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Southwest Portland's Independent Neighborhood Newspaper

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Barbara Roberts
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Corridor Project
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Complimentary

February 2012

Fulton Park Community Center on chopping block as park bureau faces cuts

PARKS AND RECREATION

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

In response to the directive from Mayor Sam Adams, the Portland

Bureau of Parks and Recreation has prepared a proposed series of budget cuts. Among the proposed cut items is closure of Fulton Park Community Center.

The proposed cuts, equal to four percent of the bureau's budget, also include closure of Buckman Pool in Southeast Portland. Other cuts are reductions in park trash removal, "scholarships" to residents who cannot pay normal fees, tree inspections, and "pass-through" grants to senior centers for recreation programs.

Outdoor recreation programs will be eliminated and port-a-potties will be substituted for restrooms. Responsibility for SUN School recreation programs will be given to Multnomah County with \$1.13

million, \$238,000 short of that program's annual budget.

If the system must be cut by six percent, the draft budget calls for closure of Hillside Community Center in the northwest hills, reductions in landscaping, natural area maintenance and irrigation, and

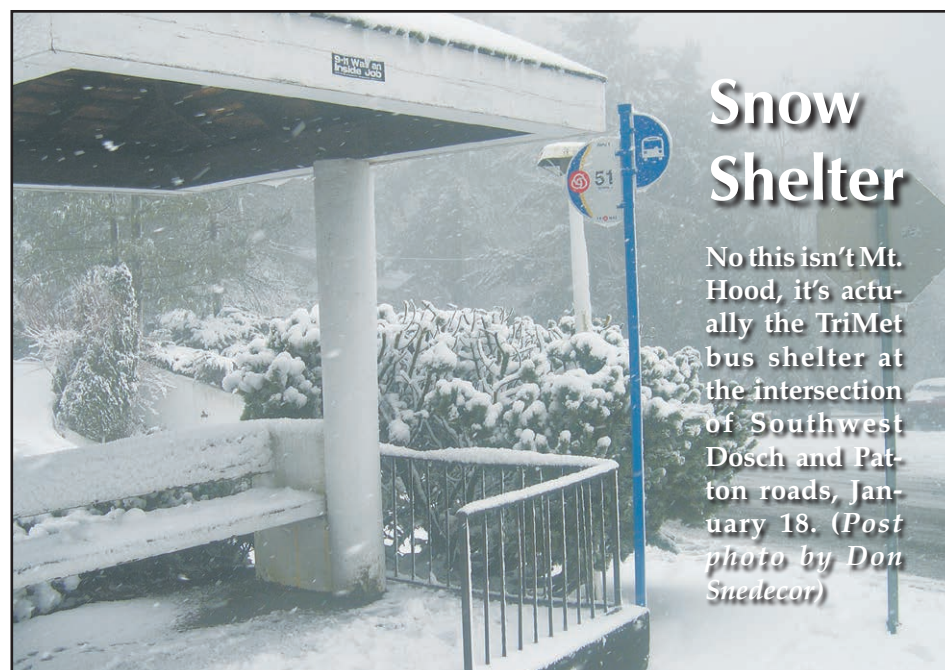
closure of elm disease prevention and operation of "splash pads."

Linda Robinson, a member of the bureau's Budget Advisory Committee, told *The Post* that the BAC had called for reductions in several areas, rather than elimination of any

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Fulton Park Community Center may be closed due to proposed budget cuts by Portland Parks and Recreation. (Photo courtesy of Isabel Souza)



Snow Shelter

No this isn't Mt. Hood, it's actually the TriMet bus shelter at the intersection of Southwest Dösch and Patton roads, January 18. (Post photo by Don Snedecor)

Senators Burdick and Devlin meet with voters at Hillsdale town hall

By Scott Mobley
Special to The Southwest Portland Post

Oregon must stop eroding its education funding even as it prepares to cut spending elsewhere, State Sen.

Richard Devlin (Democrat-Tualatin) said at a recent town hall meeting in Hillsdale.

"I think we are at a point where we say enough is enough," Devlin told a group of about 20 like-minded

voters attending the Jan. 10 meeting. "We can't diminish our resources in education any more. It's a core responsibility."

Devlin conducted the meeting at the Watershed affordable senior housing center with State Sen. Ginny Burdick (Democrat-Portland/Tigard), who has represented the Hillsdale area for some 15 years. But Hillsdale will fall into Devlin's district under the new legislative map drawn up last year to reflect the 2010 census.

The updated boundaries will go into effect after the November election when Burdick, Senate President Pro Tempore, faces an as yet unknown challenger for her fifth term.

Devlin and Burdick met with voters a few weeks before legislators go into special session to wrestle with a budget shortfall pegged at between \$50 million.

State service cuts will likely continue, though not as severely as before, said Devlin. He predicted the state, national and global economies will remain weak for three to four more years at least.

Legislators paring spending must spare Oregon's schools and universities, where the long-term costs of cuts far outweigh any short-term cost-saving gains, the senators said.

"We don't do enough to make sure people succeed and when they don't succeed, the public ultimately has to pay the bill," Devlin said. "The primary determinate of whether a person will need government

services in the future is education."

Oregon in the 1980s spent roughly 15 percent of its budget on education and eight percent on prisons, Burdick said. Those percentages have reversed since voters capped property taxes dedicated to schools and approved mandatory sentencing, she said.

Burdick called for greater focus on early childhood education to help keep people out of prison, and more emphasis on drug courts and transitional programs to prevent recidivism.

"'Smart on Crime' programs are so much cheaper than just locking somebody up," Burdick said. "You have to understand we can't just throw these meth addicts in prison because it feels good. It costs \$35,000 a year, way more than the amount of support we give for public higher education. Let's send them to college, not prison."

Voters attending the meeting also raised concerns about economic development, health care reform and the future of Oregon's senior property tax deferral program, gutted by declining home values.

The legislature recently approved a \$19-million loan to the property tax deferral program, designed to keep disabled and senior citizens in their homes.

Hoping to stimulate the Oregon economy, lawmakers narrowed the state's tax-credit program to better target small businesses. But the

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Sen. Ginny Burdick



Sen. Richard Devlin

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Friends group fights to save Fulton Park Community Center

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

By Don Snedecor
The Southwest Portland Post

I met with Moses Ross at a coffee shop in Multnomah Village in mid-January to discuss the fate of Fulton Park Community Center.



Originally built in 1914 as Fulton Park Elementary School, in 1958 the school was closed and the property and building were leased by the Portland School District to the City of Portland. That long-term lease continued until 1999 when the City purchased the building and property.

Located at 68 SW Miles St, not far from Barbur Boulevard, the property includes a 1.62-acre park, offices for staff, four classrooms, a full kitchen, and a gymnasium with a stage that is also used as a cafeteria and auditorium.

"It's one of those fundamentals that a community needs to have, right up there with sidewalks and

sewer lines," said Ross.

"My daughter took preschool classes there," said Ross. "They had an amazingly low teacher-student ratio. The quality of education for a public facility is fantastic."

Ross, chairman of the Multnomah Neighborhood Association, said a "friends" group has developed with some 75 members. The group has a Facebook page called "Save Fulton Park Community Center and Preschool."

Ross said that the activities held at the Center include an indoor park, folk dancing, community gatherings and city-run volleyball. "It doesn't mean that you have to use it, but it is there if you want to go."

To raise funds to cover overhead, Ross said better marketing was needed to targeted groups that could use the building, particularly those within a two to five mile radius.

Ross said he would like to see Fulton Park CC connect with the Multnomah Arts Center and the Southwest Community Center at Gabriel Park, so that Fulton could pick up overflow programming.

Additionally, a foundation could be formed to provide necessary funding. "I would love to see a public-private partnership," said Ross.

For more information on this subject, read Lee Perlman's news story on Page 1.

Letters to the Editor

The Southwest Portland Post
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Obama envisions an economy that works for the '100 percent'

President Barack Obama [in his State of the Union address to Congress, January 24] focused on our most important challenge as a nation: how to make America work for working Americans again.

For the last three and half decades, the wealthy have done very well, while the middle class has flat-lined or worse. I agree with the President that much more needs to be done to help rebuild the American middle class and support our working families.

I am heartened that President Obama realizes that more needs to be done to take on the foreclosure meltdown. The last three years have seen modest measures that have failed to stop the massive wave of foreclosures that have overwhelmed many communities.

We must bring the same energy and

commitment that was used to save the financial sector in 2008 and 2009 to help stabilize and restore our housing market. With five to eight million more foreclosures on the horizon, we must do all that we can to keep families in their homes.

It's the right thing to do for those families and it's essential for sustained economic recovery. This recession started with the collapse of the housing market, and until we deal with the foreclosures, underwater mortgages, and falling home values, we won't get our economy back on track.

If we're going to re-make our economy to once again make opportunity and prosperity for middle class families and small businesses the top priority, we have to end the abuses and excesses on Wall Street that caused our economic crisis.

That's exactly what we aimed to do with the Merkley-Levin provisions to end high-stakes gambling with taxpayer-backed deposits. I'm glad President Obama reaffirmed his support for this common-sense rule and the other rules of the road that will bring accountability and stability back to our banking system.

I also appreciate the President's emphasis on rebuilding our manufacturing base. In the last twenty years we have seen millions of jobs swept away overseas. That is unacceptable.

If we don't build things in America, we won't have a middle class in America. Unfair trade practices by China are driving a huge loss of

(Continued on Page 3)

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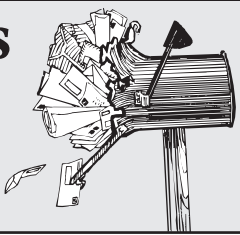
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Letters to the Editor



(Continued from Page 2)

America's manufacturing jobs, and I applaud the President for committing to ending these practices.

And I absolutely agree with President Obama that we're not going to be able to effectively meet these goals if we don't fix the broken rules in the U.S. Senate. I have been pushing for reform for over a year, and I will continue to push for reforms so the Senate can do the people's business.

Bottom line: we have a choice to make about what kind of country we want to live in. The President laid out a vision of a country that comes together to tackle big challenges and make sure that our economy works not for the one percent or 10 percent but for 100 percent of Americans.

I am proud to fight for that vision, and hope to work together with colleagues from both parties to get things done for the American people.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley
(Democrat, Oregon)
Washington, D.C.

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Nominations needed for Multnomah officers, committee chairs

Greetings from the Multnomah neighborhood! The Multnomah Neighborhood Association (MNA) is at a time of change in that we have had recent openings on both the MNA board as well as on some of our standing committees.

Board members Rob Gardner and Jessica Wade had to resign their positions on the board due to the birth of their first child and our Secretary Maria Cahill unfortunately needed to resign due to family commitments. All three will be missed and their service to the Multnomah neighborhood is greatly appreciated.

These board openings have hap-

pened mid-term, as the current terms for all board members were to expire in October 2012. As Chair, I am calling for a special MNA board election in February meant to elect new board members that will serve the nine-month remainder of their term until our next annual election in October 2012.

We currently have three board positions open (Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary are open, although the board can have more than four members) and four committee chair positions are open (Land Use, Safety, Schools and SWNI).

Our board positions are elected by the MNA membership and the committee chairs are appointed by the board. All of these positions have a time commitment of three to five hours per month and provide a valuable service to our community.

If you live in the Multnomah neighborhood, I encourage you to

"put your name in the hat" for one of the available positions. To place your name in nomination for one of the open positions, please email me at mnachair@gmail.com or call me at 503-309-7985 and I'll put you on the ballot.

You can also place your name in nomination up to the actual vote at the February meeting. The special election will be held at the February MNA meeting on Tuesday, February 14 at 7:00PM at the Multnomah Arts Center in room 30 so please plan to participate!

For less than a five hour per month time commitment, you would be truly helping your community and those that live within it. You can contact me at mnachair@gmail.com or at 503-309-7985 if you have questions about the positions or the process.

Moses Ross, Chair
Multnomah Neighborhood Association

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Work days are Monday night through Friday morning. Construction started at SW Clay Street in January and will proceed southbound to SW Caruthers Street. Flaggers and traffic cones will direct motorists around the rolling work zone. Some lane closures and delays should be expected. Motorists are encouraged to find alternate routes to avoid this work zone.

The construction is part of the second phase of the Portland Water Bureau's Westside Header Project that will install a new 5,000-foot, 36-inch diameter steel water main to replace an existing critical but aging supply pipeline. Construction work on SW Naito Parkway began in September 2011. The entire project is slated for completion by spring 2012.

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Councilor Roberts previews South Corridor Project for South Portland NA

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

Metro Councilor and former governor Barbara Roberts (District 6) last month gave the South Portland Neighborhood Association an overview



Councilor Roberts

of the South Corridor Project, a study of future transportation needs between downtown Portland and Sherwood that may lead to a light rail route along Southwest Barbur Boulevard.

Metro planner Karen Withrow, who accompanied Roberts, noted that light rail is just one of the transportation options being studied for this corridor; others include express or enhanced bus service and merely making minor improvements.

As compared to other such stud-

ies, "We're looking at this differently," Roberts said. "Instead of saying, 'This is what we're going to do,' and making everything match that, here we're looking at the corridor before deciding what the solution is."

Among the communities the project will study will be Sherwood Town Center, Tualatin Refuge, Tualatin Commons, King City, the Murray-Scholls Town Center, Lake Grove, Downtown Tigard and the Tigard Triangle, Washington Square, Nimbus, and Bridgeport Village.

Of Portland Community College's Sylvania Campus Roberts said, "We need a way to serve more students without attracting thousands of more cars."

Of the West Portland Crossroads she said, "It's clear how few sidewalks there are; it's not safe. There are places where you can't even get across the street. We need to provide for pedestrians and bicyclists, not just the person in the car."

Of Multnomah Village Roberts said, "It's one of these wonderful little places. It was quiet for many years, then the complexion changed."



West Portland Crossroads includes Barbur Boulevard, I-5, and Capitol Highway. (Post file photo by Leslie Baird)

Hillsdale Town Center is "another one of those areas where walkability is very questionable," Roberts said. "It has small, family-owned businesses, and we don't want to do things that would make them go away. We want to see what kind of things we can do to make it healthier than it is now."

Roberts also mentioned Oregon Health and Sciences University – "The neighborhood is affected at both ends of the tram" – plus the South Waterfront and River Place.

Withrow said the study area in-

cludes "28 bus lines carrying 27,000 riders, 2,000 parking spaces, three transit centers, 140,000 residents and 163,000 workers." It has been chosen for attention over 40 other transit corridors because projected growth, if not provided for, will increase travel time by 30 percent by the year 2035, she said.

Board member Jim Gardner noted that the study is due to reach conclusions by the end of the year, well ahead of the Barbur Concept Plan, which is studying land use and local conditions on and near that street. Under the circumstances, he asked, how will this work "inform" the Corridor Study? Roberts said the two efforts "learn from each other on a daily basis."

Board member Bill Danneman complained that the study's provisions for public input seem "mini-
(Continued on Page 7)

New off-leash dog park proposed for Duniway Park

Nearby resident Chris Goodrich thinks part of Duniway Park should go to the dogs. That is, he wants to establish a new off-leash dog park there.

Duniway is best known for the track and athletic field adjacent to Southwest Barbur Boulevard. This, Goodrich, conceded, is heavily used.

However, the upper section of the park, bordered on three sides by Southwest Terwilliger Boulevard, is relatively deserted, he told the Homestead Neighborhood Association last month.

In fact, Goodrich said, some people use the park for this purpose now, but risk a \$150 fine for doing so. The closest existing legal off-leash dog park is Willamette Park, about two miles away, Goodrich said.

Goodrich said he presented the idea to Portland Parks and Recreation's Bureau Advisory Committee, which seemed favorably impressed. However, he said, it was vetoed by bureau administrators.

He was told that the upper park is "heavily used" by soccer players, which Goodrich says has not been true for years. Another Homestead resident said the upper park is used regularly by dog owners "and there are never any other users."

"It's a wonderful thing to have interaction with people while exercising your dogs," Goodrich said. The Homestead NA board agreed and voted to endorse the idea.

– Lee Perlman

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COMMUNITY LIFE

By Don Snedecor
The Southwest Portland Post

4 Read to the Dogs. Improve your reading skills by reading aloud to therapy dogs from the Delta Society's Pet Partners Program, sponsored by DoveLewis.

Hillsdale Library, 1525 SW Sunset Blvd. Saturdays: February 4, 10 a.m. to 12 noon; February 11, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; and February 25, 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Registration required; call 503-988-5388.

6 Portland Mayoral Candidates Forum on Active Transportation (featuring candidates Eileen Brady, Charlie Hales and Jefferson Smith) will be held Monday, February 6, at Portland State University, Lincoln Hall auditorium, 1620 SW Park Ave.

Doors open at 6:15 p.m. for light refreshments. Forum from 7:00-8:30 p.m., followed by reception with candidates from 8:30-9:00 p.m. For



Ty Boice and Adrienne Flagg star in the Portland area premiere of "Deadly Murder" at Lakewood Theatre Company. Performances continue through February 19. For tickets or more information call the box office at 503-635-3901 or visit www.lakewood-center.org. (Photo by Lake Oswego Photographers)

more information, contact Rebecca Hamilton, PSU Planning Club, 503-970-6283 or r.hamilton@pdx.edu.

Tierney votes to suspend proposed Portland to Lake Oswego streetcar

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

Faced with a vastly reduced budget for a proposed Portland to Lake Oswego streetcar extension, the Lake Oswego City Council nonetheless decided to pull the plug on the idea.

The Lake Oswego City Council voted to "suspend" the project for the indefinite future. Last year, after a contentious debate, the City Council voted four to three to authorize further study of the idea subject to several conditions.

A report released in December estimated that the cost of the venture, once estimated to be as high as \$480 million, could be done for \$200 million, with more than half of this probably coming from federal subsidies.

Despite this, Lake Oswego council member Bill Tierney, part of the majority that had tentatively supported the project, last month said, "Until we are more united as a city, as a region, and as a City Council, I believe we should put this project on a shelf."

Tierney added that uncertainty over funding in times of already tight budgets was an issue. Later Portland Mayor Sam Adams, the project's strongest advocate, announced that work on the project was being "suspended."

Earlier in the month project manager Doug Oblatz had told the South Portland Neighborhood Association that one element in the cost cutting had been a plan to utilize a single track through the Dunthorpe community.

A second was to terminate the line in Lake Oswego three blocks north of the original site. A third was to

order four new streetcars instead of the previously planned six.

Oblatz said that this last move was accompanied by a new plan to have a route running from Northwest 23rd Avenue through downtown Portland to Lake Oswego, thus utilizing existing cars. Oblatz at that time did not specify what the frequency of service on the route would be.

Asked whether the project might some day be revived Oblatz told *The Post*, "You'll have to ask the mayor that." He said he would complete and publish a report on the proposed route, saying, "No one has told me not to complete it."

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14 The Girl Who Fell from the Sky. Read this novel by Heidi W. Durrow, then exchange perspectives about characters and plot and get to know your neighbors at Pageturners, Capitol Hill Library, 10723 SW Capitol Hwy. Thursday, February 2, 1:30-2:30 p.m. and Tuesday, February 14, 6:45-7:45 p.m. Call 503-988-5385 for more information.

15 Odyssey Program at Hayhurst School. Parents seeking an experiential and accelerated learning curriculum for their incoming 2012-2013 kindergartners, or for transfer students up to eighth grade are invited to information nights.

Enrollment selection is by lottery and attendance at an information night is mandatory. The next one is Wednesday, February 15, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. at Hayhurst School, 5037 SW Iowa St. For more information visit www.odysseyprogram.org or call 503-916-6300

18 Fifth Annual Sean-nos Northwest Festival is being held Saturday and Sunday, February 18-19 in Multnomah Village at the Multnomah Arts Center and the Lucky Labrador Public House. You are invited to come and witness the remarriage of Irish Gaelic music, song and dance during this weekend-long celebration featuring workshops, performances and sessions open to the public. For tickets and more information visit www.seannos.org.

The No. 1 Hillsdale Knitting Society invites you to join them on Saturday, February 18, 10 a.m. to 12 noon, at Hillsdale Library, 1525 SW Sunset Blvd.

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SWNI office manager receives 38 month jail sentence for embezzlement

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

On January 20 Judge Youlee Yim You sentenced Virginia Stromer, former Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. office manager, to 38 months of incarceration for the theft of \$131,000 from SWNI over the course of seven years.

Stromer was also sentenced to 60 months of probation after her release, and to make at least partial restitution to SWNI.

As part of the restitution, Stromer returned \$1,250 in pay and \$2,100 in unused vacation time owed to her after her abrupt resignation in October 2010, and pledged to immediately hand over another \$10,000 held in trust.

Deputy District Attorney David P. Shen had asked for 57 months of jail time, while Public Defender Damien Donnelly-Cole asked that Stromer serve "less than a year" in jail.

SWNI Executive Director Sylvia Bogert testified at the hearing on behalf of the prosecution. Stromer

gave a statement and her sister Karen Lee DeSousa, son Jarrett Stromer and friend Nicholas Carter testified on her behalf.

After an initial Not Guilty plea, Stromer pleaded guilty to all charges, and both she and her supporters conceded that Stromer's actions were wrong. However, they argued that the embezzlement was motivated by a compulsion to help others in a material way that was so strong it had become a pathology.

"There's no excuse, no justification for what she did," Donnelly-Cole said. "She knows what she did was wrong." However, he added, she suffered abuse and "loss of self-esteem" in her youth. "She never came to grips with it or learned to cope with it," he said.

According to Donnelly-Cole, "She filled the void by caring for other people. The thefts were to continue filling that void by caring for other people, shopping for them, helping them out."

"Sending her to prison won't help in dealing with the problem," said Donnelly-Cole. "She needs

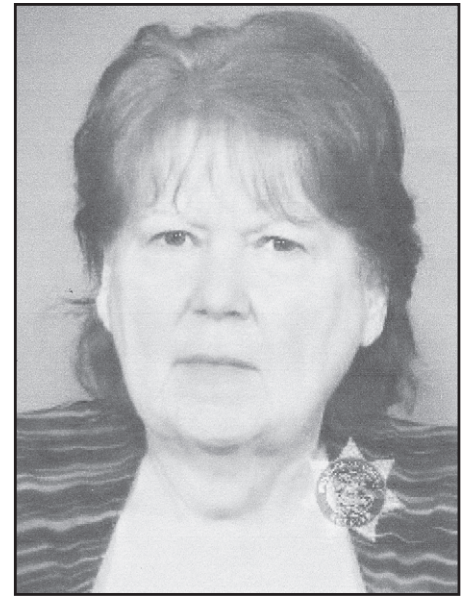
intensive therapy. I understand that there's a need for punishment, and to ensure that this doesn't happen again. The best way is probation and therapy."

Carter said that he had accompanied Stromer to the SWNI office and "northwest (sic) neighborhood functions. She seemed to be not just the go-to person for the office, the computer, the newsletter, but she always had time for people."

According to Carter, "She was really alive in that atmosphere. She misses her job and her friends. It's tearing her apart. She'd be grateful for the opportunity to correct her behavior. There are resources to deal with her problem. If she could correct the problem she could get back out there and help others."

DeSousa and Jarrett Stromer also testified to Stromer's compulsive charity.

Stromer herself could barely speak coherent sentences. "Somehow I could separate in my mind what I had done," she said. "I hate that I hurt Sylvia and caused the pain I caused."



Virginia Stromer (Multnomah County Sheriff booking photo)

Bogert gave a very different perspective. "Ginny is a very intelligent and capable person," she said. "She knows right from wrong. She understood and had knowledge of our project. She knows that volunteers often raised money dollar by dollar."
(Continued on Page 7)

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Stromer Sentenced

(Continued from Page 6)

dollar. Ginny betrayed the trust of an entire community. She hurt the neighborhood chairs, the seniors and the children who trusted her."

Bogert said she herself has worked 70 hours a week, and volunteers have contributed 1500 hours of service to the office, "to meet our commitments and regain trust." To allow Stromer to perform community service in lieu of jail "would only put others at risk," she said.

Many people wrote letters on Stromer's behalf. Shen said Stromer did good things "primarily to fill a void, and doing good was secondary." Commenting on the letters and testimony, Shen said that Stromer "didn't steal from them; she stole from SWNI over and over and over."

Judge You thanked all testifiers for "helping me make an enormously challenging and difficult decision." She said she found Stromer to be "a kind and generous person. I believe you are truly remorseful. On the other hand, you committed an enormous betrayal of trust of a huge magnitude.

"It was not only a betrayal of personal trust, but involved huge sums of money. I do not think a probationary sentence with community service is appropriate."

Beyond this, the judge placed a strong emphasis on restitution, saying all court fees should go to SWNI. Stromer will be able to receive therapy at the Coffee Creek correctional institution, she said.

After the hearing, Multnomah County sheriff's deputies handcuffed Stromer and led her away.

Roberts Previews

South Corridor Project

(Continued from Page 4)

mal at best." He called for South Portland to have a seat on an advisory committee. "The City talks about Barbur, but we live here 24/7, and we may know a few things that are useful to know," Danneman said.

Board member Jim Davis added, "The jurisdictions hire experts, and they come up with the answers. This entire neighborhood has been impacted by flawed transportation planning. We have to be protected politically, because we can't be protected from the bureaus."

Roberts replied, "I can't go back and redo history, but I've been on both sides of the expert tables. If you can't trust your political leaders, it doesn't matter what the experts say."

According to Roberts, "We get a lot of advice from experts, but we also get input from citizens. We seldom get a unanimous vote, but we do get a consensus. Keep talking to your elected leaders, and not just at public meetings. We would like to know your ideas as soon as you figure them out."

Neighborhood coalition office hires new staff

Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. has hired two new part time staff. Susan Haley will be the non-profit's bookkeeper, while Sharon Keast will be newsletter editor and communications assistant.

Keast, who has served as Ash Creek neighborhood's board representative and SWNI's Second Vice President, resigned from both positions to take the job. SWNI was expected to elect a new second vice-president at its January 25 meeting.

Fulton Park Community Center

(Continued from Page 1)

particular component. However, Robinson said, "We were told that to get the savings called for we'd have to close at least one community center."

Fulton, one of the oldest and smallest such facilities in the city's parks system, seemed a logical choice. So did Buckman Pool, which is owned by the Portland School District and operated by Parks. Pier Park in North Portland was on the short list for potential closure, but its operations are subsidized by non-bureau funds that would be lost if operations ceased, Robinson said.

Kirky Doblle, chair of the Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. Parks Committee, had anticipated possible closure of Fulton at the December SWNI board meeting and voiced vehement opposition to the idea.

The space is well used and "incredibly vital," she said. Moreover, she added, neither Multnomah Arts Center nor the Southwest Community Center in Gabriel Park is in a position to absorb the activities and patrons of Fulton in addition to what it is already doing.

Accordingly, a large contingent of Fulton supporters was among the 240 people who showed up at a public forum last month, pleading for the center to remain open. Whether they achieved their aim was questionable.

Elizabeth Kennedy-Wong, public information officer for the Park Bureau, told *The Post*, "What this showed was that the supporters of Fulton Park [Community Center] are well-organized and vocal. It

doesn't necessarily mean that the center is more important to more city residents than other Parks programs, such as splash pads [circulating water features]."

Robinson added, "None of the (proposed) cuts are good. But unless we can somehow persuade City Council to give parks a smaller share of the cuts, we have to either reduce expenses or find a new source of revenue. The money has to come from somewhere."

Burdick and Devlin meet with voters

(Continued from Page 1)

state should do more to focus and coordinate economic development funding, Devlin said.

Most of those at the meeting did not live in Hillsdale. None discussed topics specific to the neighborhood or southwest Portland.

Doug Plambeck, a neighbor of Devlin's in Tualatin, came "to hear what the senator had to say."

"It was more like an update on the legislature and a history of how we got here," said Plambeck. "It was very informative."

Plambeck is a board member of Community Partners for Affordable Housing, the nonprofit that built the Watershed senior housing center where the meeting was held.

Burdick said she expected much of the feedback she got from voters during the hour-long town hall session.

"People are concerned about education and protecting the vulnerable population from the budget crisis," Burdick said. "People understand we have to spend limited dollars wisely to get through this crisis."

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Questions & Answers About Our Environment

Dear EarthTalk: Is it true that the bathroom is where over half of our household water usage takes place? What are some ways to take a bite out of that?

— Shelby McIntyre, Chico, CA

Yes indeed, some 60 percent of our household indoor water usage happens in the bathroom. As such, updating old leaky fixtures and changing a few basic habits could go a long way to not only saving fresh water, an increasingly precious resource, but also money.

Undoubtedly, the toilet is the biggest water hog in the bathroom. Those made before 1993 use up to eight gallons of water per flush, five times what modern toilets use. "It's a good idea to replace pre-1993 toilets if you can," says Patty Kim of National Geographic's *Green Guide*.

FYI, usually a toilet's manufacture date is stamped under the lid if you want to check how old it is.

If it is older and you can't or don't want to upgrade it, Kim recommends

rescuing a two liter soda bottle from the recycling bin and filling it partially with some water and sand or pebbles and then putting it into your toilet's tank, where it will take up space and force your toilet to use less water every flush.

Or get a Toilet Tank Bank for less than two bucks; it hangs in your toilet tank and displaces almost a gallon of water to save water on every flush.

Plumbing leaks account for some 14 percent of the total water usage in an average U.S. home. Toilets are often a major culprit. Kim recommends testing your toilet by putting 5-10 drops of food coloring into the tank, then put the lid back on but don't flush.

Check back in 15 minutes or so to see if any of the colored water leaked down into the bowl. If so, you have a water-wasting leak, and it might finally be time to replace that aging toilet after all.

The EarthEasy website reports that replacing an older 18 liter per flush toilet with an ultra-low volume (ULV) 6 liter flush model "represents a 70 percent saving in water flushed and will cut indoor water use by about 30 percent."

The shower can also be problematic as a water-waster, especially if the showerhead in question was made before new regulations went into effect in 1992 mandating lower flow.

Kim says you can check to see if your shower head is older or not by turning the shower on full blast and catching its output for two minutes in

a bucket. If the bucket is overflowing, then your showerhead is an older, more wasteful model.

Newer low flow showerheads won't come anywhere near to filling the bucket after two minutes. A new showerhead costs around \$10 and is a great investment because you can save water and money with every ensuing shower.

Regardless of whether or not you have a newer showerhead, you can save more water by turning off the shower to soap up, then turning it back on to rinse.

Eartheasy reminds us that even with a new showerhead, even a moderately short shower can still use between 20 and 40 gallons of water. But that's nothing compared to a bathtub, which can hold as much as 50-60 gallons of water.

Additional pearls of wisdom in regard to reducing bathroom water waste include turning off the faucet while brushing teeth. Better yet, fill up a glass with just enough water to rinse after brushing.

Likewise for shaving (gentlemen), stop up the sink with a little warm water in it and wiggle your razor around in the basin between strokes. And if you suspect your faucet may be spraying harder than it needs to, unscrew the aerator tip where the water comes out and take it into a hardware store for a more stingy replacement.

CONTACTS: The Green Guide, <http://environment.nationalgeo->



Some 60 percent of our household indoor water usage happens in the bathroom. A shower, even with a low-flow shower head, can use up to 40 gallons of water. (Photo courtesy of Hemera Collection/Thinkstock)

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