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INSIDE:

Multnomah traffic-calming campaign aims to get attention of drivers
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Volume No. 22, Issue No. 5

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Portland, Oregon

Complimentary

March 2014

Snowmageddon!



Lucy and Tony Quinn of Multnomah measure snow depth on their deck Feb. 8. Snowstorm story and photo essay on Pages 4-5. (Photo by Joanie Quinn)

Southwest Corridor Plan rolls on with full cast of characters and issues

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

The news of high capacity transit planning has been in the news lately. Everything from tunnels under Hillsdale, MAX lines down Barbur Boulevard, and bus rapid transit have been proposed.

Nothing has been decided yet. The budget is not set. Barbur Boulevard is not going down to one lane each way. Bike lanes will not be sacrificed.

The mission is to bring some kind of rapid transit service, either bus or light rail, along Highway 99W between Portland State University and Sherwood.

There seems to be a role for anyone who's interested. To address this, the Southwest Corridor Plan Portland Working Group has been formed. It has been meeting monthly since November.

The participants have read like a list of who's who of Southwest Portland. Almost every Southwest neighborhood and business association has been represented.

Residents, business and property owners have had influential voices.

Media, college students, and various staff of elected officials have also been in attendance.

The city of Portland, TriMet, Metro, Oregon Department of Transportation, Portland Bureau of Transportation, Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. and adjoining jurisdictional partners have all been part of the mix. From a reporter's perspective, working with just one of these entities can be a daunting task.

One of the main challenges has been the variety of issues posed by the Southwest Corridor Plan team in order to appease bicyclists, pedestrians, and commuters, while meeting strict environmental regulations and addressing mass transit needs for a growing southwest community.

According to TriMet, over a quarter of the Portland metro workforce commutes from Southwest. There are a variety of ways to become involved in the Southwest Corridor Plan.

First of all, become familiar with the website, www.oregonmetro.gov. A list of all the partners, decision making process, and timeline can be found here.

Second, consider attending the South-

(Continued on Page 6)

Portland teachers' union strike averted Feb. 20 after 11th hour deal

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

After months of negotiations, Portland Public School and Portland Association of Teachers agreed on a tentative deal that suspended the proposed strike Feb. 20. At press time, the two sides had not officially approved the deal.

The teachers union had voted to strike at a special meeting Feb. 5 at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall.

If the conceptual agreement is approved, teachers and administrators can get back to the business of serving the 47,000 students of Oregon's largest school district.

Parents can breathe a sigh of relief that they don't have to worry about child care or what to do with idle kids, athletes can finish up their winter sport season, and seniors can again count the days down to graduation.

"With the latest snow closures," one parent said, "we weren't looking forward to more delays in the school day."

The main issues were oversized classrooms, increasing workload, adding more school days, language about standardized testing, and providing fair compensation.

"It has never been about salary, they just want to sustain what has been promised," one Southwest high school teacher stated.

"PPS paid a state consultant \$15,000 a month for the last 18 months to work on mediation for the district! I'm in the wrong field!"

The Portland Association of Teachers and Portland Public Schools worked over 10 months to reach a negotiated settlement at the eleventh hour that

prevented a strike.

"Today, our schools are open as usual, our teachers are in their classrooms and our students are engaged in learning," Superintendent Carole Smith said. "I am really pleased we are in this place today and I share our whole community's sense of relief."

Smith went on to say, "I want to acknowledge that the process of bargaining this contract has been long and, at times, difficult for everyone involved. Through it all, both teams stayed committed to crafting a better labor agreement."

The Portland Association of Teachers will soon announce their process for ratifying the agreement. If the tentative agreement is ratified by their membership, the proposal will then go before the Portland School Board for ratification.

Smith said she hopes all of this will happen within the next few weeks.

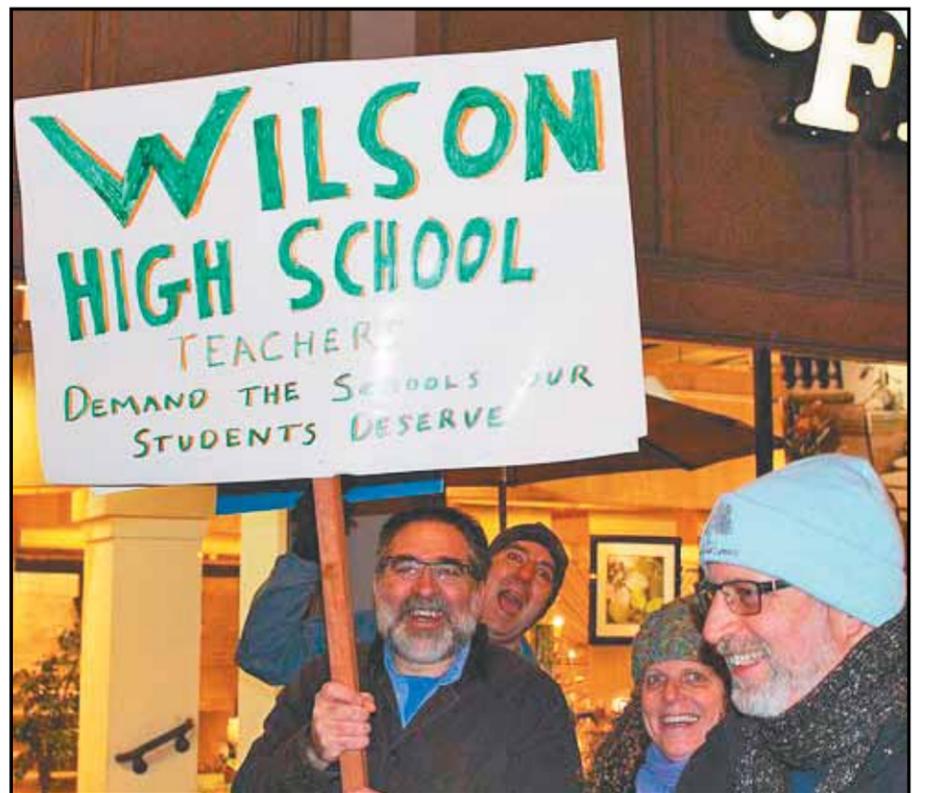
"I would like to thank all of our community partners who stepped forward with offers to help us keep our students safe and fed in the event of a possible strike," Smith said.

Trying to capture the story proved difficult for this reporter. Another high school teacher, who also wished to remain anonymous, summed it up.

"Every teacher I know has a slightly different perspective on the entire (bargaining) process. I know I would not be representing perhaps even the majority.

"The issues are extremely complicated. It would take a long time and an objective, diligent reporter to uncover the complexities and undo the damage that biased reporting has done."

The details of the final agreement will not be released until both sides have ratified the deal.



Wilson High School teachers and parents demonstrate before a possible strike. (Photo courtesy of Portland Association of Teachers)

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EARTH TALK

Questions & Answers About Our Environment

Dear EarthTalk: What are “dirty fuels” and why are they so called?
— *Bill Green, Seattle, WA*

The term “dirty fuels” refers to fuels derived from tar sands, oil shale or liquid coal. Just like their more conventional fossil fuel counterparts such as petroleum and coal, they can be turned into gasoline, diesel and other energy sources.

These energy sources can generate extreme amounts of particulate pollution, carbon emissions and ecosystem destruction during their lifecycles from production to consumption.

“Because tar sands [have] more sulfur, nitrogen, and metals in [them] than conventional oil, upgrading and refining [them] causes a lot more air and water pollution and greenhouse gas emissions,” reports the Natural Resources Defense Council, a leading environmental non-profit.

“On a lifecycle basis—that is, extraction all the way through combustion—tar sands cause about 20 percent more global warming pollution than conventional oil,” adds NRDC.

“Oil shale and liquid coal are even

worse, causing nearly 50 percent more global warming pollution and over double the lifecycle emissions of conventional oil...”

In North America, the majority of such fuels come from Canada’s vast Boreal Forest, to where tens of millions of birds flock each spring to nest.

“Tar sands oil development creates open pit mines, habitat fragmentation, toxic waste holding ponds, air and water pollution, up-graders and refineries, and pipelines spreading far beyond the Boreal forest,” reports NRDC.

“This development is destroying habitat for waterfowl and songbirds that come from all over the Americas to nest in the Boreal.”

Beyond impacts at the extraction sites, dirty fuels cause pollution problems all down the line. For this reason, environmental leaders are opposed to the proposed Keystone XL pipeline which, if approved and built, would transport tar sands fuels through the Midwestern U.S. to refineries in the Gulf of Mexico.

“Refinery communities like Port Arthur, Texas...are already unable to comply with their air pollution regulations, so dirtier fuel is the last thing they need in their refineries,” adds NRDC.

And while dirty fuels may reduce our reliance on foreign oil, they won’t help reduce gas prices as they are so expensive to produce that gas prices would have to be higher than they already are in order for them to be profitable.

“They also can’t help with stabilizing gas prices in the case of a



Environmental leaders are opposed to the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. Pictured: Rainforest Action Network protesters in front of the Canadian Consulate in Chicago. (Photo courtesy Rainforest Action Network)

disruption to oil shipments because each new tar sands project requires huge infrastructure and capital investments, so it takes years for new tar sands projects to come on-line—it’s not as though there is loads of spare tar sands oil just waiting to be put through the pipelines,” says NRDC’s Elizabeth Shope.

“The fact is, we don’t need these fuels,” she adds. “We can reduce oil consumption by increasing fuel efficiency standards, and greater use of hybrid cars, renewable energy and environmentally sustainable biofuels. What’s called ‘smart growth’—how we design our communities—is also a very important element in meeting our transportation needs.

“North America stands at an

energy crossroads. We now face a choice: to set a course for a more sustainable energy future of clean, renewable fuels, or to develop ever-dirtier sources of transportation fuel derived from fossil fuels—at an even greater cost to our health and environment.”

For more information on this subject visit www.nrdc.org. EarthTalk® is written and edited by Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss and is a registered trademark of E - The Environmental Magazine (www.emagazine.com). Send questions to: earthtalk@emagazine.com.

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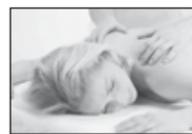


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A grassroots traffic-calming campaign hopes to get attention of drivers approaching West Hills Learning Center on Capitol Highway. (Photo courtesy of Moses Ross)

Multnomah traffic-calming campaign aims to get attention of drivers

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

James Nobles is tired of drivers not paying attention to the speed limit in Multnomah Village. His car was hit while pulling out of the West Hills Learning Center. No one was hurt.

Years ago, another parent was as well and fought the city to get the speed limit lowered. Despite efforts to slow drivers down, vehicles still drive much higher than the speed limit.

"[The speed limit is] 25 miles per hour from the Hoot Owl Market until the village limit," Nobles said at the February meeting of the Multnomah Neighborhood Association. "Then it becomes 20!"

Nobles contacted Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. who in turn contacted Sharon White, pedestrian advocate from the Portland Bureau of Transportation.

White said that for every six safety

pledges completed by area residents and staff members, one "Slow Down" lawn sign would be provided to the community.

Over one hundred pledges were gathered from neighbors nearby and parents from the West Hills Learning Center spearheaded by Nobles.

Then, a test run of the Multnomah Safety Vigil action plan went into effect in mid-February. Permission was granted by property owners.

A dozen signs were placed along Capitol Highway ("the Narrows") from Southwest Texas Street to Southwest Miles Street reminding motorists to slow down and drive the posted speed limit.

Three volunteers participated from the sidewalk.

Volunteers from the neighborhood association said they will move the signs to Southwest 40th and Capitol Highway and other areas where speeding has created unsafe conditions for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

COMMUNITY LIFE

By Don Snedecor
The Southwest Portland Post

5 Hillsdale Neighborhood Association meets again on Wednesday, March 5, at 7:00 p.m. at the Watershed building, community room, 6388 SW Capitol Hwy.

A representative from Metro is scheduled to give a 30-minute presentation on the high capacity transit corridor running through Hillsdale. Glenn Bridger, transportation chair, will lead a discussion about potential projects related to the Southwest Corridor Plan. Contact Mikal Apnes at 503-705-9777, Mikal@windemere.com or visit www.hna-pdx.com for more information.

8 Southwest Urban Trails Walk is Saturday, March 8. Meet behind the Wilson High School bleachers (Southwest Capitol Highway at Sunset Boulevard) at 8:45 a.m. This will be a seven-mile walk through the neighborhoods and Trail #6. Bus rides can make the walk shorter. Bring a snack, water, and dress for weather. Well-behaved dogs are allowed on leash only. Email Sharon Fekety at fekety@hevanet.com for details.

11 Multnomah Neighborhood Association meets again on Tuesday, March 11, at 7:00 p.m. at the Multnomah Arts Center, Room 30, 7688 SW Capitol Hwy. Rich Newlands, manager of the Multnomah Boulevard bicycle and pedestrian project has been invited to give an update. Expect reports on traf-

fic calming, Woods Parks Advocates, Southwest Corridor planning. Contact Moses Ross, chair, mnachair@gmail.com or 503-309-7985 for more information.

12 Maplewood Neighborhood Association meets again on Wednesday, March 12 at 6:45 p.m. at Maplewood Elementary School, 7452 SW 52nd Ave. Congratulations are in order. Friends of April Hill Park has met its goal of raising \$250,000 for boardwalks and bridges. Elections of board members are scheduled along with regular business. Contact chair Jill Gaddis via email maplewood@swni.org for more information.

Southwest Corridor Plan design option workshop will be held on Wednesday, March 12, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Wilson High School cafeteria, 1151 SW Vermont St. Currently more than 50 design options for the Southwest Corridor are being considered. Metro planners would like to narrow that down. Similar workshops will be held this month in Tigard and Tualatin. Visit Metro's website www.oregonmetro.gov for more information.

19 Rehabilitation of the Newbury and Vermont bridges along Barbur Boulevard is the subject of an open house presented by the Oregon Department of Transportation on Wednesday, March 19, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Mittleman Jewish Community Center, 6651 SW Capitol Hwy. Contact Susan Hanson, ODOT community affairs coordinator at 503-731-3490, susan.c.hanson3@odot.state.or.us or visit www.oregon.gov/odot for more information.

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Winter snowstorm a reminder that neighbors need to plan for emergencies

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

Most businesses closed either early or tried to stay open as best as possible during the early February snowstorm which dropped a foot of snow in Southwest Portland.

First Friday was cancelled in Multnomah Village. School activities and sports were postponed. Buses ran late, slowly, and infrequently much of the storm.

The electricity shut off and water pipes busted.

But for local residents Bob Cogan and his cousin Jean Fitzgerald, all went as planned; at least for them.

"This is a perfect time to become acquainted with emergency preparedness and become part of a team," Fitzgerald said while sipping on a hot tea.

The cousins have been out canvassing just a small part of their Multnomah neighborhood to conduct outreach and ask neighbors to join a team to be ready for an emergency.

"Just this little bit of snow makes you a prisoner in your own home," Cogan said as he showed off his two-week supply of emergency water and food

in his apartment.

"My sister called me just now to see if I had lost electricity," Fitzgerald related. "What will you do when you can't use the Internet or listen to the TV or radio for updates?"

"This snow is a wakeup call for everyone," Cogan warned. "Next time it could be an earthquake, flood, or civil unrest."

Cogan went on to explain how the Neighborhood Emergency Teams worked in each community. A roster is made up of adjoining streets with names of all residents and animals, phone numbers, and emails.

Skills are added such as nurse, plumber, and electrician. Professional or governmental help may not come for days depending on the situation.

The Post sat down with the cousins in Cogan's apartment for the following interview.

Q: What is your main purpose in becoming involved with this team?

Cogan: To help other people get organized in the event of a major emergency.

Fitzgerald: We surveyed folks and got nine out of 23 surveys back. We hope people become more serious.

Cogan: We tried getting information to everyone through the Internet but privacy is an issue for some. So we visited two dozen homes. We want to form teams about emergency preparedness and assist folks with suggestions on how to become prepared.

Q: What are some key messages?

Fitzgerald: Do you have cash on hand in case ATMs are down? Do you have extra medications packed somewhere to take with you? What about pet needs?

Cogan: Well, some of the responses



Multnomah residents Peter Samson and Robin Schaufler brave the snowy weather en route to O'Connor's Restaurant and Bar in Multnomah Village. Neighbors and businesses need each other during an emergency. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

we heard were, 'Well if I die, I die!' or 'I'm too busy right now to get organized'.

Q: What made you get involved?

Cogan: We heard some national geologists speak at an event a while back and showed us information of natural disasters in Japan and California. We were shook up! We're also overdue for a large quake.

Fitzgerald: Hillsdale residents Lynn Rossing and John Morris are very organized and prepared. They became co-chairs of the Hillsdale Neighborhood Emergency Team. NETs are made up of residents trained by the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management.

Q: What is one more thing you like the community to know?

Cogan: Be prepared.

(Continued on Page 6)

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Snowmageddon!

Folks in Southwest Portland are treated to a rare blanket of snow



McKenzie Craine enjoys sledding near Jackson Middle School. (Photo by Kevin Craine)



Ice sculpture of Lucky Lab owner Gary Geist is the creation of pubster Cabel Merkin. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)



Snow princess Sahara Wright poses for a close-up, Feb. 6. (Photo by Chantal Wright)



A Multnomah neighbor captured this scene of a street snowed under during her walk, Feb. 8. (Photo by Birgit Hoffshulz-Ransom)



Nolan and Jake, a boy and his dog, enjoy playing in the snow, Feb. 7. (Photo by Jennifer Scales)

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Southwest Corridor Plan

(Continued from Page 1)

west Corridor Plan design workshop. It is scheduled for Wednesday, March 12, from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Wilson High School cafeteria, 1151 SW Vermont St.

Third, participate in local neighborhood or business association meetings.

Finally, join one of the many local workgroups that have been meeting on a regular basis. Some are by appointment only like the Southwest Corridor Plan group called "ID SW."

This group consists of business leaders of large institutions like Oregon Health & Science University, Fred Meyer, Safeway, and Portland State University.

According to Malu Wilkinson, from Metro, the purpose of ID SW is to engage other voices, such as institutions and larger business owners in the corridor.

"We want to build a foundation for the kind of public-private partnerships that will be needed to bring the Southwest Corridor Plan to fruition," explained Wilkinson. "It is an opportunity to build support for the land use visions in the corridor."

Wilkinson said the ID SW is a sub-committee of the Metro Steering Committee which is open to the public. "This group is not any greater than that of the other community groups providing feedback," she emphasized.

According to Metro, all the options and projects that are being analyzed will be evaluated through vetting it with an expanded set of goals related to economic development, housing options, and accessibility to transit.

Kay Durtschi, Multnomah transportation chair, also sits on Metro's Joint Policy Advisory Committee for Transportation. At the February neighborhood meeting, Durtschi circulated 33 proposed projects in Southwest for

"roadway and active transportation".

"These are designed to improve livability in Southwest Portland," Durtschi reported, "and will be funded by a mix of federal and other funding sources. This will help provide infrastructure for which transit plan is decided on."

Each neighborhood association has until March 31 to submit the top three projects to SWNI, the Southwest neighborhood coalition, along with the reasons each project was selected.

Denver Igarta, from the Portland Bureau of Transportation, noted that the Southwest Corridor Plan is looking at high capacity transit 10-plus years out.

"We'd like to look at which ones we might be able to start implementing before the transit build timeline," Igarta said.

The Southwest area poses a variety of hurdles that must be considered: topography, storm water plans, appropriate bike and pedestrian paths, and the complex zoning rules.

"It might be more feasible to identify funds for smaller segments of projects," Igarta suggested. "Portland Bureau of Transportation would like to get to the point where we can at least start looking for funding sources/opportunities to keep moving them forward while aligning them to our bigger goals: safety, getting people active, and feasibility."

Winter Snowstorm

(Continued from Page 4)

Fitzgerald: Go to www.preporegon.org At the end of the interview, the white, powdery snow started icing up from freezing rain making it even more treacherous to get about. It's just a matter of time until something more than precipitation hits the community.

More information on local emergency preparedness can be found at SWNI.org. Bob Cogan can be reached at coganbob@gmail.com. Jean Fitzgerald can be reached at walktours2@aol.com.

Student art show to be held at Hillsdale Art Supply Company

THE COUNTRY STORE

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

Wilson High School art students will be showing their recent work at the Hillsdale Art Supply Company during the month of March. A reception for the students will be held on Friday, March 7 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

The Hillsdale Art Supply Company is run by Ryan McAbery and Denise Rumsey. They sell their artwork at local shows and teach business education courses to artists at their store.

The store specializes in selling recycled art supplies, items either donated or bought from artists who no longer need them.

It is then fleshed out with recycled inventory and new fine art supplies so there are both recycled and new items for sale.

The business isn't a nonprofit but the owners work hard to be an asset to the community through low-cost supplies and by keeping useable materials out of landfills.

"We have classes for kids and adults ranging from \$10 drop-in to \$55 for artist workshops," McAbery confirmed. "There is calendar on our website."

Each Thursday, there is a different artist to teach a specialized medium for part of the artist workshop series.

"For the art shows," McAbery explained, "our goal is to host all of the Southwest Portland schools on our gallery wall throughout the next two years."

Local artists are also featured. The owners are currently working with



Owners Ryan McAbery and Denise Rumsey opened Hillsdale Art Supply Company in the Hillsdale town center last spring. (Photo courtesy of Ryan McAbery)

Rieke Elementary School and Robert Gray Middle School to schedule them for April and May respectively.

The schools decide if they sell the artwork or just showcase it so there isn't a commission on sales. The Wilson artists will be selling their work through the show and receive 100 percent of the profits.

"We love the idea of showcasing the art students," Rumsey said while attending her first Hillsdale Business and Professional Association meeting.

"We believe when they see their work in a more professional, out-of-school setting, it can be really motivating and inspiring."

The Hillsdale Art Supply Company is located next to Jade Dragon Chinese Restaurant at 6327 SW Capitol Hwy, Suite B. For more information, please visit www.hillsdaleartsupply.com.

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The Portland Ballet holds gala studio reopening in Hillsdale

By Lee Braymen-Cleary
The Southwest Portland Post

Three hundred well-wishing ballet fans, parents and contributing philanthropists streamed through doors of The Portland Ballet for a gala grand reopening on Jan. 25. And what a gala!

Robert Hoffman, principal pianist, regaled the crowd with classical works and his own compositions. Attendees dined on a wide array of appetizers.

Ballet students costumed to the nines performed delightful renditions of favorites such as a "Sleeping Beauty" *pas de deux* not once, but twice.

Why the hoopla? After months of expensive remodeling costing somewhere between \$500,000 and \$700,000, The Portland Ballet Academy (located at 6250 SW Capitol Hwy in Hillsdale) celebrated a new opportunity to serve more ballet students, many more.

First opened in 2001 by artistic director Nancy Davis and managing director Jim Lane, The Portland Ballet was successful from the outset.

That Davis and Lane were once principal dancers for the original Los Angeles Ballet contributed to that success. They brought outstanding professional knowledge to school operations, a sensitive understanding of teaching, and a serious multi-level curriculum.

The Portland Ballet curriculum has successfully inspired and trained 150 or so young academy dancers, male and female alike. Starting with "creative ballet" for ages three through six, it builds layer by layer, seven layers in all, for students ages six to 22.

Now, with space stretched from

3,500 to 6,100 square feet, the academy can serve at least 50 more curriculum students and as many additional drop-in students.

Davis, excited about The Portland Ballet's increased capacity, is thrilled about the remodel. "The expansion is something we've wanted for several years now, so this is a dream come true."

According to Davis, "It gives us more options for expanding our programs, but it also gives us a sense of prestige. We can now provide an even higher level of excellence for our dancers and our community."

Excellence is The Portland Ballet's pride. When serious, motivated students finish the program, they are well prepared to compete at auditions with dancers nationwide.

"Our dancers go on to dance with professional companies and university programs," said Davis.

According to Davis, graduates have danced with the Houston Ballet, the St. Louis Ballet, Ballet Memphis, Ballet West, the Sacramento Ballet, the Eugene Ballet and Ballet Idaho.

Still others have been invited to the professional division of companies including Alvin Ailey, the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre, the San Francisco Ballet, the American Ballet Theatre and the School of American Ballet.

Devin Packard, 18, who danced the role of the prince in "Sleeping Beauty" at the gala, soon graduates from high school and the academy. Tall, slender but muscular, handsome and well-mannered, he began serious dancing as a freshman and holds a lot of promise.

One of perhaps a dozen male dance students, he has already secured a position for summer 2014 with The



(Photos courtesy of Caitlin Dwyer, The Portland Ballet)

Boston Ballet.

For a long-term opportunity, he soon flies to San Francisco to audition and, if necessary, will continue competing elsewhere until he finds his true dance home.

During his dance education, Packard had many opportunities to perform publicly, for the academy offers shows annual shows.

During the 2013-2014 season, The Portland Ballet offers three public performances. The first performance, a holiday performance, was held over the Thanksgiving weekend at Portland State University's Lincoln Hall. Dancers were accompanied by the Portland State Symphony.

The second performance, date to be announced, at The Portland Ballet studios, is entitled "The Portland Ballet Showcase." Students enrolled in each dance level will demonstrate skills they have mastered over the year.

The third performance, a June 13-15 spring concert, occurs again at the studios. It will feature quite skilled youth company members dancing to works created by well-respected choreographers.

Whether you want to enroll in classes or purchase show tickets, call The Portland Ballet at 503-452-8448, and check their website at www.ThePortlandBallet.org.

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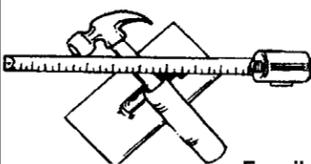
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Early spring is the right time to hunt for good gardening tools

GARDEN MIND

By Rebecca Hart

Here in the Northwest how do we tell spring is close by? From the sounds. All manner of birds return, filling the air with song.

Frogs of different sizes contribute their peeps, ribbets and croaks. We are fortunate: while another polar freeze blankets the north and northeast parts of the country, here the days approach mildness.

Temperatures nudge up into the 50s, and the intrepid gardener ventures outside. What to do? Where to begin? Are you anxious to plant seeds? To settle bright primroses or potted spring bulbs for some needed color?

For me the early work is tempered by the idea to "start where I am." What I see, what I need to do, what I'm most capable of completing given the resources at hand. This reckoning doesn't always match with my ambitions, but I'm learning to aim for completion, which means chunking stuff down.

I like to divide seasonal garden tasks into categories. Indoor and planning tasks. Outdoor weather-dependent projects. Planning and executing shopping trips. The busy mind of the gardener considers the possibilities.

If you use a garden journal you can refer to prior years' notes to get a read on your garden. Inventory the garage or potting shed for items to replace, or to recycle.

If you have chemicals you don't wish to use, take them to a Metro station. Have you thought about adding a garden structure, or decided to do some hardscaping, requiring new layouts of beds and walkways?

Maybe it's time to consider getting a new tool or gadget to make the work go easier.

Whether you buy your garden goods via Internet, retail, or garage sale, remember this—every craftsperson of any discipline respects and hunts for good tools: gardener, cook, woodworker. Here's a short list of my essential tools.

Soil thermometer: Invest in a good one. It indicates soil temperatures. Why? Early spring is when the enthusiast plants seeds. Often seeds sprout easy-peasy. But seeds are especially sensitive to soil temperatures and off-timing can result in germination fail. Don't let it happen to you.

Garden journal: If you don't have one, get one. If you are serious about your garden, get a journal. Make regular short entries.

Gloves: I use latex or nitrile for everyday gardening; I like the tactile sense. Buy gloves on sale, stock up, and throw out the old ones seasonally.

Hand hygiene: If you can't abide gloves but need to keep your hands clean, get a jar of Barrier Cream, from art supply stores. Run soap under your fingernails for quick clean-up. Avoid skin cleaners with "micro-beads," a newly discovered ecological complication. If your hands tend toward soreness, consider "craft" compression-style



New foliage on a Japanese maple is a sure sign of spring. (Post photo by Rebecca Hart)

fingerless jersey gloves

Hoses: Invest in good hoses, nozzles and shutoffs. These pay for themselves. Do not let your hose kink. Ever. Use a good shut-off valve to stop water. *Never, ever* kink a hose to close off the water.

Hand tools: Japanese wrought iron hand weeder, three prong. Fishtail or dandelion weeder. Narrow trowel that doubles as a bulb planter. Japanese serrated garden knife for cutting root divisions, string, landscape cloth, or cleaning between bricks or decking. Two pairs of garden pruners like Felco or Corona. Typically I lose mine so I buy knock-offs, and replace them as needed.

Small sharpening stone. Long-handled pruners. A small step stool (I don't sit on ground, or kneel, or stoop). Con-

struction wheelbarrow. Tool bucket to carry it all in. Twenty-gallon black pots for weeding.

Full size tools: Shovels, one with a small head, another one regular-size. D-handle narrow spading fork. Long-handled cultivator.

Those are the basic tools I use these every day I'm in the garden; the rest are treats. In time you'll add to your list of essentials.

This winter, Mother Nature has been sending us some extreme weather and how it presents in Oregon is anybody's guess. As gardeners we do the best we can.

If droughty conditions prevail this year, water-recycling and proper mulching will become big concerns. See you in the garden.

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