipients. Require them to select only one. Then divide the money accordingly. For example, if 45 percent of the votes favor Friendly House, then Friendly House gets 45 percent of the proceeds. I also suggest the prospective recipients make a presentation at a general membership meeting and each prospective recipient include a summary of their proposal to accompany the emailed ballots.

Steve Mayes  
NW 53rd Drive

Cremation releases mercury

Thank you for your coverage of the proposed Rapid Response Bio-Clean waste disposal facility at Northwest 27th and Nicolai in the March NW Examiner. While this proposal is bound to be controversial, there is one aspect that has to be a hard no. Cremation of human remains must not be allowed to take place. Trash and debris from homeless camp sweeps and trash cleanups have to go somewhere, but opening a crematorium next to a dense neighborhood is completely unacceptable. Bio-Clean wants a location closer to the area where it conducts sweeps. On the surface, that seems to be a reasonable idea, but in fact, it is the worst idea ever to include cremation as part of those plans here, right in the city. Dental fillings that are euphemistically called “silver” fillings, also known as dental amalgam, are composed of about 50 percent mercury. Mercury is a known potent neurotoxin. When human remains with amalgam dental fillings are cremated, the incinerated mercury goes up the chimney, then quickly falls back to earth onto neighbors. Don’t fall for the organic composting and recycling aspects, which are merely greenwashing for this toxic proposal. Please join me in vigorously opposing at least the cremation component of Bio-Clean’s proposed plan. It is incompatible with human health and safety.

Caroline Skinner  
N. Kellogg St.

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Mitch Green: Skeptical of streetcar plan.



Olivia Clark: Making the rounds.



Eric Zimmerman: Bureaus have work to do.

**“I am definitely optimistic that we might have a better system that prioritizes residents and homeowners over special interests and the city bureaucracy.”**  
—Todd Zarnitz, president, Northwest District Association

Montgomery Park Area Plan, adopted by the former council last December—a plan futilely resisted by NWDA for six years.

If the old guard rushed to pass the plan before their terms expired, it suggests they suspected that new winds were coming. With good reason.

“I’m pretty disappointed with the Montgomery Park Area Plan process,” said Green, likening it to token input reaching the council only after the plan was “already fully baked.”

For the first time, someone in City Hall had spoken to NWDA’s dissatisfaction with the project, which involves rezoning industrial land and extending a Portland Streetcar line to Montgomery Park.

Green was not merely playing to the activists in the room. He made the point more vigorously at a council work session in January, at which he lashed into the plan’s financial underpinnings.

“I’m very concerned about the streetcar,” he said. “I wonder why we have a \$178 million plan for broader housing and economic development that would probably happen without that streetcar.”

It’s a suspicion that cannot be proved, but government operatives had not even entertained such possibilities. And that was not the only problem.

“I view that as a streetcar-led development process and not a transportation solution. I want to take a second look at that,” Green said.

Green was leery of a project amounting to more than 90 percent of the city’s capital improvement budget without having an identified source of those funds.

He sounded a lot like Steve Pinger, the committee’s most stalwart skeptic of the Montgomery Park Area Plan, who has called it development subsidies masquerading as transportation improvement.

**Broken trust**

Council member Eric Zimmerman wasn’t as well-versed on the Montgomery Park plan, but he was similarly candid about other bureaus that have lost touch with their neighborhood constituents: the Portland Bureau of Transportation and Portland Parks & Recreation.

“I think parks has a ton of work to do with building trust within the community before we ask voters for a levy again,” Zimmerman told the NWDA Planning Committee. “I think they need to hear that, and they heard it loud and clear from me in a way that I don’t know has been communicated in the past.”

Nor is he a fan of PBOT’s reimagining of public rights of ways for pedestrian plazas and dining shelters. Some of the underused plazas were “really huge failures” by attracting “bad behavior,” situations he believes could have been avoided had the bureau “really incorporated” neighborhood input.

That failing is less likely now that there are “district-elected representatives holding the line.”

In the absence of authentic local community involvement, Zimmerman said, the city has been swayed by advocacy groups pushing for citywide approaches that miss the peculiarities of each locality.

“I don’t know that this is going to work in a district model,” he said.

Zimmerman also takes NWDA’s side on one of its pet peeves: the large amount in system development charges assessed on new construction that are not being directed to the local impact area.

“What have they done with SDCs they’ve collected?” Planning Committee Chair Greg Theisen asked. “From this neighborhood, I think it’s \$18-plus million over the last 15 years, and we’ve seen pretty much none of it.”

NWDA has been waiting for the park in Slabtown promised 13 years ago that still is not under construction, a hangup blamed on funding entanglements.

Meanwhile, SDCs collected for park construction cannot be applied to runaway maintenance backlogs at existing parks.

“I am challenging the city to reevaluate how they interpret the use of SDCs,” Zimmerman said, “and I’m taking the tack that SDCs are supposed to only be used for increasing capacity. ... When you take some of the parks in Portland that aren’t being used by everyday families because of bad behavior that’s going on there or because of nothing other than grass there, improvements to the area that bring people back is increasing capacity. ... It’s been a pet project for me.”

Clark is not as outspoken on issues as her counterparts, but she has made a fast study of the local issues not always making the news. She is the one most often seen at neighborhood meetings and events. She speaks of the collegiality of the three District 4 council members and their willingness to compromise for common goals.

Other inner-Westside neighborhood groups are also getting to know their new representatives.

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The panel was introduced by City Club Chair Jon Stride. Sophie Peel of Willamette Week was the moderator.

“We had Olivia Clark at our Jan. 28 meeting, we have scheduled Mayor Keith Wilson at our next meeting on Feb. 25 and we have Eric Zimmerman tentatively scheduled for April 22,” Downtown Neighborhood Association President LaJune Thorson said. “Yes, accessibility is very different now.”

All three District 4 council members support the mayor’s plan to end unsanctioned camping by the end of the year, a popular cause with neighborhood associations and community volunteers who have invested long hours cleaning up trash and calling in livability complaints to city bureaus.

Zimmerman drew applause at a District 4 City Club forum last month when he said voters are rejecting “the dogma around” shelter and social service providers, noting that some homeless people “are doing everything they can to avoid the shelters we are providing.”

### Sharp contrast

The new connectivity contrasts sharply with the former council, which seemed to go out of its way to let Westside neighbors know they were at the end of the line. Former Commissioner Mingus Mapps allowed PBOT to unilaterally suspend meetings of the Northwest Parking Stakeholders Advisory Committee for six months while spurning all efforts by neighborhood representatives to talk to him about it.

Former Mayor Ted Wheeler assigned the Office of Neighborhood Involvement/Office of Community and Civic Life to successive commissioners who were openly hostile to neighborhood associations.

Neighborhood representatives are pleased with the attention from City Hall, though most remain in a wait-and-see pose.

“I don’t know,” said NWDA board member Jeremy Sacks, “but I would welcome any move by the city to listen to neighborhoods again.”

“It was great to see all three council members attend a Planning Committee meeting,” NWDA President Todd Zarnitz said, “though I don’t think any of them

asked for the neighborhood view.

“I am definitely optimistic that we might have a better system that prioritizes residents and homeowners over special interests and the city bureaucracy. Certainly, the council members seem to be more engaged with the community so far.

“The neighborhood associations are still in a terrible down cycle, however. We’re sort of being placated at the moment.”

“All three district representatives seem bright, engaged, personable and anxious to use their positions to address city issues,” committee member Joni Johnson said. “I was also heartened by Eric’s comment that the three of them enjoy working together. That will certainly be beneficial to District 4 since the alternative of competing council members’ agendas within districts would further Balkanize the city.”

But the pivotal difference seems to be removing council members from an administrative role.

“Not being hooked in to the bureaus makes it easier for them to hear the neighborhood associations’ perspective,” Pinger said. “These commissioners have been impenetrable because their constituency has been the bureaus.

“The thing we experienced working with the commissioners over the last 10 years or so—and Montgomery Park is an example—they seem increasingly to represent their bureaus rather than represent the citizens.”

“I think you nailed it on the head there, Steve,” Zimmerman responded, “because that was the nature of the beast in the old system.

“All 12 of us have a feeling that there is an oversight role, and that’s huge change from ... the bureau as the number one constituency.”

Vrilakas is ready to give it a try “to keep the momentum going.

“We really want to stay in contact with our representatives so we don’t have to get upset with them later.” ■

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# Déjà vu

# Déjà vu

# Déjà vu

# Déjà vu



David Dysert



Jessie Burke

## Failure to enforce public records law leads to recurring cycle

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

The District 4 Coalition of neighborhood associations may have taken a clue from the national scene—acknowledging legal violations with no pretense of enforcement.

The coalition board voted unanimously to grant public access to recordings of Pearl District Neighborhood Association meetings, resolving a grievance filed by the NW Examiner. At the same time, the board made it policy to play no role in enforcing any of its grievance decisions.

Consequences for noncompliance with coalition requirements are to be left in the hands of the Portland Office of Community & Civic Life, which in recent years has shown no interest in enforcement either.

Talk without teeth got nowhere with the person controlling the public records in this case.

David Dysert, PDNA Planning and Transportation Committee chair and interim chair of the PDNA board at the time of the grievance, ignored another request for a recording made the day after the coalition supposedly laid down the law.

Delayed action is still possible. A new PDNA chair elected last month has asked for time to straighten things out.

District 4 Coalition staff, meanwhile, sowed new seeds of confusion at more recent training sessions for coalition board members. The attorney who successfully represented a Southwest Portland neighborhood association against another public records request last year was brought in to lead the training. Stephanie Dolan, who directs the Law Garden in Eugene, stuck to her winning argument, that Oregon neighborhood associations are not public bodies and therefore do not have to turn over recordings.

Dolan, who heads a Eugene firm specializing in nonprofit law, is the coalition’s regular lawyer and the one it recommended to Dysert to fend off the Examiner’s record request.

But the coalition board was on a completely different track. On Feb. 3, the board unanimously (with two abstentions) adopted a decision that read, “the recording requested by Mr. Classen is a public record and must be provided. ... Recordings become public records and must be provided when requested.”

Despite the disparity, no effort was

made at the workshops or by the organization subsequently to reconcile the chasm, or even to acknowledge it as such.

“We have no conflicts, Allan,” District 4 Coalition Executive Director Darlene Urban Garrett wrote in an email. “The Pearl sought legal advice from a nonprofit attorney. Her advice was in conflict with our coalition findings. Our findings were aligned with the ONI [Office of Neighborhood Involve-ment] Standards.

“The District 4 Coalition is standing with our grievance findings, and if the Pearl wants to appeal it, it will be up to them,” Garrett concluded. “That being said, we will be working with our board to make sure that neighborhoods have record retention policies that are clear and appropriate.”

Record retention policies are one thing, but the duties of Portland neighborhood associations regarding open meetings and public records are considerably more expansive. They cover public notice requirements for meetings and their agendas, the recording of motions and votes cast by each member of the decision-making body, for instance. Decisions not made in accordance with the standards can be invalidated.

Still, public officials and activists alike misinterpret the duties of Portland neighborhood associations.

Last year, Multnomah County District Attorney Mike Schmidt issued an opinion that Portland neighborhood associations are not public bodies under Oregon law. Schmidt contended that such associations fail to satisfy a six-part standard distinguishing public bodies from other entities. This was the decision referred to by Dolan in defending her advice to District 4 Coalition representatives.

Schmidt held that the city’s district coalitions, on the other hand, are public bodies in that “a coalition encompasses a larger geographic area and therefore ... from my perspective ... is performing a key government function in communicating with its citizens.”

Schmidt also wrote that “the city of Portland requires that neighborhood associations make many of their records available to the public in

**“I’m concerned that incorrect information has been provided, particularly regarding public records.” —Steve Moskowitz, attorney**

exchange for receiving official recognition and a number of other benefits from the city.”

If Schmidt’s reasoning defined a clear distinction between coalitions and associations, one independent legal scholar did not see it.

Steve Kanter, dean emeritus of the Lewis & Clark Law School and a Constitutional law professor, told the Examiner that Schmidt’s criteria might just as well apply to neighborhood associations, which also receive city funding to communicate to their constituents.

Kanter found the former DA’s five-page opinion unpersuasive and marred by internal contradictions.

Steve Moskowitz, a pro bono lawyer who serves on the Northwest District Association, prepared an analysis that he shared with NWDA President Todd Zarnitz last month.

*“I’m concerned that incorrect information has been provided, particularly regarding public records. I understand that past opinions from the Multnomah County District Attorney Office have been offered as indications that neighborhood associations are not ‘public bodies’ as defined by state law and are therefore not subject to the state public records law.*

*“However, state law is not the primary body of law which governs how Portland neighborhood associations or district coalitions are to create, maintain and disclose records. The primary body of law governing neighborhood associations and district coalitions on that matter consists of the Portland city code, standards and contractual obligations, and the district attorney has no jurisdiction to interpret and apply those.*

*“Portland City Code Chapter 3.96, City Council Resolution 36329 and the ONI Standards adopted by City Council clearly define the legal requirements of neighborhood associations to maintain and disclose records, including electronic recordings.*

*“Although neighborhood associations may not be subject to the state public records law, the Portland City Council by resolution*

*clearly intended that the scope, meaning and interpretation of that law be incorporated into Portland public record rules and regulations as they apply to neighborhood associations.”*

The Examiner asked Mayor Keith Wilson’s office to explain the city’s position on the duties of neighborhood associations. The inquiry was passed on to the Office of Community and Civic Life, which issued an unsigned statement: “Neighborhood associations are not public governing bodies, and as such, they follow the ONI Standards. Please let us know if you have any other questions.”

We had a follow-up question: What do you do when an association or coalition violates the ONI Standards? There was no reply from either OCCL or the mayor’s office.

The District 4 Coalition board could send a clear message on public records and the expectations of the associations it serves. Or it could leave things in a haze and see what happens.

The new person at the helm of the coalition board is Jessie Burke, who also chairs the Old Town Community Association. Burke drew the attention of Willamette Week in two stories raising questions about her accountability to the OTCA board. One concerned actions taken by her and fellow OTCA officer Jonathan Cohen, her husband, without board knowledge regarding private businesses in which the couple has a stake.

Burke was asked for records of a Feb. 5 OTCA meeting at which board members had intense exchanges. Recordings of the meetings are made, but they are not available to the public or press.

“Regarding OTCA meeting minutes, we only keep written records,” she told the Examiner. “I have to check with our board, but I believe it is only an official public record once it is approved at our March meeting.”

That was a redux of the Examiner’s grievance against Dysert, which was supposedly resolved by the coalition’s decision on Feb. 3. Burke’s defense was the same one used by Dysert—recordings are not official records and therefore need not be shared.

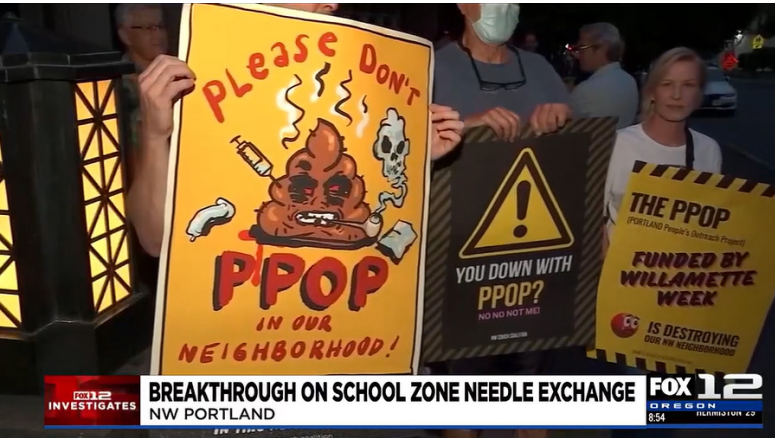
And those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it. ■

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Drug users and the people who serve them have had little to fear from law enforcement in recent years. District Attorney Nathan Vasquez has vowed to change that.



Since last summer, KPTV covered efforts by residents to remedy safety and crime problems in their neighborhood.

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# ~ Douglas 'Michael' Leander 1950-2025 ~ NW Examiner's first, and funniest, columnist

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

Douglas 'Michael' Leander contributed zany columns to the first three editions of the NW Examiner in 1986, but he was never replaced. You can't replace the funniest, most interesting man in the world, an assessment shared by many who knew him.

Leander died in Eugene on Feb. 7 at age 74, after fighting off a blood disorder for four years that was supposed to kill him in two weeks.

Nothing about Leander was predictable. He was fluent in Russian and was loved by many immigrants for whom he interpreted in court, hospitals or wherever needed. He amazed companions by connecting with strangers in languages they had no idea he spoke.

His irreverent multicultural fluency shined in his third column, "Terrorism in the Northwest," in which he portrayed "Akhmed Al-Gresshami" and "Zarzan Teheran."

The caption read, "A group of desperate, media-hardened Northwest terrorists maneuver this plastique-laden pickup on a crash course with a Northwest 23rd Avenue business. Using the preferred terrorist technique of forming explosives into everyday objects, Zarzan leads the 6-cylinder charge with explosive croissants strapped to his body."

I called the column "The Retractors: The only column requiring a preemptive retraction. The editor, the publisher and the author are not responsible for its content."

Still, there were requests for retractions. Another early contributor to the paper, Janet Mandaville, complained about the ethnic stereotyping of a part of the world where she had lived. Leander said his fictional terrorist cell also included German, Irish and domestic terrorists, but he couldn't displease everyone.

He didn't even have to open his mouth to make people laugh. His 6-foot-2, 300-pound former high school lineman's body crammed into a mini-compact would do the trick.

He worked at assorted jobs, including many years in computer programming. Despite his communication skills, his career at The Oregonian never included journalism. He worked in the graphics department, where to keep things lively he challenged colleagues to create the most offensive bumper sticker imaginable, put it on their car and see if they could draw angry honks before driving one block.

Sasha Aginsky, owner of Via Delizia, recalls the story Leander told at his restaurant in the Pearl, where he was a regular patron.

"An incredible guy," Aginsky said. "It was impossible not to like him. ... He was a character."

One day Leander needed to cover a debt, so he called an old friend who was then working for Goldman Sachs. He asked for \$10,000, which was quickly granted.

"Stupid me, I should have asked for \$100,000," he joked.

"Stupid you," his benefactor replied. "You should have asked for \$1 million."

It may not have mattered. Leander was not one to hang on to money.

He told Aginsky about loaning \$40,000 to the owner of a soon-to-fail bar on Northwest 16th Avenue.

Aginsky asked how he was going to get the money back. Leander wasn't worried, he told the man he could repay him \$1 a month.

"He was so generous," Aginsky said, "but he had no business savvy."

Leander's short-run column in the Examiner was entirely his idea. He asked for no compensation. His friends, Ralph Wells (a longtime Northwest Portland resident who died in January) and Mike Taylor helped with the production.

The first Retractors columns dealt with the alien influx sneaking across West Burnside to reach prosperity in Northwest Portland.

"Even the minor family squabbles that have broken out between the 21st Avenue faction (Phalangist Militia for the Liberation of Jerry Garcia) and the 23rd Avenue Faction (The New Believers of the Open Market) have been affected by the alien onslaught.

"The Northwest—leave it and leave it again," is the motto of our more conservative community business members.

"Free land! Free housing! Free parking! Free deli takeout!" is the more liberal rallying cry.

"May they name a disease after you," is a favorite of my brother-in-law."

I never did learn the name of his blood disorder, so I will call it Mike Leander's disease.

I don't think it was contagious, but to know him was to die laughing. ■

Mike Leander put his whole body into being funny, and bringing friends into the scene made it all the better.



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News of Unico Properties' default on a \$24 million loan on the **LOVEJOY BUILDING** at 1331 NW Lovejoy St. caused concern about the future of the Safeway store on the ground level. The default pertained only to office space above the store and does not affect the supermarket.

**THE RAM'S HEAD**, (middle left) in the historic Campbell Building at 2282 NW Hoyt St., will close in June. Four other McMenamins businesses in the Northwest District will remain open.

**NOSSA FAMILIA COFFEE** (top left) is closing its Pearl location at 1350 NW Lovejoy St. on March 1, but the roastery at 3530 NW St. Helens Road and its two Southeast Portland shops remain open.

**ART SCHOOL** (bottom left) is a studio "run by makers for makers" at 2070 NW Quimby St. in Slabtown Square. It is described as a "funky, bi-level space with room for pottery, fiber arts, a tiny retail shop and more." Classes and events are planned later in the year.

**NORTHWEST PORTLAND HOSTEL** (below), 479 NW 18th Ave., was named third best hostel in Central and North America by HostelWorld. It was founded in 1998 by Jim Kennett, who continues to operate the business with Britta Diettrich.



## NOBBY NEWS

Vol. 31, No. 3 "News You Can't Always Believe" March 2025

### Easter egg hunt called off

The Nob Hill Bar & Grill regrets to announce that its annual Easter egg hunt, a cherished tradition for 39 years, has to be canceled this year due to security concerns surrounding the soaring price of eggs.

"No insurance carrier would accept the liability of theft when dozens of eggs are being handled by children who could not pass security protocols," said Greg, administrator and chief of the poultry division at Nobbys. "Egg poaching is real thing."

Greg is also imposing a strict three-egg daily limit on egg orders until further notice.

"We're scrambling to get a handle on the situation," he said.

Meanwhile, he is asking all patrons to stop fixating on eggs while other options are being egg-splored.



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# The Cardinal Times

SINCE 1897

## BLM Week of Action empowers and educates students

By NIDHA EAKAMBARAM and MEGHAN WHITTEN

Through teaching the history of the Black Lives Matter movement, Black Lives Matter Week of Action educates students on discrimination and honors the life of Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old African-American who was fatally shot in Sanford, Florida.

Black Lives Matter Week of Action focuses on elevating Black voices, showcasing a variety of clubs and activities.

The student organizers, often past or present students in Critical Race Theory, work hard to make each year more engaging and informative than the previous.

Junior Riley Debose is one of the student organizers and says that Week of Action is extremely important for Lincoln.

“[Because] Lincoln is a predominantly white school, there [are] often people [who] are blind [to] the racial discrimination and experiences for people of color on a day-to-day basis. Having [students] be educated by

putting themselves in people of colors’ shoes is important,” Debose said.

Junior Kendra McPherson is a leader of the mental health awareness club and led a discussion-based session at Week of Action.

“We were doing a discussion about mental health specifically in BIPOC communities,” said McPherson. “We had some videos and some activities to go along with that, but it was mainly a discussion-based session.”

Emma Horspool is a leader of WISE (Women in Sports Empowered) and in her session, she aimed to highlight Black women in sports.

“We really wanted to focus on different African-American women in sports because a lot of the people can name the white males in the sports in the Olympics, but not a lot of people can name the African-American [names],” said Horspool.

Senior Dorothy Cui attended the ASL session and found it engaging and informative, as the session taught attendees how to sign “Black Lives Matter”.

“Before listening to Mr. Malbin’s [former Lincoln ASL teacher] presentation, I had no idea that there was a vibrant Black deaf culture that’s unique and distinct from the American deaf culture in general,” said Cui.

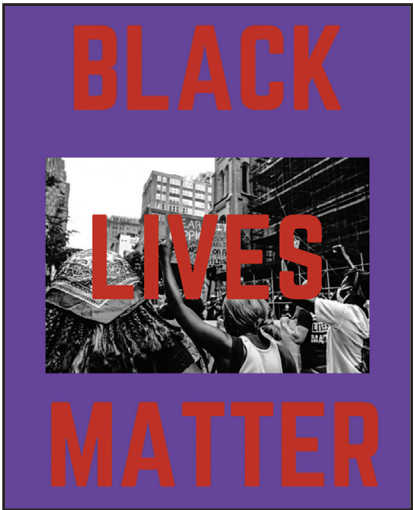
Even though those who attended the sessions found them informative and important, both the leaders and attendees noticed a lack of attendance similar to past Week of Action’s.

McPherson said that she noticed a lack of attendance in her session.

“We probably had nine people in our first session and four or five in our second session. So, not a lot at all,” said McPherson.

Horspool said that while her session had a decent turnout, she was overall disappointed with the amount of students who skipped.

“I think for them not to even try and see what it’s about and go to a session is disappointing and a little bit frustrating,” Horspool said. “Every year [we] focus on how we can get more people engaged, but sometimes it’s out of our control.”



A leader of mental health awareness club, Junior Kendra McPherson, explains why Week of Action is important for Lincoln. “It’s about our community and it’s about our peers,” said McPherson. “And if we’re not there to support people who have been oppressed for generations, then how are we going to improve as a society?”  
By MEGHAN WHITTEN

## Waterproof Cards: Sailing and rowing at Lincoln

By CURTIS BEAUBRUN

While some Cards choose to race on land, others flock to the Willamette River.

Having a school near a river makes participating in water sports very accessible. Sailing and rowing are not Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) sanctioned activities. Despite

this, they still create communities at Lincoln.

Many Lincoln students who sail do so with the Willamette Sailing Club. The sailors race in pairs, attempting to cross a designated area as fast as possible using the wind.

Sailing is a club sport, with the WSC being composed of students from across the district, including 12 Lin-

coln students. The team is divided into two fleets, an intermediate blue fleet, and a more advanced red fleet.

In competition, sailors participate in a series of races, which are referred to as regattas. They race in C420 and CFJ boats, both are meant for two sailors and tailored for youth. Points are given, which are equal to the participants’ placement in individual races. The result of the regatta is based on the team with the least amount of points.

It’s freshman Trinity Ashton’s first year on the team.

“I really love... how it feels when you’re sailing,” said Ashton. “It just feels really freeing and it’s an activity that I love to do.”

Sailing also gives students opportunities to connect with students from other schools at regattas. Junior Jo Emery reflects on this unique opportunity.

“It gives me a chance to meet people from other schools, [and] other states,” said Emery, “I have friends who live in Seattle because I met them through sailing. The community that

you build is also really great.”

Other students race on the waters through rowing. In contrast to sailing, the boats are propelled by the rowers paddling using oars. In contrast to sailing, competitions are decided by one race, in which crews compete side by side, trying to reach the finish line first.

Most rowers at Lincoln row with either Rose City Rowing, located near the Tilikum Crossing Bridge, or Oregon Rowing Unlimited, which is next to Oaks Park.

Despite the sport being very demanding, with constant practices leaving participants with blisters, the heavy dependence on teamwork leads successful crew mates to create extremely close connections.

Sophomore Aiden Bilstrom reflects on the effects that this teamwork has created.

“I just love the atmosphere of it,” said Bilstrom. “I’ve gotten to meet so many cool people through it and just formed a really deep bond.”



Sailors at Lincoln do so in pairs on boats, while rowers compete in groups of one, two, four or eight.

Photos courtesy of BRUCE BLOCK AND AIDEN BILSTROM

## We found the best birria tacos near Lincoln

By SOPHIE MONAHAN, DONOVAN SCHUBERT AND WILLIAM SCHOINAS

We ventured to three popular spots in downtown Portland to review their birria tacos, evaluating each location based on price, taste and proximity to Lincoln. Here’s our breakdown:

### What are birria tacos?

Birria tacos are a flavorful Mexican dish made with slow-cooked meat, often beef or goat, served in tortillas and paired with a rich, savory consomé for dipping. The combination of tender meat, spices and toppings has made them a fan favorite in Portland.

1. Papi Chulos (NW 13th Ave)  
Our first stop was Papi Chulos, where two tacos cost \$11, making each \$5.50. The portion size was small, and the flavor, though decent, missed the mark with an unexpected hint of cinnamon that didn’t pair well with the tacos. While the beef filling and fresh onions and cilantro were enjoyable, the consomé lacked depth and flavor. Overall, we rated this spot a 6.7/10 for the unique but underwhelming experience.



2. Tacoqueto (SW Harvey Milk St)  
Next, we visited Tacoqueto, a small food cart known for tacos and seafood. Unfortunately, the tacos left much to be desired, scoring a 4/10. While the toppings were fresh, the meat had a seafood-like aftertaste, likely due to shared cooking surfaces with seafood dishes. This strange flavor profile overshadowed the initial taste.



3. Birrieria PDX (Madison)  
Finally, we tried Birrieria PDX, a chain specializing in birria tacos. At \$2.75 per taco (with a \$2 deal on Tuesdays), the value was unbeatable. The meat was tender, the toppings were flavorful and the salsa was delicious. The ambiance—with picnic tables and music—added to the experience. We rated this spot a stellar 9.3/10 for its unbeatable taste, price and atmosphere.



All photos by Laney Urness



"Homeless Sweeps" cont'd from page 1

of Development Services in January “to discuss a new facility for accepting, processing and disposal of waste and vehicles including human and pet remains and medical waste.

“Proposed operations include recreational vehicle and automobile dismantling; future cremation of human and pet remains, including natural organic reduction or composting as well as storage of human remains; medical waste sterilization and recycling; portable toilet and sewage disposal services for pump trucks only; and waste-tire disposal. The facility will not be open to the general public.”

Could this become the world’s first combination garbage hauler and funeral home?

Nari Bio is the more mysterious side of things. A tasteful website featuring an older couple promises, “At NARI, we are dedicated to providing ethical, compassionate service to donors and their families throughout the donation process. Our company connects donors to qualified mortuary science and surgical education institutions for the purpose of advancing the progress of science and education.

“All of our work is done in strict compliance with federal and state regulations, including the Uniform Anatomical Gift Act, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act and all industry standards. Our company is a freestanding organization licensed by the Oregon Health Authority.”

Where will the bodies come from?

“Our virtual funeral service option allows families the opportunity to have a no-cost option for honoring the life and memory of their loved one before donation.”

The website lists the Nicolai address, and a real



Rapid Response Bio-Clean provides a range of cleanup services to local governments and private clients.



person answered the phone. Phineas told the NW Examiner that the company was not yet open for business, though it is licensed to operate a body donation service.

Could some of the bodies be those of campers not surviving a cold night or drug overdose?

We left three messages for Hamel to explain such matters but have not heard from him.

Meanwhile, the Northwest Industrial Business Association is concerned about what might be going on at 27th and Nicolai, especially upon learning of the body donation business.

Eric Opsahl of Xavier Development sent out a warning after the pre-application conference in January.

“This type of use (handling of bio-hazardous materials and human remains) should be required to be located farther away from a high-density residential/mixed-use neighborhood, not literally on the border of the new Montgomery Park Plan Area that was just

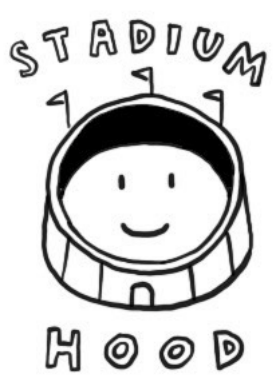
approved in December,” Opsahl wrote in an email. “The adopted plan is projected to create \$103 million of residual land value, add 2,220 new residential units and create almost 1,800 new jobs in the area.”

Another local developer, Noel Johnson, had similar thoughts.

“It probably hurts the recent public-private efforts to enable new housing and jobs investments around the former ESCO and struggling Montgomery Park office properties,” Johnson said. “A facility for the cleanup needs created by having thousands homeless is today’s reality, but there are many options that are more ready to go in Northwest Portland with less adjacency issues.”

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# Emergency Declaration for Public Safety and Livability in the Stadium Neighborhood: A Summary



The residents of District 4 urge the Portland City Council to declare an emergency to address the escalating public safety and livability crisis in the Stadium neighborhood. Unregulated harm reduction efforts, such as those conducted by Portland Street Medicine and its affiliate, the Portland People's Outreach Project, have contributed to unsafe conditions through the distribution of drug paraphernalia near schools without oversight or accountability, fueling open air drug use, organized crime, and hazardous waste accumulation while further straining law enforcement and outreach resources. The flight of businesses, residents and visitors underscores the urgency of immediate action.

**To restore safety and order, the community proposes:**

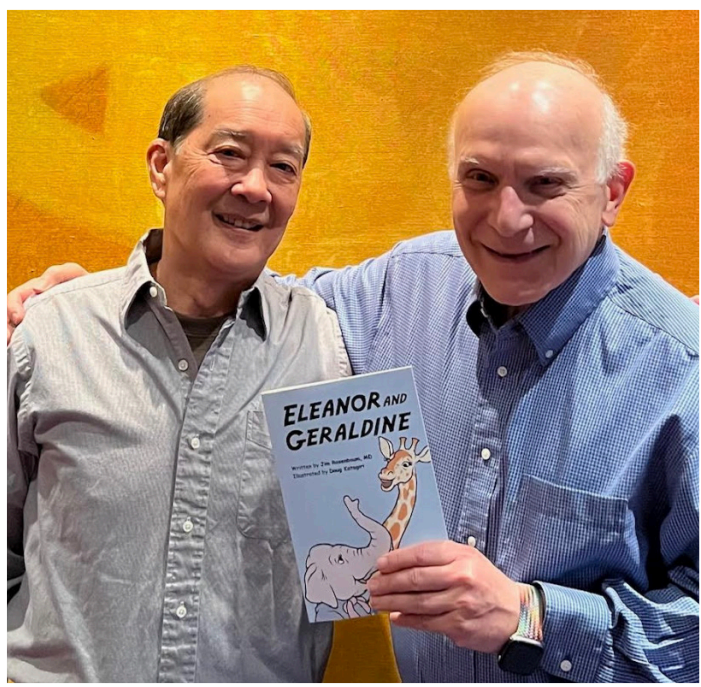
- **Collaborative curfews** during peak hours, permit requirements for public material distribution near schools, relocation of harm reduction organizations from school zones, and enforcement of a citywide ban on the open carry of large bladed weapons.
- **Expanded safety measures** include increased patrols, targeted responses to organized crime, and emergency deployment of mental health and recovery resources.
- **Traffic flow adjustments**, such as temporary street closures and new stop signs, aim to disrupt criminal activity corridors, while environmental maintenance efforts will expand cleanup initiatives, business accountability programs, and reassessment of walk-up window services.
- **Community engagement** will be strengthened with a citizen advisory group, neighborhood coalition meetings, independent reviews, and Good Neighbor Agreements, ensuring ongoing accountability and collaboration.

**Conclusion:** The residents of the Stadium neighborhood call for swift City Council action to restore safety, order, and livability. Without immediate intervention, the community will continue to suffer from deteriorating conditions. Submit comments to District 4 City Councilors:

Olivia Clark: [councilor.clark@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:councilor.clark@portlandoregon.gov)  
Eric Zimmerman: [councilor.zimmerman@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:councilor.zimmerman@portlandoregon.gov)  
Mitch Green: [councilor.green@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:councilor.green@portlandoregon.gov).







Lincoln High School class of 1967 graduates Doug Katagiri (left) and Jim Rosenbaum recently published an illustrated children's book, "Eleanor and Geraldine," about the friendship between an elephant and a giraffe. Katagiri is a graphic artist who worked for the Oregon Zoo, and Rosenbaum was a professor at Oregon Health & Science University whose grandmother founded Rose's restaurant, a longtime fixture on Northwest 23rd Avenue.



Heavy rains caused a landslide that closed Northwest Cornell Road Feb. 23. Two days later, Northwest Thompson Road was closed by a downed tree and power lines blocking the road.



Traffic backed up on Northwest Naito Parkway by the Steel Bridge for more than four hours on Feb. 5 due to a man brandishing a machete. Portland Police officers persuaded the man to surrender peacefully.



Lincoln High School senior Jonathan Wilkinson was named Portland Pearl Rotary student of the month for January. He has been in the school's barbershop quartet and is active in the business startup club. He plans to get a degree in structural engineering.



The Goose Hollow Foothills League elected board members in January. Front row (L-R): Jerry Powell, Scott Schaffer, Rachel Clark and Isabel Kjaer. Back row: Karl Reer, Eva Kutas, Jacquie Tracy, Tim Slevin-Vegdahl and President Bridget Bimrose. Vadim Mozyrsky and J. Charles Griggs are not in the photo.



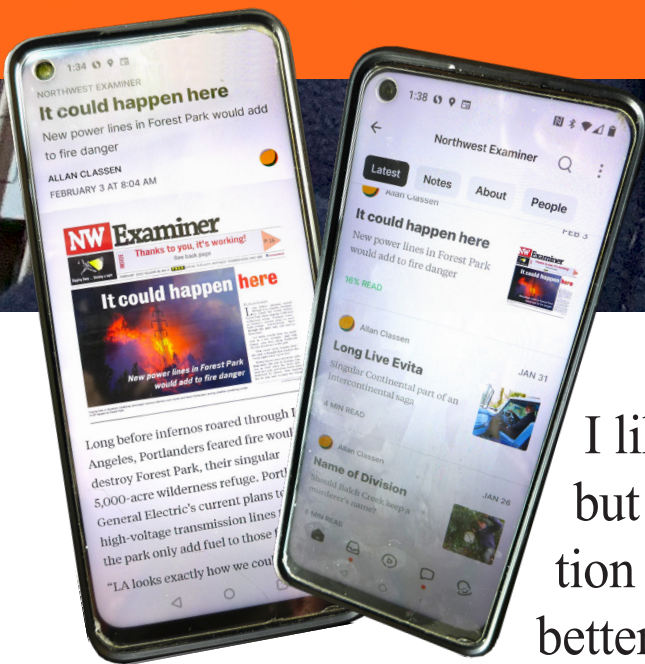
Mayor Keith Wilson and other dignitaries participated in the Portland Winter Light Festival event at Old Town's Ankeny Square, where some artistic lighting will become permanent.



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*Allan Classen*

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