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doesn't work?



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flock popup



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Dying with
Dignity

JANUARY 2026/ VOLUME 39, NO. 5 **FREE** SERVING PORTLAND'S NORTHWEST NEIGHBORHOODS SINCE 1986 [f nwexaminer](#)

Still no Slabtown Park



Where did the money go? Neighbors had no clue.

Todd Zarnitz, president of the Northwest District Association, bemoans the city's failure to move forward with the promised Slabtown Park at Northwest 20th and Pettygrove streets. Photo by Walden Kirsch.

BY ALLAN CLASSEN

For more than a decade, the city promised to build a park at Northwest 20th and Pettygrove.

Yet a “fenced-off pile of dirt” and no timetable to begin construction is all Northwest District Association President Todd Zarnitz sees.

Worse, Portland Parks & Recreation finally admitted—after years of assurances that progress was near—that there is no money for the project and no commitment to find it. That contradicts years of bureau updates affirming that the project was funded and a project manager hired.

Zarnitz dug into public documents recently and made what he called “a stunning discovery.” The Central City Parks System Development Fund—the primary source of the park’s funding—was indeed dry. But the money hadn’t gone to nearby infrastructure mitigating the impact of growth, as state and local law requires.

Two major expense items jumped out from a city financial report:

- A \$45 million loan to the Fire and Police Disability and Retirement fund in mid-2024 to cover a cash-flow deficit until tax receipts expected that November. In 2025, the City Council approved another loan for \$50 million for the same purpose, turning a onetime bailout into a troubling pattern.

Continued on page 6

From lost to found

Lives are rebuilt in Central City Concern’s Clean Start Program

BY ERIN HOOVER BARNETT

Laura Brown was in her early 40s and ready to throw it all away.

It was 2010, and she had come through drug treatment, gotten her son back in her life and was working on being grandma to his young son. But the only job she could get with felonies on her record was pushing a barrel for Central City Concern’s Clean and Safe Program.

She was up before dawn, in all manner of weather, picking up spent needles, feces and garbage on the streets of downtown Portland as part of this program funded by the Portland Metropolitan Chamber to get after the messes that accompany chronic homelessness.

On a cold rainy morning, sweeping up cigarette butts around the Pioneer Courthouse, all she could think about was cashing her next paycheck and getting high.

Staying the course

Focused on her broom that morning, Brown didn’t see the woman until she heard her steps slow and looked up.

The woman was close to Brown’s age. Smartly dressed.



Hurrying to work. But she looked Brown in the eyes. “Thank you,” she said.

The act of kindness was fleeting but powerful. For the first time in forever, Brown felt seen. And it changed her.

She stayed clean and kept pushing the barrel. Showed up every day. Then she got asked to train others. She kept moving

Central City Concern’s Clean Start program supervisor Laura Brown, (right) with Justin Whnuck, (center) and Kevin Lytsell. Photo by Walden Kirsch

Continued on page 13



NW Davis Street
#403 & #103
The Historic 705 Building



SW 55th Drive
Mid-Century Modern



Pacific Highway #23
Lake Oswego Terraces



SW 18th Court
Gresham Custom



E Road 12
Mt. Hood National Forest



NW 154th Avenue
Historic Oak Hills



NW 22nd Avenue #206
Villa Florence Condo



SW 6th Avenue #505
The Historic Ambassador



NW 53rd Drive
Forest Retreat w/3+ Acres



NW 13th Avenue #315
Chown Pella Condominiums



NW Cornell Road
View & Chapman School



SE 60th Avenue
Mt. Tabor Restoration



NW Irving Street
The Hubbard House
Condominiums



NW Overton Street #1
Townhome with ADU



NW Shenandoah Terrace
A.E. Doyle Architect



SW Greenleaf Drive
Morris Whitehouse Architect



NW Westover Square
Kings Square North



SW Park Place
Carl Lind Architect



NW 25th Avenue
Emil Schacht Architect



NE Irving #103
Irving Classic Condominiums

SOLD IN 2025



NE 56th Avenue
Rose City Bungalow



SE 16th Avenue
Sellwood Cutie



SW 1st Avenue
Painted Lady



NW Hoyt Street #104
Hoyt Square Condominiums



NW Marshall Street
Joseph Jacobberger Architect



NE 10th Avenue
Irvington Craftsman



NW Skyline Boulevard
Built by Contractor Bill Hughes



NW Overton Street #810
The Encore Condominiums



S Custer Street
Top of Corbett



NW Northrup Street
William Christmas Knighton
Architect



NW 25th Avenue
Emil Schacht Architect



NW Albermarle Terrace
Gevurtz House with Mt Views



NW Greenbriar Terrace
DeYoung & Roald Architects



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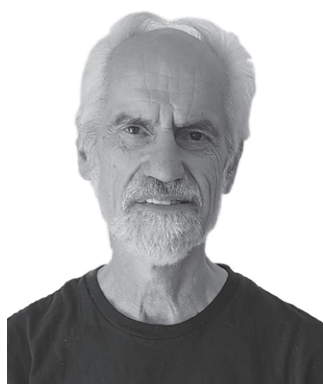
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Who says forced drug treatment doesn't work?

Multnomah County Commissioner Meghan Moyer insists that forcing people into drug treatment does not work. Nor does she support civil commitment to confine people who may be a danger to themselves or others, which she says is enormously expensive, violates their rights and is rarely appropriate.

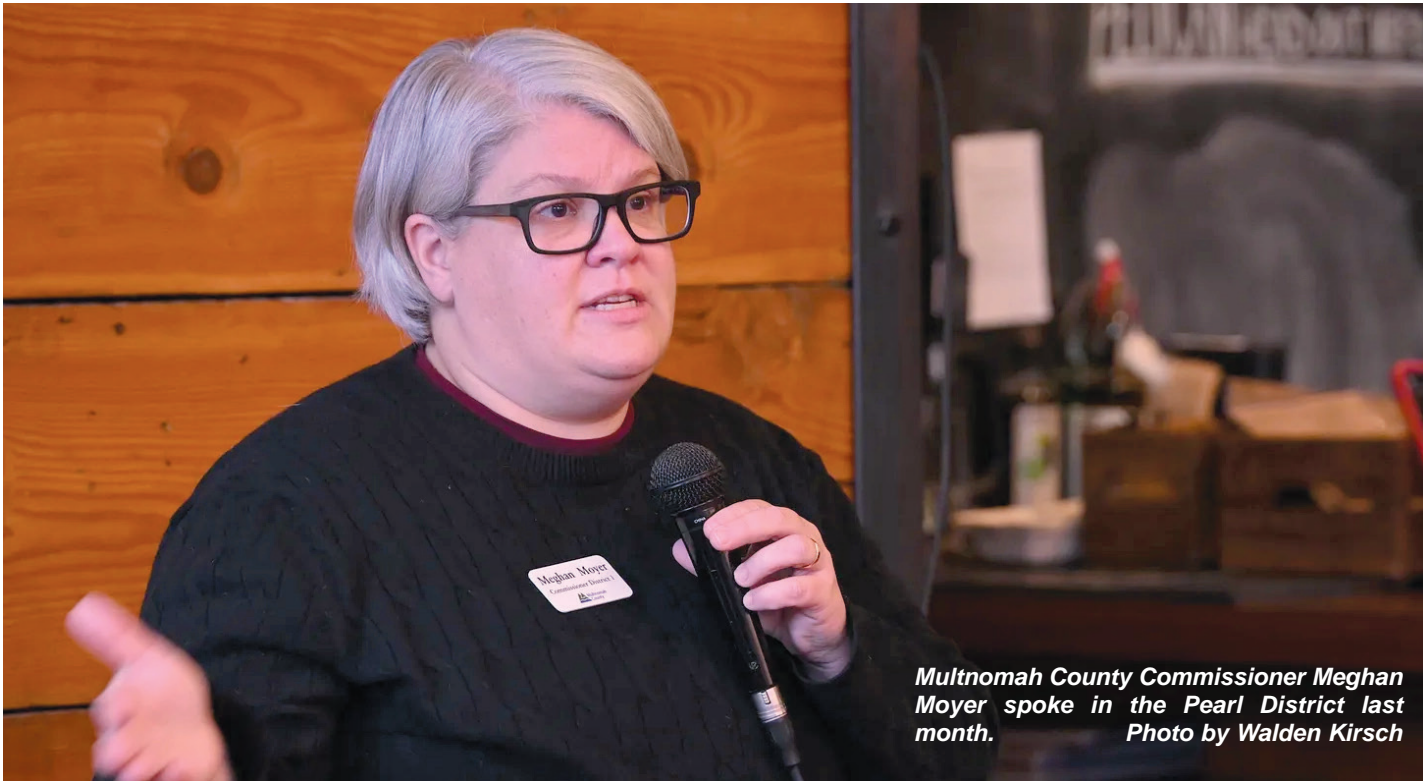
Moyer has spent 20 years in social service policy work and speaks with a sense of her own authority. Her conclusions sound believable, especially to those not having direct experience with behavioral health and addiction issues.

When she spoke this month at a community meeting in the Pearl District, a criminal defense attorney praised her as the rare public official who truly understands the issue. Certainly both have built their careers around protecting the liberties of individuals, a position easier to justify if one believes that social interventions have no value.

But is Moyer right?

There is evidence on the other side. The New York Times recently published an opinion piece by Keith Humphrey, a professor of psychiatry at Stanford University and former drug policy adviser in the Obama administration. In a study Humphreys cited, "2,095 addicted patients found that one year after treatment, those whose care was mandated were somewhat more likely to avoid drug use than were those who entered treatment voluntarily. Further, compared with their peers who had voluntarily sought treatment within the justice system, the patients whose care was mandated were less likely to be rearrested."

Humphrey noted that a 2023 medical review of 22 studies revealed "a lack of high-quality evidence" in favor of or against involuntary treatment for



Multnomah County Commissioner Meghan Moyer spoke in the Pearl District last month. Photo by Walden Kirsch

addiction.

If his overview is fair, it appears that the impetus for entering treatment has far less to do with the outcome than other factors.

But Moyer brings a particular bias to this subject. When she ran for County Council, she was asked to explain why, in her position with Disability Rights Oregon, she would not support a suit against the city of Portland for failing to keep sidewalks clear for passage by disabled citizens. Moyer replied that she believed that the plaintiffs were primarily interested in protecting their property values, and that stigmatizing the homeless was useful in achieving that aim.

In other words, Moyer put the public image of homeless persons above her former agency's mission to enforce disability law and policy, and she did so because she disapproved of motives she attached to those she saw

as political adversaries.

None of this came out at Moyer's talk in the Pearl District. She struck a middle-of-the-road position on most topics and drew generally appreciative reactions.

She must realize the "harm reduction" approach to substance abuse is losing popular support. The antifa-leaning Portland People's Outreach Project that for months distributed supplies and drug paraphernalia without question on West Burnside has moved on. That was not before discrediting their no-judgment philosophy that rained havoc and intimidation on the surrounding neighborhood.

The all-carrot-and-no-stick approach is also coming apart locally regarding Housing First, a strategy that has put addicts and people with behavioral health issues into housing without prior treatment, resulting in trashed apartments, intolerable problems for

other tenants and the economic ruin of nonprofit landlords attempting to operate low-income housing. Central City Concern issued a comprehensive report declaring Housing First without requisite treatment to be unsustainable.

Even if voluntary treatment works better than forced treatment, as Moyer believes, that's not the full test. We have to ask if voluntary-only treatment works for the rest of society. If local businesses fail, public spaces are unsafe and filthy, residents move away, property values crash and tax revenues slump, social resources will not exist to provide treatment to anyone.

This goes beyond considering the greatest good for the greatest number: preserving civil society itself is at stake.

COMMENT ON NWEXAMINER.COM or email: allan@nwexaminer.com



Readers Reply

Letters can be sent to: 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.

No adults in room

Your call for a political party comprised of those adults in the room to counter the radical leftists who have hijacked City Council begs the question: Where were the adults when Portland chose to expand the council?

Where are the adults who should decry the generous salaries and benefits bestowed to the likes of Angelita Morillo? Instead, Portland

seems to endlessly obsess over federal immigration policies or other things related to Donald Trump, which are federal, not local issues. Why doesn't Portland ever look in the mirror versus employing tired old tactics that never work?

This ideological war between the Democratic Socialists of America, which is far more radical than Europe's more familiar social democrats, has been brewing for at least a decade. The DSA loathes capitalism and wants to

topple it entirely, lacking regard for the lifeblood of any city, its businesses and hard-working professional taxpayers. Morillo cares not a whit about the ad nauseam filth and drugs in the Pearl.

Karla Powell
NW 11th Ave

Message from native son

Portland's Forest Park certainly might have helped focus environmental scientist Tom Kaye's love of nature,

growing up as he did just yards from the park's northern border. He later founded and now directs the Institute for Applied Ecology, a nonprofit conservation group in Corvallis. Kaye was interviewed last month on Oregon Public Broadcasting's "Think Out Loud" describing the slashing of federal funding for 30 vital research projects that are being aborted. Among the projects lost are several butterfly restoration efforts done with the assistance of Coffee Creek

Cont'd on page 5

The NW Examiner

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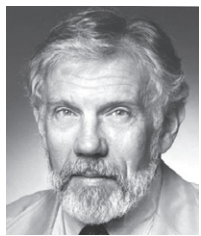
Katherine Lyte



Katherine Ruth Lyte, a longtime Wilamette Heights resident, died on June 17, 2025, at age 83. Katherine Weisner was born on Sept. 14, 1941, at Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center and grew up in the house where she later lived as an adult. She graduated from Jefferson High School in 1959 and Portland State

University with bachelor's and master's degrees in social work. She worked for the Christie School, the Morrison Center and Multnomah County, where she counseled troubled students at several schools, including Lincoln High School, before retiring in 2009. She also had a private practice. She is survived by her husband, Peter Lyte; son, Eric Hallingstad; daughters Kirsten Hallingstad and Karen Slaughter; brothers, Ray Weisner, John Weisner and Thomas Weisner; and four grandchildren.

Dr. Matthew C. Riddle II



Dr. Matthew C. Riddle II, a longtime resident of Portland Heights, died July 30, 2025, at age 86. He was born on Dec. 9, 1938, in Portland, a fifth-generation Oregonian whose forebears traveled the Oregon Trail in 1851. He attended Ainsworth Elementary School and Catlin Gabel School and graduated from Lincoln

High School in 1956. He graduated from Yale University and Harvard Medical School and served in Vietnam as a MASH unit doctor. Returning to Portland, he was a professor and clinician at Oregon Health Sciences University, where he worked for 50 years. He received the Outstanding Physician-Clinician award from the American Diabetes Association in 2005. He married Betty Burwitz, Lori Harris and Pat O'Shea. He is survived by his children, Matthew Riddle III, Ann Riddle, James Riddle and Sarah Riddle; stepchildren, Richard Gutierrez Jr., Alix Robinson, Brian Karl and Kelly Karl; sister, Elizabeth Jackson; and eight grandchildren.

Karen Whitaker



Karen Whitaker, a longtime resident of Portland Heights, died Nov. 22, 2025, at age 89. Karen Morris was born on Dec. 4, 1935, in Boston, and attended New Trier High School in Winnetka, Ill., and Denison University in Granville, Ohio. She married Allan Whitaker Jr. in 1955, and they settled in Portland in 1971. She

worked with her husband and sons at AM Whitaker Co., an insurance brokerage, until 2022. She volunteered for the Portland Center for the Arts, Portland Art Museum and the Assistance League of Greater Portland. She was a member of the Multnomah Athletic Club and The Town Club. She is survived by her sons, Al and Lee; her daughter, Janet Lamson; and seven grandchildren.

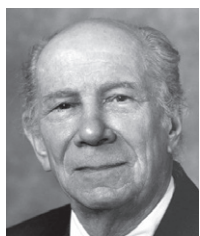
Martin Winch



Martin Tobin Winch, executive director of Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest in the 1990s, died on Nov. 26, 2025, of mesothelioma at age 81. Winch was born on March 9, 1944, in Portland and grew up on Northwest Cornell Road. He attended Portsmouth Priory in Rhode Island and graduated from Princeton

in 1966. He worked with migrant farm workers in Texas as a VISTA volunteer before earning a law degree in 1971. He married Carolyn, and they moved to Central Oregon in 1971. They created Deschutes Independent School, and he worked to restore Wychus Creek. The Jesuit Volunteer Corps was based at Northwest 22nd and Hoyt streets and focused on community service. Carolyn died in 2024. He is survived by his daughter, Paula; son, Peter; and two grandchildren.

Paul Fellner



Paul Fellner, a former resident of Northwest Westover Road, died on Dec. 10, 2025, at age 102. Fellner was born on Dec. 25, 1922, in Austria, and was drafted into the army under Nazi occupation. He married Maria Fruhwert in 1948, and they moved with their children to Portland,

where he worked full time while studying for a degree in accounting. He became a CPA and founded the firm of Fellner and Kuhn. He was a

member of the Multnomah Athletic Club, where he swam a mile every day before work. He climbed Mount Kilimanjaro at age 80 and completed the Portland Marathon at age 86. His wife, Maria, died in 2021. He is survived by his daughters, Eva and Marianne.

Carol C. Englehart

Carol C. Englehart, a longtime resident of Southwest Vista Avenue, died on Nov. 13, 2025, at age 96. Carol Chambers was born on Dec. 15, 1928, in Portland and grew up in Eastmoreland. She attended the University of Oregon and Lewis & Clark College. She married Miles P. Englehart; they divorced. She was a member of The Town Club for most of her life. She is survived by her daughters, Ann Desch and Jane Both; eight grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by her son, David Englehart; and beloved, Robert Koch.

Death Notices

SISTER SUSAN MALARKEY, 95, grew up in Portland Heights.

DR. JOHN PEARSON, 86, member of Portland Pearl Rotary.

MARJORIE SORENSON, 83, attended Skyline Grade School.

GLORIA YARNE, 91, 1952 graduate of Lincoln High School.

BERTRAM ROGOWAY, 95, resident of Goose Hollow.

JOHN KRIER, 78, 1964 Lincoln High School graduate.

PHYLLIS NIELSEN, 101, former Goose Hollow resident, Multnomah Athletic Club member.

JOAN LUBAR, 83, member of Congregation Beth Israel.

RUTH (GRUNBAUM) EPHRAM, 92, Lincoln High School graduate.

LUCIEN S KLEIN, 89, 1954 Lincoln High School graduate.

GREG A. ROLLIN, 65, 1977 Lincoln High School graduate.

THOMAS L. SHERMAN, 84, 1958 Lincoln High School graduate.

BRADLEY SWECK, 63, 1980 Lincoln High School graduate.

JOAN C. PALMER, 89, 1954 Lincoln High School graduate, Multnomah Athletic Club member.

FLOYD VAN NOY, 91, Lincoln High School graduate.

EUGENE DEFORREST DENT, 76, owned Studio Concepts Co. on Northwest 28th Avenue.

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Correctional Facility inmates, aiding their education and future lives. The emerald ash borer, killer of native Pacific Northwest trees, is also under study.
I happened upon a Barry Lopez quote just after listening to the OPB interview: "In the gathering darkness, to say to the physical Earth and to all its creatures, including ourselves fiercely and without embarrassment, I love you. And to embrace fearlessly the burning world."

*Jere Grimm
NW Aspen Ave.*

Do not mix

Portland's various approaches to solving homelessness have had minimal success. As a marketing consultant for over 40 years, it appears to me that one of the problems has been a failure to segment the market. We do not differentiate the people who are homeless for financial reasons from those who have drug issues or those who have mental health challenges.

At the William Temple House pantry, where I volunteer, I have met people who are eager to get back to a normal life but don't have the assistance and guidance they need. Their interactions with others with whom they are forced to share the street or overnight shelter cause them to lose their belongings, get physically threatened and feel helpless. Segregate these people, spend money on what it will take to help them and then move on to the other two homeless segments. It would take less money, less time and result in more success than the approach of the current plans. Residents of neighborhoods like the Pearl would probably be open to shelters where these individuals are given counseling, job preparation and a place to leave their belongings during the day. But mixing them with those who suffer from drug addiction and mental health issues can push them into one of the two other categories out of depression and desperation.

*Marcia Wolly
NW Lomita Terrace*

Comments from NWExaminer.com

To Montgomery Park or bust

Bob Weinstein

A responsible transportation agenda would:

- Fix NW 23rd now—not in ten years.
- Prioritize safety, maintenance and reliability over ribbon-cutting mega-projects.
- Update ridership assumptions to reflect real conditions, not legacy spreadsheets.
- Demand financial accountability before committing to another nine-figure gamble.

Instead, we are sprinting toward Montgomery Park—or bust. If this project proceeds on its current trajectory, "bust" may be the more accurate destination.

Scott Spencer

If the goal is to move people, why not work with TriMet to create a new bus line that follows where the tracks would be laid? Seems less expensive and more flexible. I ride the streetcar on a regular basis between PSU area and Good Sam and would prefer if it was a bus route. It always seems like the street car was nothing more than nostalgia for the past and a way for tourists to get around.

Little improvement around Pearl shelter

Rich Ovenburg

You can't bring a large population of people addicted to drugs or battling severe mental illness into a neighborhood and expect things to remain the same.... These people need help, not a place to crash.

Pearl Safeway is 'absolute disaster'

Linda Berg

North Pearl has almost no other businesses still surviving, so Safeway has been the main spot for panhandling, loitering etc., long before the shelter opened. Many nearby businesses closed because of untenable rent increases rather than street-people issues.

Dan Berne

It's this way early in the morning as well. Last week, I could not walk on the sidewalk ramp or steps on Northwest 13th going o Safeway because individuals were strewn across actively taking meth or just having taken it. Mitch Green: You are our councilor. Get off your Peacock horse, open your eyes, and help those of us who live here.



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Left: For years, Portland Parks & Recreation claimed the hangup to beginning park construction at Northwest 20th and Pettygrove was a delay in transferring title of the land. When that was resolved last year, another explanation emerged: There was no money in the Central City fund.

Above: This AI-generated image of a Slabtown Park exists only in imagination. Portland Parks & Recreation has released no design for the park.

“The specific financial tradeoffs were not the focus of my engagement.”
Dan Ryan,
 city councilor

“Still no” cont'd from page 1

- \$60 million was transferred out of the Central City SDC zone by City Councilor Dan Ryan to build an aquatic center in North Portland.

Neither made sense to Zarnitz. The retirement fund transfer seemed to violate state law dedicating SDC funds exclusively for capital projects. And diverting the money to a swimming facility about four miles beyond the boundary was particularly galling. The proposed Northgate Park Aquatic Center had been in the news, but few knew the primary source of its funding.

“We didn’t understand that those funds were from our account,” Zarnitz

said. “I didn’t understand it was our money until recently.”

Now he can’t get the subject off his mind.

“Apparently Dan Ryan grabbed what looks to be the ENTIRE uninvested Central City area SDC collections, and committed that money to the North Portland Aquatic Center.”

Ryan was commissioner of Portland Parks & Recreation when money for the pool was pulled from the Central City zone two years ago. That step was quick and easy. Under state law, a local jurisdiction can modify its list of approved projects within 30 days if notice is given to those who have requested it. NWDA representatives were unaware of the decision or what they could have done to challenge it.

Bret Horner, who has been managing the Slabtown Park project for PP&R, never informed NWDA representatives of the subtle opportunity that had slipped past them. In an email last

March, he finally revealed, “All available parks SDC funds have been allocated already by former commissioner Ryan last year.”

Horner justified the out-of-area spending.

“PP&R does track where revenue collection and expenditures occur through the years,” he wrote in another message, “with the goal of making sure we are distributing funds for park improvements throughout the city and to make sure funds don’t get spent exclusively or too significantly in one area of the city vs. the other areas. This happens in tandem with an annual exercise to prioritize projects for SDC funding based on a variety of criteria (service level, household rating and equity rating).

“Parks SDC funds are also prioritized to be spent in areas that have fewer resources and are highly rated based on the criteria previously mentioned—fewer parks and with fewer experiences

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Washington Park South Entry	P10546	\$109,706.57
Southeast		\$12,747,759.45
Errol Heights Park Development	P10500	-\$874.02

The Northwest section of the city has received a paltry share of the \$31 million in system development charge revenues distributed by the city since 1999. None of the three projects designated for "Northwest" is in the Northwest District.

like sports fields, playgrounds and picnic areas."

Horner did not mention the city code limiting such transfers. While City Code 17.13.110 allows SDC revenues to be distributed anywhere in the city, at least 43% of the funds must be spent in the local district where they were generated.

John DiLorenzo, an attorney with Davis Wright Tremaine who has brought several successful suits against the city of Portland, doubts the city's 43% rule would stand up to Constitutional challenge because it allows a geographical separation from the site

of the fees extracted and the mitigation provided.

Ryan evasive

The NW Examiner asked Ryan why he moved funds from the Central City to North Portland.

"While serving as parks commissioner, I advocated for a number of projects and made my priorities clear, including the North Portland Aquatic Center," read a statement he issued. "I am well aware of the city's deficit in swimming facilities, especially in North Portland, and did everything I could to advance

the NPAC."

Ryan was less attentive to the public pool deficit in Northwest Portland, which has not had one since the tiny, four-lane lap pool in the Metropolitan Learning Center fell into disrepair and closed in about 2008.

"The Parks Bureau staff ultimately brought the project to fruition, including the details around funding and execution," Ryan's statement said of the aquatic center. "The specific financial tradeoffs were not the focus of my engagement."

Ryan did not respond to these follow-

up questions:

- Why was the Central City fund depleted to the degree that the bureau could not fulfill its prior and much more modest commitment to Slabtown Park? (Various documents list the park allocation as \$3 million to \$5 million.)
- Had he jumped into campaign mode while he was still parks commissioner of the entire city?

Ryan moved the funds to the North Portland aquatic center in December 2023, when commissioners were elected

Continued on page 8

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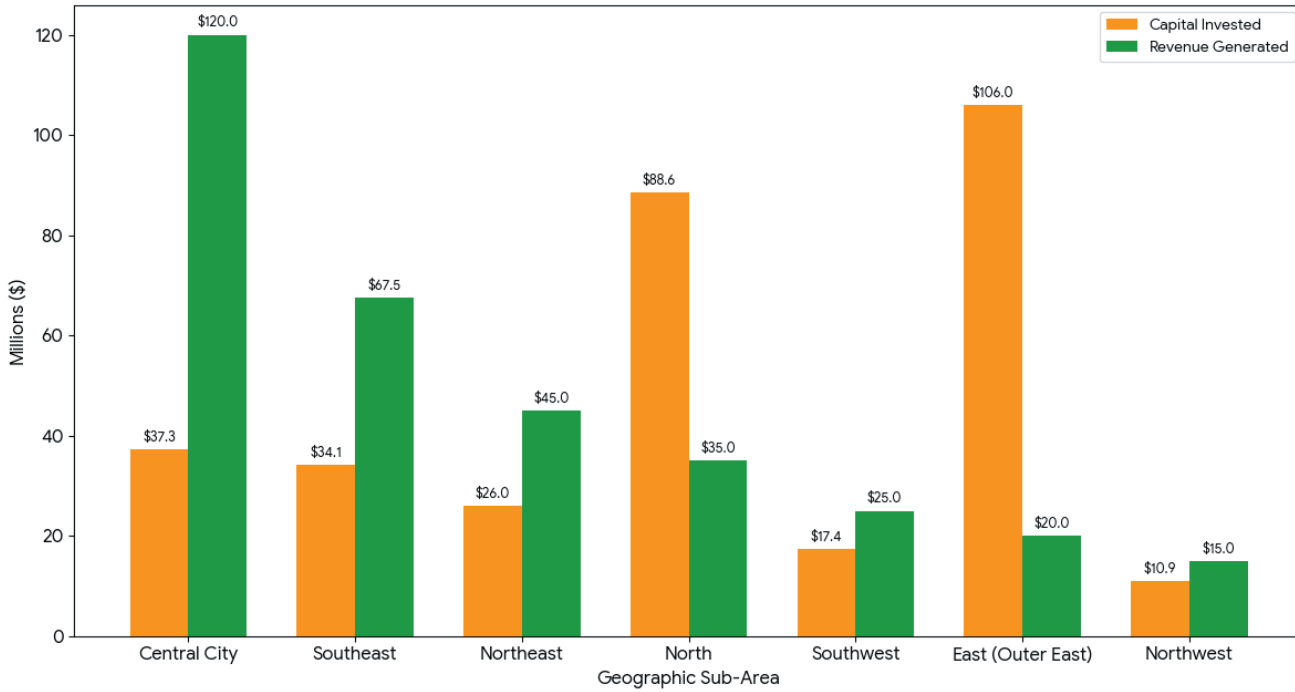
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SDC Program: Revenue vs. Investment by Sub-Area (1999–2025)
Includes FY 2024-25 Expenditures and full \$76.5M commitment to North Portland Aquatic Center.



Most system development charge collections have come from the Central City, an expansive category that includes Slabtown and most of the construction in Northwest Portland in the last 26 years.

"Still no" cont'd from page 7

citywide under the old city charter. A city press release touted the action: "Commissioner Ryan directs nearly \$60 million in development fees to North Portland Aquatic Center."

A month later, he declared his candidacy for the newly created District 2 seat. Bringing home the bacon to their local constituencies is something candidates brag about, but Ryan had procured the funds when his mandate was still to serve the entire city.

We wanted to know if the councilor recognized these dual loyalties and the favoritism he showed to his home district while he was parks commissioner. It was a question he did not acknowledge.

Neglected quadrant

This was not the first time Northwest Portland would get the short end of SDC allocations that its construction projects produced. Although there are only two official SDC zones—Central City and non-Central City—the Parks Bureau keeps more specific breakdowns of investments by projects and subareas.

The division into two zones also blurs the Northwest District role in that the development hub in recent years—Slabtown, also called the Conway Master Plan area—is designated as within the Central City zone.

In no other city zoning or policy categories is this area considered part of the Central City. Zarnitz suspects the

Slabtown area was "gerrymandered" into the Central City zone to minimize the share of SDC revenues attributed to Northwest Portland. For the past 15 years, Slabtown has been the mother lode of new construction in the district, if not the westside. Meanwhile, the public infrastructure that should have accompanied it has not materialized.

The 2025 Parks & Recreation SDC Annual Report lists investments for the Northwest area since 1999. Only \$148,000 has been spent in that area over 26 years, and \$110,000 of that was for the Washington Park South Entry Project, which was not in Northwest Portland at all. Take that out, and Northwest Portland has received one-tenth of 1% of total SDC investments in the city. The

other two projects—an entry to Forest Park along Highway 30 and acquisition of park land in Linnton—were also outside the Northwest District, so it is no exaggeration to say the neighborhood has gotten nothing in the whole deal.

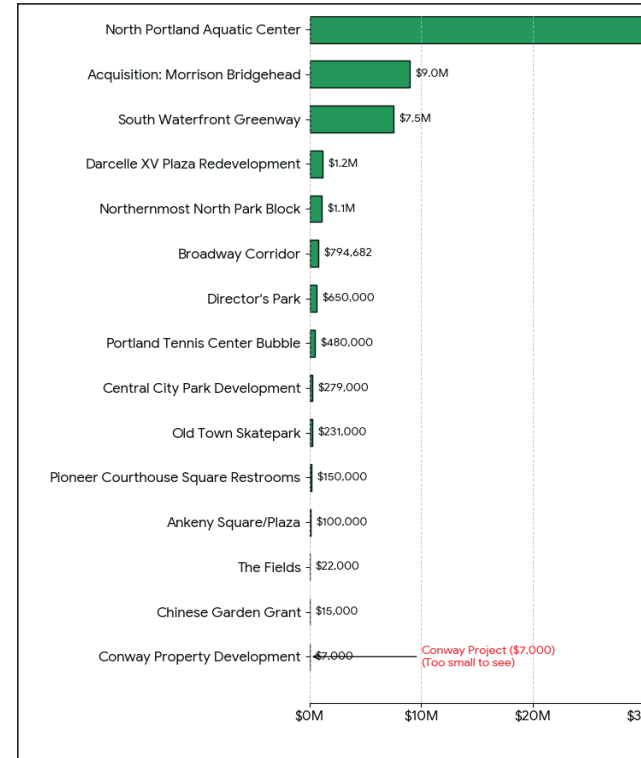
That's how Zarnitz sees it:

"We're doing the lion's share of work in building dense, urban, vibrant neighborhoods, and that money should have been spent to make those neighborhoods the most successful they can be. That's the purpose of that money being raised."

Daunting optics

But Zarnitz's organization is ambivalent about the imbalance he sees.

Total SDC Investment by Project



All SDC investments to date in the Conway Property, also share devoted to the North Portland Aquatic Center.



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ect: The "Stack" Comparison



known as Slabtown, amount to one-tenth of 1% of the

It came out at a recent meeting of the NWDA Planning Committee.

“This city has very few public pools, and they’re hard to find places for, and North Portland is under-parked,” NWDA board member Regina Hauser said. “I do not like the optics of the neighborhoods you identified complaining that money was stolen from them to benefit North Portland. I just don’t think that’s a good idea.”

“Regina is right—the optics of us whining about it are going to get us nowhere,” added Roger Vrillakas, a member of the association’s Planning Committee since the 1980s. “I’m much more interested in trying to fix the essence of the problem, which is state law that says SDC funds can only be spent on capital projects, not maintenance.

That’s the problem.”

It certainly is one of the problems. Northwest and North Portland have both lost use of public pools due to insufficient resources to repair and maintain them.

“I appreciate the optics,” said Steve Pinger, another longtime NWDA representative, “but I think what we have taken as being the third rail in a lot of political discourse in this city is not so much the third rail anymore. I think we’re simply trying to sort out what’s appropriate for the city to be doing with the resources that they have. And right now, the city’s going broke, so everything’s on the table.”

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

Reconciling a peculiar loan

Noel Johnson, a local developer who lives in the Northwest District and has long been active in neighborhood affairs, has been critical of Portland’s management of system development charges for years. He personally compiled a list of every housing development built in the district since 2000 to show that the neighborhood was getting a paltry return on the growth it shouldered.

But he said the most striking evidence that the city can’t be trusted to manage SDCs is the \$45 million loan to the Fire and Police Disability and Retirement fund classified as an investment in Northwest Portland.

He called it “crazy” and worse.

“The City Council’s decision this past July, and also in July 2024, to use \$50 million of parks fees for something other than offsetting development is most probably illegal let alone unethical,” Johnson said.

Johnson referred to Oregon Revised Statutes 223.307, which states that “reimbursement fees may be spent only on capital improvements associated with the systems for which the fees are assessed including expenditures relating to repayment of indebtedness.”

“With the state law, only if one interprets the use of ‘expenditure’ to exclude loans, would ORS 223.302-307 allow for ‘interfund’ loans to come from SDC funds,” he continued.

“That is a hard sell. A fiduciary with another person’s money is not legally in the clear if they say they just ‘loaned’ the money to their friend, instead of investing it like they were supposed to.”

Todd Zarnitz also sees something fishy in the way Parks SDC account managers handled the loan. He called the terms friendly to the borrower and not faithful to city code.

Portland City Code 17.13.110 A. states:

“All monies derived from the Parks and Recreation SDC must be placed in the Parks and Recreation SDC Account. Funds in the Parks and Recreation SDC Account must be used solely for the purpose of providing capacity-increasing capital improvements as identified in the adopted Parks and Recreation SDC-CIP [Capital Improvement Plan].”

As neither Johnson or Zarnitz are lawyers, we asked two local attorneys to review their claims. Both agreed with their conclusions and had further concerns with the city’s management of the SDC program.

Portland Parks & Recreation was asked to comment on the two loans to the disability and retirement fund. An addendum will be posted if a response is received.

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JAN 10 & 11

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JAN 16*, 17 & 18

BEETHOVEN’S EROICA

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*In Salem



JAN 22

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Makers mart: Portland Bazaar



The pop-up Portland Bazaar packed the former Premier Gear Building, which has been vacant since it was purchased in 2017 and then remodeled. Photo by AJ Meeker



Art, clothing, handbags and furnishings were available for the two weekends before Christmas. Photo by AJ Meeker

Shoppers flocked to the Portland Bazaar for handmade goods sold by 200 local craftspeople at the former Premier Gear Building at Northwest 17th and Thurman the last two weekends of December.

The building has been empty since it was sold in 2017 and remodeled for creative office space. But for four days, it became a head-spinning hive where everything from molded beeswax candles to Thunderpants, the brightly patterned Portland-made underwear, are peddled. There were aisles of handmade goods sold by 200 local makers, vendors and thrifters, all rejoicing in a kind of freewheeling commerce that's anything but corporate.

As one wild-eyed vendor named Lynzee Lynx said, "People know shopping on Amazon will kill all of this."

"People want to hang out and they want to have an experience, so we've added more food and drink this year," said Jenna Winkler, a Portland Bazaar organizer. She and her business partner, Delia Tethong, launched Portland Bazaar in 2011. Five years ago, they expanded the event to run for two weekends during the holidays, which vendors prefer because they can leave their elaborate stalls up for the duration.

Winkler and Tethong also produce November's

European Bazaar in the Goat Blocks on the Central Eastside, Street Bazaar in Pioneer Square in the summer, and they recently launched a market in San Diego.

"We had our highest attended weekend—our biggest day ever—last Saturday," Winkler said, with more than 15,000 people on each day. The formula works, she said, because they bring together experienced makers with up-and-comers.

"We do a lot of hand selecting and curating to create a good variety," she added. "Plus, a lot of the people here don't usually do other markets."

NOBBY NEWS

Vol. 32, No. 1 "News You Can't Always Believe" January 2026

Thanks for everything, Santa!

Nurse Kellie was so thrilled to see Santa Claus at Nobbys last month that she just had to give him a big hug. She wanted to thank him for all the presents she had gotten over the years, always thoughtfully chosen, wrapped and delivered on time no matter where her family moved.

Santa was touched by her story and hugged her back. It gave him a warm feeling, even though he had forgotten some of the details as to which dolly he delivered to her in what year and to which address.



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West Sylvan Middle School student Reese knows chocolate.



The New York-based owners of Schoolhouse have laid off most of its staff.

Chocolate tour

For the scoop on hot chocolate, I enlisted my neighbor and West Sylvan Middle School student, Reese. She has the necessary sweet tooth and love of research the job takes.

The first stop on our tour is Cascadia Coffee Pub, a laid back cafe at 2010 NW Front Ave. that serves breakfast, lunch and pastries. But we didn't allow ourselves to get distracted by the menu or cute dogs in holiday vests under the tables. We had one job: drink some hot chocolate. Reese, who had never been here, agreed that we would steer clear of her usual on-the-go spots: Country Coffee, Starbucks and Dutch Bros., for the article.

Anita, the welcoming barista at Cascadia on this night, starts with a mocha sauce to make the house cocoa. Next she steams whole milk and blends it all together by hand. She adds a thick swirl of whipped cream, pours it into a brown cup with a saucer and

dusts the top with chocolate powder. "You don't want it too hot," Anita said. "People tend to drink it quickly," so the risk of it cooling off too much before consumed is low.

"OK, this is very good," Reese said, moving to a communal table with a wreath centerpiece. "It's not too sweet." She began taking notes on a piece of paper torn from my yellow legal pad and decided to make a chart.

"I like the flavor; I would give this a nine out of 10," she said, doodling hearts and faces in the chart's margin.

Cascadia set a high standard, so we're curious to see how the others compare. The Dragonfly Cafe and Sterling Coffee are on the itinerary, and we'll visit both soon.



Briefly . . .

Owners of **GRAND PRIX MOTORS**, currently operating at 1234 SW Jefferson St. in the Goose Hollow neighborhood, recently bought the two commercial floors of "the REI building" at Northwest 14th and Kearney. REI closed its store in 2024, citing theft as the primary reason. The \$6.65 million price includes 226 covered parking spaces.

SCHOOLHOUSE, 2181 NW Nicolai St., laid off most of its staff. The move comes amid ongoing financial struggles at its parent company, Food52. The New York-based food and lifestyle publisher acquired Schoolhouse in 2021 for \$48 million.

DEADSTOCK COFFEE in Old Town is moving from 408 NW Couch St. to The Hoxton hotel at 15 NW Fourth Ave.

NUVREI BAKERY, 404 NW 10th Ave., is closing its Pearl District location after many years selling its fresh baked croissants and colorful macarons. Their bakery on 1122 SW Harvey Milk St. in the West End remains open.

INDEX PDX, 114 NW Third Ave., which sold new and used collectible Nike and Adidas shoes, among other brands, is closing its Old Town store and moving to online only sales.

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Above: In November, Justin Wnuck's dad Charles Wnuck (far right) flew the two of them to Texas to see a San Antonio Spurs game with Justin's son, Asher, 14 (middle). Justin had been estranged from his father and did not rejoin his son's life until last spring when Justin was not only clean and sober but promoted to supervisor at Clean Start.
Photo provided by Justin Wnuck

Left: Kevin Lytsell (seated) pipes up about what he's grateful for during the morning huddle led by Justin Wnuck (front right) and attended by Laura Brown (front left). Wnuck's crew handles the Clean Start Program's new contract with the Portland Environmental Management Office, expanding cleanup services to the Pearl and Stadium neighborhoods.
Photo by Erin Hoover Barnett

"From lost" cont'd from page 1

up the ranks. She became a supervisor, then assistant manager and then business manager.

Along the way, she also made changes.

The work culture in the Central City Concern garage at Southwest 15th and Alder was pretty much guys and a few gals keeping to themselves. So when Brown moved into a supervisor office, she installed a coffee maker, filled a candy dish and left her door open.

Soon she was greeting crew members, hearing their stories, building relationships one paper cup of coffee at a time.

Taking a leap

Justin Wnuck was living on his dealer's property outside Medford, years into a monster IV heroin habit, when a psychosis took hold that he could not shake.

Careening on foot along country roads, ducking behind bushes, he was certain a guy in a red truck with an AK-47 was coming to get him. Convinced that a helicopter overhead had its sights trained on him. Imagined the 5 o'clock news with everyone he had ever known telling the reporter that this wasn't the guy they knew.

So when he reached the bridge, he resolved to end it all. In a moment of clarity, he decided against traumatizing a driver by jumping in front of their car.

Instead, he turned and leaped off the bridge into the rushing Rogue River.

He hit the water. Hard. And he realized: he was not dead.

In fact, his life had just begun.

An ambulance ride led to 72 hours in the psych ward and then to an opportunity: a local safe house where he could detox. Thinking more clearly then, he started calling treatment programs. He wanted out of the Rogue Valley. He chose Coda in Gresham, using his Oregon Health Plan coverage. But getting a job after getting clean was another matter.

All he could land was temp jobs until he found the janitor trainee position at Central City Concern, pushing the barrel downtown. It was March 2021. He was 37 years old.

"I was very relieved that I would get consistent hours. At the same time, I'm 37 and I'm out here cleaning up feces. Where did my life go?" Wnuck said. "But to help clean up the city and do a service, it gave me a sense of relief and purpose. It allowed me to pay my rent and be self-sufficient for the first time in my life."

Paying it forward

Laura Brown saw something in Justin Wnuck early on.

Not only was Wnuck always at work, always on time, but also she learned that

he walked more than a mile to the bus to make his Sunday morning shift. He was eager and open, thorough and focused.

When Wnuck had to go back to Jackson County to testify against his dealer for murdering his own wife and stepdaughter, Central City Concern rallied around him. Brown talked with Wnuck by phone every day he was down there. When Wnuck rebuilt his relationship with his son, now 14, she was there to cheer him on.

Brown helped promote Wnuck up the line – from pushing the barrel to training others to riding the tricycles equipped with pressure washers to becoming the program's first dispatcher as the program grew, changing its name to Clean Start and now accepting multiple contracts.

Now Wnuck supervises the crew on the new contract with the city's Portland Environmental Management office. Fifteen new positions. Fifteen more people with a chance at a clean start. With this contract, the crews are now cleaning in the Pearl and the Stadium neighborhoods.

He leads like his mentor, Laura Brown.

"I'm not the type who will get upset or raise my voice – would rather talk things out," Wnuck says. "I like to be as present as I can for my team, just try to be there for them in whatever capacity they need me to be."

Pausing in gratitude

At 6:45 a.m. on a drizzly Friday, a passel of beefy guys and one gal settle into folding chairs in one corner of the Central City Concern Alder Street Garage. Wnuck and Brown stand up front.

"Had a supervisors meeting yesterday," Wnuck starts out. "Everyone's really happy with your work, so I appreciate that."

He reviews a few route changes and areas that the city wants them to focus on more. Then he looks around at the crew.

"So, does anyone want to say what they're grateful for?"

A close-shaved guy with a linebacker build raises his hand.

"I'm grateful for my recovery," Kevin Lytsell says. "I've got 22 months today."

"Twenty-two today?" Wnuck says. "Wow. That's great."

The crew applauds.

"Congratulations," Brown says.

Learn more about the Central City Concern Clean Start Program: <https://centralcityconcern.org/jobs-location/clean-start/>

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Death with dignity: Our personal experience



Left: Patty and Don Goldenberg on a recent vacation.

Far left: The cancer spread to Patty Goldenberg's head and eye socket, causing excruciating pain in her final weeks.

As jurisdictions and advocates nationwide grapple with medical assistance in dying, a Pearl District man tells his wife's story

BY DON GOLDENBERG, MD

On Nov. 27, my wife, Patty, age 81, died peacefully at home in my arms with my two daughters at her side. The day before, our family, including our five grandchildren, celebrated Thanksgiving together. They knew this was her final goodbye, and we all hugged and cried with Patty and with each other.

Patty chose to die with dignity. We are fortunate that Patty and I moved to Portland 10 years ago, after I retired from my medical practice in Boston.

Oregon is one of only 10 states that allow physician-assisted death. Death with Dignity was enacted in 1997, when Oregon became the first state to allow terminally ill patients to voluntarily end their lives with lethal medications prescribed by a physician (1). Oregon and Vermont are the only states that allow terminally ill patients who are not residents to access physician-assisted deaths. However, physician-assisted death is now legal in most of Europe, Canada, Latin America and Asia (2).

Our family's recent experience with Oregon's Death with Dignity may help others to understand its process and value. Patty was successfully treated for breast cancer at age 54, but four years ago, metastatic cancer caused a hip fracture. Over the last four years, she had metastasis to other bones and the liver, each treated with apparent resolution.

Then, just six weeks ago, the cancer spread to her head and eye socket, causing excruciating pain. She was hospitalized for pain control, and we were told that further treatment for the cancer was not warranted. The pain was so severe that her blood pressure skyrocketed, her blood sodium plummeted, and she spent a few days in the intensive care unit.

We next met with the hospital palliative care team, who assured us that they could alleviate her pain. This was accomplished with massive doses of opioids. However, Patty became very sedated and suffered from an inability to urinate or defecate. We then arranged for hospice care at home. I naively thought that the hospice health care team would be able to expedite Patty's end of life wishes by increasing the opioids if and when needed. The palliative care team said that was not the role of hospice. They also advised against my playing any role in the opioid dosing schedule, despite my medical background.

A close friend of mine in Portland had also lost his wife to cancer a few years earlier, and she had chosen to use Oregon's Death with Dignity process. Patty, my daughters and I asked the hospital palliative care team about this option. However, since Patty was in a faith-based hospital, any formal discussion and arrangements for Death with Dignity had to be provided by an oncologist not on the hospital staff.

We arranged this with her oncologist, who had treated Patty before her hospitalization. He met with Patty and agreed that Patty met the two requisite Death with Dignity guidelines: a terminal illness that will lead to death within six months and that she was capable of making and communicating her health care decisions.

**"I naively thought that the hospice ... would be able to expedite Patty's end of life wishes."
—Don Goldenberg**

He also arranged to have Patty interviewed by a second physician, and both sent their Death with Dignity affirmations to the Oregon Health Authority.

A complicated process

Even in Oregon, discussing and arranging Death with Dignity was complicated. I was hesitant about broaching the subject, since Patty had climbed out of each previous metastatic setback. We both knew this was very different since she was now receiving comfort care, not any treatment. This is the goal of hospice, "to manage symptoms and improve the quality of life with someone near the end of life. Hospice guides you and your family through the dying process—physically, emotionally, spiritually."(3). Hospice provided a walker, wheelchair and hospital bed, and I slept next to Patty in our living room. The hospice nurses and social workers visited frequently, adjusting the medications to provide adequate pain management and ease anxiety.

Once we decided on the Death with Dignity option, I wanted it ready to be administered, if that became Patty's wish. A single compounding pharmacy in the Portland area is licensed to prepare the lethal formulation, and coordinating the paperwork with the pharmacy, physicians and the state authority was not simple. It took a few weeks before the formulated medication arrived. I was still unsure of when and how to bring up the Death with Dignity option with Patty.

Over the next few weeks, Patty became progressively weaker, less alert and slept most of the day. After a difficult day, Patty asked me whether it was time for Death with Dignity. We cried as we held each other, but we each knew that this was the right choice. Patty, always in charge, decided to wait two more days so she could celebrate Thanksgiving, her favorite holiday, with her family.

Thanksgiving was both sorrowful and joyful. The day after Thanksgiving, I mixed the compounded medicine in a glass of apple juice and gave it to Patty. My two daughters and I watched as she drank it down and then settled next to her in bed. While lying together, we each grappled with some common end of life questions, as captured in a recent New England Journal of Medicine editorial (3).

"Is she choking? Am I doing the right thing? Can she hear us?"

I reassured myself and my daughters that her staggered breathing was "normal at the end of life and she wasn't struggling to breathe. The morphine doesn't speed up the dying process, but takes away the pain. She wasn't conscious, but I think on a deeper, spiritual level

she knew we were there ... felt our presence, and was comforted by the sound of your voice." (3).

'The last frontier'

Physician-assisted death was described in a recent New York Times article as "the last frontier in the expansion of individual autonomy" (2). However, there are bitter debates about who should be eligible. For example, in most countries, people with intractable mental illness or dementia are not eligible for physician-assisted death, which remains restricted to people with a terminal illness.

Most U.S. states, often using the guise of religious dogma, have prohibited physician-assisted death, even in patients with terminal illness. It was encouraging last week when New York Gov. Kathy Hochul approved a bill to allow physician-assisted death for terminally ill people.

Hochul, a Catholic, struggled with her decision, noting, "a lot of religious conflict in me, the way I was raised. But I realized it's not about me, it's about 20 million New Yorkers. I do not believe that in every instance condemning someone to excruciating pain and suffering preserves the dignity and sanctity of life." (5).

A colleague in the New York Senate applauded Hochul's decision, noting, "It's not about shortening life. It's about shortening death" (5). In opposition, the New York State Catholic Conference called the bill "egregious, intrinsically evil" (5).

One popular website titled "Aging With Dignity" claims: "Physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia create pressure on those facing serious illness or disability ... such practices devalue human life, marginalizing and endangering the poor, disabled, minorities and elderly through assisted suicide." (4).

These statements misrepresent Patty and the thousands of Oregon residents who have chosen Death With Dignity. Like Patty, people who chose Death With Dignity are well-educated, independent, currently in hospice care and die peacefully at home (1,2).

Patty cited that her fear of loss of autonomy as very important in this decision. Rather than "creating pressure," choosing Death with Dignity alleviated her anxiety and pressure. Patty had put up with a great deal of uncertainty, pain and suffering over the past four years. Patty's decision when and how to end her life was hers alone, and made with dignity and grace. It should be an option for every person facing death.

1. Oregon Health Authority. *Oregon's Death with Dignity Act Current Report 2024*.

2. Nolen S. "Should you be able to ask a doctor to help you die?" *New York Times* Dec. 9, 2025.

3. Brender, Teva M.D. "What is Hospice?" *New England Journal of Medicine* 2025;393:1872-3.

4. agingwithdignity.org.

5. Asford G. "N.Y. governor will sign right-to-die bill for the terminally ill." *New York Times*. Dec 17, 2025.

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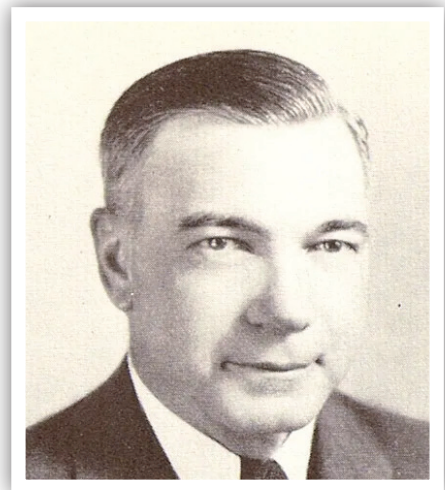


A voter initiative to consider merging the city of Portland and Multnomah County will hold its kickoff event on Thursday, Jan. 22, 4:30-7 p.m., at Lucky Labrador Beer Hall, 1945 NW Quimby St. "Come sign the petition, meet other people who are fed up with the status quo and see what all this work has been building toward," wrote Matt Zmuda, founder of MultNoMo and a Northwest Portland resident. "We'll have volunteer packets available for pickup, plus food and drinks." To register, visit <https://luma.com/7190aqn7>.



Portland Fire & Rescue laid out its policy on open fires around homeless encampments, which draw frequent calls for service. "When firefighters extinguish these types of fires, people still in need of warmth and/or a cooking fire will move to areas less visible and often less safe for the use of open flames, such as alleyways littered with combustibles, against a building out of view, or even inside a highly flammable tent."

Former Lincoln High School baseball and football coach Wade "Whizzer" Williams will be honored at the annual Baker City Elks Club banquet on Jan. 31. Williams coached Lincoln to state baseball championships in 1935, 1936 and 1956. He began his coaching career at Baker City in 1913.



A Green Loop Concept Plan encircling the Central City with a bicycle and pedestrian path was shared with the Downtown and Pearl District neighborhood associations last month. The Portland Bureau of Transportation has sketched out options for public review, aiming for City Council adoption this fall. The plan is mum on tree removal, a key concern of South Park Blocks preservationists who championed its national historic designation, in part to protect the trees.



Scott Kerman, executive director of Old Town's Blanchet House, resigned without notice on Dec. 18. Kerman, who had been in the position six years, said, "I think 2026 is going to be an extremely brutal year for nonprofits," he told the NW Examiner. "I'm at a point where I want to move to the macro level." Emily Coleman and Steve Cook were named as co-interim executive directors.



Northwest Portland resident Chris Smith, who founded No More Freeways to block Oregon Department of Transportation plans to double the width of Interstate 5 through North Portland hopes to raise an additional \$9,000 to cover legal fees to halt the project. "In 2026, we'll finally get judges to weigh in on whether ODOT has been brazenly breaking state and federal law." Donations can be made through nomorefreewayspx.com/donate/.



Asa Flats + Lofts, 1200 NW Marshall St., continues to attract intense drug and homeless activity, particularly around the bike parking alcoves. But the Chicago-based owner, Styl Residential, has been unresponsive to local pressure to enclose the alcoves or to contribute to the Northwest Community Conservancy, which provides security and outreach services.

It's time to join the party!



Thomas Lauderdale, founder of Pink Martini, gets some accompaniment from his dog Gonzo shortly before the annual Christmas party at his Portland home. Photos by Walden Kirsch.

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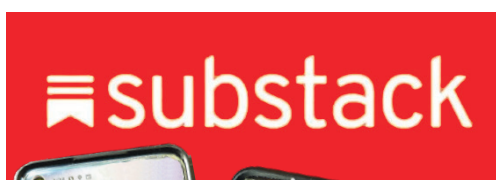
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