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# The Southwest Portland Post

Southwest Portland's Independent Neighborhood Newspaper

**INSIDE:**  
 Should there be a  
 permanent fence  
 around the Wilson  
 softball field?  
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Volume No. 16, Issue No. 8

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Portland, Oregon

Complimentary

June 2008

## New serpentine skatepark under construction at Gabriel Park

By Polina Olsen  
 The Southwest Portland Post

It always amazes John Hartung. "If I tell people in, say, Austria I'm from Portland, they say - 'that's so cool.'" The owner of Rebel Skates, a local manufacturer of skateboards, Hartung says people come from around the world to skateboard in Oregon. "Even tiny towns have wonderful skateparks. It's not only the number but the quality."

Soon Gabriel Park will be among the best as Airspeed Skateparks works overtime to finish their snake run design by July. "It's a serpentine canal type thing with all sorts of features sprinkled amongst it," said co-owner Geth Noble about the 10,000 square-foot space. In business since 2000, he and partner Stephanie Mohler have built skateparks from Ireland to Argentina as well as several on the Oregon Coast where they live. "We worked as employees or sub-contractors for other companies, and we decided we had to do it ourselves."

"It has lots of hips -- features you can blast airs over," Noble said about the Gabriel Park project. "You go airborne

on a skateboard," explained Mohler, "like Superwoman." And according to Mohler the sport attracts all ages.

"People between two-years-old and 80 enjoy skateboarding. You get grandparents with their grandchildren, fathers and mothers with their children or teenagers on their own. Young kids from the neighborhood can walk here after school. What's great about skateboarding is it gets kids out of the house and away from the television."

Mohler expects between 30 and 100 skateboarders each day from Portland and beyond. "People come from all over the world to ride," she said, noting skateparks they've built on the Oregon coast draw riders from Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. "Think of it as like national parks. Skateparks are one-of-a-kind with obstacles and features that aren't found anywhere else in the world."

Portland Parks and Recreation chose Gabriel Park for Portland's next skatepark during a site-selection process. Good public transportation and proximity to the Southwest Community Center were key. "The environmental mission statement basically mirrored what we had on our website since 2000," said Mohler. "It was very attractive to



Stephanie Mohler, Geth Noble, Melissa Ballantyne, and Gavin Temple working at the Gabriel Skatepark site. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

us." Airspeed Skateparks has built a bioswell [retention pond] to manage storm water and noise buffers to protect neighbors. They are careful to separate and recycle construction garbage.

According to advocates, skateboarding is wildly popular. "If you go by places that have a skatepark, tennis court and baseball diamond -- the skatepark is the one being used," said John Hartung of Rebel Skates. He said the history of skateboarding in Portland goes back to the 1990 unauthorized

project underneath the Burnside Bridge on the east side of the Willamette River. "The bureaucracy was so fouled up the kids finally went and started digging themselves."

Hartung recalled the Ross Island Sand and Gravel Company dropping off concrete seconds and the volunteer crew mixing cement. By 1992, the city threw in the towel and officially approved the project.

"I started at Burnside Skateboard  
 (Continued on Page 4)

## Food Front Cooperative will open second organic grocery store in Hillsdale

By Polina Olsen  
 The Southwest Portland Post

The bumper stickers they gave away said "Keep Portland Local." The crowd lined up to join. More than 70 supporters came to the Hillsdale Shopping Center for the May 12 announcement of the Southwest's new cooperative grocery. Food Front, located in Northwest Portland since 1987, will open a second store in late summer 2008. The organic and natural foods market will occupy space once used by Nature's Northwest and Wild Oats.

"We've received so much support,"

said Food Front general manager Holly Jarvis when the applause died down. She noted a grocery is essential to any neighborhood. "We will not, cannot sell out to another corporation," she said, referring to the 2007 takeover of the Wild Oats chain by Whole Foods Markets who quickly closed the Hillsdale store. "A coop is literally owned by the people who shop in the store, by the community that it serves. We won't be taken over by a national chain."

"Customers should expect more local items: produce, meat, and condiments like barbecue sauce and jam," said Food Front community outreach and marketing director Tom Mattox. "It will look like a regular grocery but be

organized as a coop. We're responsive to what people in the neighborhood want." Mattox encourages people to send email and let them know what they'd like (see for more information). He emphasized, "Everyone can shop here -- not just coop members."

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a cooperative is "an enterprise or organization owned by and operated for the benefit of those using its services." At Food Front, people become member-owners by buying one \$150 share (\$5 per month for 30 months). Members can run for the board, vote in board elections, and receive dividends on profits based on what they spend at the store. Additional benefits include coupon books and discounts.

"I'm a local food guy and I want a place that really supports local," said Greg Higgins, who owns Higgins restaurant in downtown Portland. A Hillsdale resident, he belonged to Food Front while living in Northwest Portland. "I always liked their support of local farmers."

Mike Roach, Hillsdale business and professional association president and co-owner of Paloma Clothing, agreed. "In a small shopping center, the grocery store is usually the anchor," he said. "It guarantees a certain number of visitors each week. It was a bitter experience seeing your grocery bought out by Whole Foods and then closed within days. We are so excited about having one of the best coops in Portland. We don't have just a replacement -- we have a major improvement."

After the announcements and toasts of sparkling apple juice, 28 people lined up to fill out the short application form and join. Lynn Rossing, of Hillsdale, was among those waiting. "I believe in shopping locally, and we're diet-conscious -- gluten-free," she said. "We want to cook all our own food and know what's in it."

Among those celebrating were three generations of the family who has owned the shopping center property for 100 years. Gustav Ferdinand War-  
 (Continued on Page 4)



Eamon Molloy, Hillsdale Farmers' Market manager, fills out an application to join the Food Front Cooperative Grocery. Mike Roach, president of the Hillsdale Business and Professional Association is behind the table. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

Don't forget to renew your subscription. Form on Page 2.

The Southwest Portland Post  
 7825 SW 36th Ave Suite #203  
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**NEIGHBORHOOD NEWS**

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

**Russell to replace Bridger as SWNI board chairman**

As the Post went to press, a proposed slate of officers would make former Multnomah Neighborhood Association chairman Brian Russell chair of the Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. board. He would replace Glenn Bridger of Hillsdale, who is stepping down after five years in the post. SWNI's other incumbent officers – first vice president Ken Love, second vice-president Tye Steinbach, secretary Susan Egnor, and treasurer Tom Schaper, are all seeking re-election. These positions were scheduled to be voted on by the SWNI board at their May 28 meeting.

As chairman, Bridger ran the monthly SWNI board meetings efficiently, but with a light, avuncular style of

leadership. His conciliatory manner helped convince the Southwest Hills Residential League to overcome years of independence – and sometime suspicion and hostility – to join the coalition of neighborhoods

**South Waterfront completes concert series**

The South Portland Neighborhood Association has finalized its schedule of a second season of free concerts in Willamette Park. The musicians will be Michael Manning and the Pump Station Gang on July 9, the buckles on July 16, the Touchables on July 23, and the Free Mountain Ramblers on July 30. All concerts are from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

**City reviews latest South Waterfront tower**

The Portland Design Commission last month gave its second informal Design Advisory review to a South Waterfront project by the Prometheus Corporation on Block 45A, a half-block

parcel bounded by Southwest Bond Avenue, River Parkway and Abernethy Street. Here the corporation, which owns six square blocks at the south end of the district, plans to build a 31-story, 320-foot tower with small floor plates of 10,000 square feet. The corporation will build a seven-story structure im-

mediately to the south, with a public walkway between them.

Commission members were generally supportive of the plans, and several said they would like to see the tower go even higher, if the code allowed it, to form the southern boundary of the district.

**Give me a break!**

Here are my thoughts on the not-so-bright idea of the "halo" LIDs [local improvement districts] which are being shoved down our throats right now: Give me a break!

Why are we being asked to pay a new tax for local street improvements while the city, county, and state already have a steady stream of moneys we taxpayers provide them to take care of the basic safety and maintenance needs of these very same streets?

The stench of denial, ignorance, and arrogance is palatable way out here in the far reaches of the potholed and sidewalk-less Southwest.

City Hall aggressively wastes time debating about spending millions of

those tax dollars to move a worn out and broken down bridge from Sauvie Island to the middle of the Pearl District for no other apparent reason than it seems like a good idea to Sam Adams. And, need I mention the tram? Give me a break!

I encourage all who will be affected by these proposed halos to get informed and let City Hall and Southwest Neighbors, Inc. know what you think.

Daniel Taylor  
Southwest 39th Avenue

**Letters to the Editor**



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# City Council hearing on Sears Armory rescheduled for June 12

By Mark Ellis  
The Southwest Portland Post

In the matter of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process which will decide the future of the Sears Center Armory, it's down to three possible uses and four proposals.

At a May 8 public meeting at the facility named for Korean War hero Jerome F. Sears, David Sheern (Portland Development Commission associate project coordinator) briefed citizens about the City Council hearing on the matter, rescheduled to June 12 at 2:00 p.m. at City Hall.

Once City Council has made their recommendation, PDC will submit a Final Re-Master Plan. The Department of Defense will then make the final decision on the site's new use.

"We will present our findings to the city council," said Sheern, "and then it will be their decision as to what to submit to the DOD." Those findings include a broad analysis of the various proposals, existing condition of the property including certification of the base environment as toxic waste free, and traffic impact studies based on proposed usages.

The City Council will also consider a huge stack of public input surrounding future use. If the mood at the meeting was any indication, that input includes a fair share of contention and concern.

Four proposals made the final cut. The Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) and Community Partners for Af-

fordable Housing (CPAH) both propose that the 1961 vintage armory and site be converted to a mixed-income housing development. Under their scenario, housing opportunities would become available for the disadvantaged and homeless.

Westside Christian High School envisions a quality educational facility, and has agreed, if selected, to contribute generously to programs aimed at helping the disadvantaged constituency. The final proposal is for a Portland Emergency Response Management (POEM) facility, which entails transforming the site to a center from which to coordinate city-wide emergency response mechanisms.

Under the housing plans the existing facility would be demolished to make way for new housing units and HAP and CPAH office complexes. With the Westside Christian High School and POEM proposals, the existing brick and mortar of the base would remain.

In 2005 the Army decided for various reasons to declare the facility surplus, with a final pullout scheduled for 2011. The PDC undertook the BRAC process, and determined that the site was eligible for residential, educational, or--as was the case with Army operations-office/industrial use. Various proposals were put forth, and the March 8th meeting signaled that the list had been winnowed down to four.

The Westside Christian High School proposal would house the school's administrative offices and classroom space enough for 275 students. "We



Portland City Council will hold a hearing on June 12 to help decide the fate of the Sears Armory. (Post file photo by Don Snedecor)

believe that Westside Christian is the ideal reuse candidate for the Sears Armory," said Westside principal Andy Sears, who affirms that the school's plan is the only proposal not requiring public funds.

"Instead," says Sears, "public funds are generated." Project manager Steve Reiff said, "Westside Christian is a high quality academic institution that would be a long term asset to the neighborhood."

The school has committed to provide community space on the grounds

should they become the new owners, and have agreed, if selected, to contribute generously to long term funding of the city's Home Again Mentoring program, aimed at helping the homeless and disadvantaged constituency.

Under both the HAP and CPAH  
(Continued on Page 4)

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## Sears Armory

(Continued from page 3)

plans, 100+ mixed-income, mixed tenure housing units would be made available, with a percentage of the tenants qualifying for support on the basis of need. Similarly, both housing plans would require public subsidy.

CPAH executive director Sheila Greenlaw-Fink elaborated on how her organization's plan would ensure that families and individuals of all income levels can continue to live in the Village, improve the prospects for local schools to remain open and thriving, and provide a vibrant and secure place to call home for hundreds of residents. "We should plan with our children's needs in mind," said Greenlaw-Fink, "and look creatively to the future while honoring the past."

Mike Andrews, HAP director of development and community revitalization offered the following comment on behalf of the housing authority: "With housing prices rising for both renters and home buyers in Southwest Portland, we believe the Sears site provides an excellent opportunity for lower income families to have stable housing that allows them to become a part of the community."

If the Emergency Response Center gets the nod, everything from terrorist attacks to treacherous ice storms would be dealt with from a new combination command and training center, shelter, storage facility, and emergency vehicle deployment hub. POEM director Carmen Merlo: "The city's proposal for the reuse of the center offers a compelling public safety justification."

Merlo went on to explain that currently no emergency response equipment is located on the west side. "In the event of a catastrophic earthquake or other disaster that would damage or make impassable the bridges," she said, "Westside response would be severely

hindered, and the city might not be able to restore critical services."

Over the time allotted for the meeting, many thoughtful and opposing viewpoints about the Sears Armory's near-history were aired. Concerns about everything from the need for low-income, disadvantaged, and workforce housing, to the fear of certain types of individuals associated with such housing, came up.

There was clear frustration which suggests that some feel that aspects of the process have been less than transparent. And there was a thought or two which raised the possibility that visions proposed for the various future incarnations of this 3.7 acre site and its complex of Cold War-era buildings have not been as far-reaching as they might have been.

Sheern took a barrage of questions, attempting to negotiate the public passions surrounding each proposal. He also addressed the fears of some citizens. "I understand that some of you are worried about what might end up in your backyards and neighborhood," he concluded.

*Editor's Note: Portland Community College is the most recent applicant interested in acquiring the Sears Armory site. At the Multnomah Neighborhood Association meeting on May 13, a representative from PCC explained that the college was interested in establishing a community education campus. With some modifications to the existing buildings, PCC would also move its human resources, financial services and data center to the Sears site.*

*A straw poll by the neighborhood association's voting members of the five proposals came out this way: PDOT Emergency Response Center 26, Housing Authority of Portland 15, Westside Christian High School 12, Community Partners for Affordable Housing 8, Portland Community College 6.*

## Skate Park

(Continued from page 1)

Park because I was already a residential and commercial cement finisher," said Gavin Temple, who currently works for Airspeed Skateparks at Gabriel Park. "We stole the land from the hobos, prostitutes and drug addicts and just pushed our own theme. Pretty soon all the riffraff was gone, and all we had left was a skateboard park."

"Burnside is the most renowned skateboard park in the world because of its history," said Tom Miller, founder and chair of Skaters for Portland Skateparks (SPS) and chief-of-staff for City Commissioner Sam Adams. "Imagine a bunch of soccer players going out to a public space and creating their own field."

"I'm a lifelong skateboarder," Miller said, adding, "There's a tremendous unmet need. We discovered that there were tens-of-thousands of skateboarders and no facilities. Kids were on private property – and they needed their own advocacy organization."

In 2005, the city accepted the SPS plan for 19 public skateparks; Gabriel Park is among them. "I think it's great," says Miller. "It will be a big asset for the neighborhood and the Southwest."

For more information on Portland skateparks visit [www.skateportland.org](http://www.skateportland.org). For a history of the Burnside Skatepark project, watch the OPB video "Full Tilt Boogie" at [www.burnsideproject.blogspot.com](http://www.burnsideproject.blogspot.com).

## Food Front

(Continued from page 1)

din came from Germany in 1908 and started a dairy farm, his granddaughter Ardys Braidwood said. "The dance center at the top of the hill was a garage, and all the milk trucks went in there at night to be serviced."

They had over 100 acres and up to 450 milking cows until the school district wanted to build in the 1950s. "At that time my grandpa had passed on and my dad was running the dairy. So they sold property to the school district and developed the little shopping center."

Hillsdale Farmers' Market manager Eamon Molloy was among the first to join the shopping center's new coop. "I'm happy we have a locally owned grocery moving into the neighborhood," he said, noting several farmers already sell to Food Front. Molloy noticed farmers' market business dropped when Wild Oats closed, and said groceries and farmers' markets work together. "You need to buy farm direct but you aren't going to get everything there. You can do it all in one trip with a grocery store next to a farmers' market."

For more information on the Food Front Cooperative Grocery, see [www.foodfront.coop](http://www.foodfront.coop), email [info@foodfront.coop](mailto:info@foodfront.coop), call 503.222.5658 ext. 133, or visit the NW Portland store at 2375 NW Thurman St.

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Amanda Fritz (right) with Homestead neighborhood activist Tom Miller at the Southwest Neighborhoods Inc. Candidates Fair April 29. Fritz was the top vote-getter for City Council Position One in the May 20 primary, and will face a runoff election against Charles Lewis in November. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)



Nick Fish at the Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. Candidates Fair. He was elected to City Council Position Two in the May 20 primary, and should assume office this month. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)

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# Should there be a permanent fence around the Wilson softball field?

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

After extensive outreach two years ago, Hillsdale Neighborhood Association leader Don Baack was confident he had community support to turn the "Hillsdale Triangle" into a community plaza, regardless of what Portland Public Schools, owner of the property, thought of the idea.

Now, it seems, one part of the community has signaled that the buy-in is less than total.

The property in question lies between Rieke School and Wilson High School, and contains the high school's softball field. Softball players, coaches and parents have complained for years about the poor condition of the field. According

to girls softball parent Thomas Benke, the uneven ground is a potential source of injuries.

The team and parents helped refurbish the field through volunteer labor, and raised money to buy a fence for the field, thus allowing for it to be properly cared for. "In addition to its practical necessity, the new fence has symbolic importance," Benke wrote. "It creates a sense of place and permanence for the Wilson softball program."

In April Portland Public School staff started building the fence. Alarmed, Baack and other Hillsdale leaders appealed to Portland School Board member Ruth Atkins, and through her influenced facilities and assets management division director Bryan Winchester to issue a "stop work" order for the fence. Benke responded with a flyer headlined,

"Save the Rieke Ballfield and Wilson H.S. Softball!" and suggesting that the plaza would have "all the same elements as Pioneer Courthouse Square."

Hillsdale suggested a "temporary fence" that could accommodate the teams' immediate activities while not precluding their own long-term plans.

Winchester responded that such a fence would "cost several thousand dollars more" than the planned fence, and would involve "incalculable moving, storage and maintenance costs." He said that the fence would contain two gates that would allow access to the land.

Mike Roach, co-owner of Paloma Clothing and president of the Hillsdale Business and Professional Association said he didn't have a problem with the fence as much as with the way it was installed. "Clearly these girls needed a place to play varsity softball," he told *The Post*. "Ideally there would have been some notice to the neighborhood first. The way it was done was not in the spirit of cooperation."

"In the end the district made an important decision to leave a gate open so that other, future uses are not absolutely precluded. Most of our ideas for that space are just ideas at this point. No one knows when things are going to happen, and to deny these girls a chance to play now would not be fair."

Baack declared himself satisfied with the outcome. "It will do for now," he told *The Post*. The issue might have to be reopened someday if long-term plans for the triangle bear fruit, he said.

Such plans are predicated on a long-standing school district policy to allow

"shared use" of its facilities with the larger population when they do not conflict with school use. Benke says he is in favor of "multiple-use" of the land, but it quickly becomes clear that to him this means baseball or softball. He is opposed to "inconsistent uses," and for him that category includes both the summer concerts that Hillsdale is trying to attract and the Farmer's Market they would like to move there.

"If it's multi-use, no one will maintain it," he said. "If you balance the interests between the student interests and the larger community interests, there will be a continuing deterioration of the student facilities."

Even more central, Benke rejected the notion that because the land is "public property," it should be available for public benefit. "Our ideology is that this is private property that is for the benefit of the students here," said Benke, who stipulated that he did not officially represent others.

Told of Benke's comments, Roach replied, "That's a pre-Measure Five argument. That this is private property may be technically accurate, but he's missing the point. The district is trying to partner with others, to share facilities with the larger public that doesn't have children but does vote."

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# Bootleg stairway issue dominates Hillsdale neighborhood meeting

By Mark Ellis  
The Southwest Portland Post

Generally speaking, the Southwest Trails Group is seen as exerting a positive influence in the southwest area by acting as stewards and advocates for the vast system of trails which all agree are a part of the area's livability quotient.

But even head trail-maker Don Baack admits he erred when he and members of his group uprooted some venerable junipers and constructed an unapproved stairway on an embankment which leads to Sunset Blvd. via Seymour Drive and 25th Avenue.

"In retrospect," Baack told the May 7th meeting of the Hillsdale Neighborhood Association, "I should have divulged my intentions to the neighborhood before constructing the stairway."

At issue is the right of way down a 100-foot slope, which Seymour Drive neighbors claim began as a quick shortcut for immediate neighbors only and over time has morphed into a regular route for local walkers and hikers.

People have been using an unimproved step system which all agreed was on private property, until Baack and company carved out a slot on what all agree is adjacent public property

and installed a creosote railroad-tie staircase.

Neighborhood resident David Barberis and others, acting on behalf of aggrieved nearby homeowners concerned about liability, foot traffic volume, and privacy issues, removed the staircase after receiving the following communiqué from PDOT Development Services Division Manager Christine Leon:

"(The stairs) were installed without PDOT's knowledge, without permit, without abutting property owner consent, and with what appears to be creosote railroad ties, and improper material for this application, and to a steepness beyond what PDOT stair details indicate."

The loggerhead has generated bruised feelings on both sides. One element contributing to the disagreement has to do with the real-time value of the shortcut. Those opposed to making the embankment a public route claim they have timed the difference between the shortcut and the conventional route—proceeding down SW 19th Ave. to Sunset—and determined that the time saved is less than a minute.

In a follow-up email Barberis spelled out his neighborhood's desire for a return to the preexisting situation: "a way for us and our neighbors to gain

quick access to Sunset Blvd."

Voices in favor of the route's viability claim that it is not just quicker, but also safer and more pleasant than the SW 19th alternative. There were also complaints that the new junipers planted by nearby homeowners now impede foot traffic down the slope not just on private property, but on public as well.

"This route was approved as a pedestrian connection by the HNA several years ago," said Baack in his follow-up email, "when we were asking for pedestrian markers along several pedestrian connections in Hillsdale." He insisted that the public is free to use this right of way anytime, and that it cannot be blocked by adjacent neighbors.

But Seymour Drive residents and surrounding neighbors stressed concerns about property rights infringement, and the possibility that they could be sued in the event of an injury on the slope. Citing City Code Chapter 17.42 Barberis affirmed that, "The fact that we, the abutting property owners, were liable for use of the hazardous stairs constructed by the Southwest Trails Group was confirmed to us by the City Attorney's Office."

Barberis further explained that the juniper replanting was done to address erosion concerns on the suddenly

barren embankment. He especially bemoaned what he sees as the waste of public monies which will likely be spent looking into the situation and implementing whatever plan is ultimately reached. "The \$20,000 dollar estimated cost of a City Code staircase could provide 50 tons of food to the Oregon Food Bank," he said.

Affected neighbors also provided anecdotes which suggest that not only had the staircase been built illegally, but that the SWTG construction party treated them rudely on the day the stairs were installed. Baack could not recall any such rude treatment, but added that if there was any, that he considered it regrettable.

"The next step will be will be up to the City of Portland," concluded Baack, who noted that PDOT's Mark Lear had attended the meeting and is planning a process to clarify the issues and decide under what conditions to move ahead. "I look forward to working with the city in getting this resolved."

But Barberis was last to weigh in with his charge that, "The liability that SWTG has exposed us to cannot be tolerated and must be exposed. Any property owner who has a SWTG trail abutting their property should check with the city regarding liability issues."

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# Artist-in-residence Linda K. Johnson coordinates art projects in South Waterfront

By Lee Perlman  
The Southwest Portland Post

In the South Waterfront, across from the looming John Ross condominium tower, there is a two-square block expanse of lawn. Someday, it will be a community park that serves the growing area in a variety of ways. For now the lawn, suitable for dog walking and other informal outdoor activities, is a place-maker for what is to come.

On the other side of the John Ross is the lair of another place-maker: Artist in residence Linda K. Johnson.

Since last August, she is there to provide art projects that promote and celebrate the new area, with the participation of its new residents and the public at large.

Her chief function has been to commission a new work by an artist each month. The artists have been painters, sculptors, a dancer, a writer and a photographer with widely different styles, but all have had this in common: they are about the South Waterfront, they are displayed or performed there, they are free to the general public, and they involve some sort of public participation.

Of this last Johnson told the Post, "There are some artists who just like to sit in their studio and paint – that's great, but it's not appropriate here."

Photographer Christopher Rauschenberg took pictures of people and things

in the district, then had an exhibition there of his work. Dancer Tahni Holt staged performances in three different places, at and above ground level, and invited the public to view them from different places as well. Dancer Bill Will is scheduled to perform a recital on July 19.

On August 2nd, 10 choreographers and theater companies will give 10 short performances simultaneously at 10 different locations in the district, with the performers rotating their performance spaces and the audience free to do so as well.

Funding for the project comes from "the principal developers of the district," as Johnson put it, but especially Williams and Dame and the Gerding-Edlen Company. The idea was Johnson's.

Long one of Portland's most respected dancers, choreographers and performance artists, she has taken special interest in the city's communities and geographic locations. One year, at the downtown Artquake festival, she and fellow performers spent all day constructing and re-constructing a metal structure that mimicked the changing face of downtown.

A later work, "The View From Here," examined the much-discussed but little-understood Urban Growth Boundary, the official dividing line between urban and rural development; for that work, Johnson personally toured the boundary.



Linda K. Johnson at South Waterfront Park. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)

She was especially intrigued by the possibilities of the South Waterfront. "Here we've reconstituted a neighborhood that for years was an uninhabitable brown field," she said. "It's a chance for everyone in the city to re-draw their internal maps."

She wrote an unsolicited proposal for the project to Homer Williams and Mark Edlen – who agreed to fund the project. It is not a great surprise. Williams, in particular, has always believed strongly in the components other than housing that create a true community. In the Pearl he contributed to what eventually became Jameson Square, and to art projects to utilize it.

To those who suggested that the new open spaces would become problem hangouts for the homeless he said, "We can't control who will come here, but if

we program it properly we can have a lot of control over what happens here."

Johnson says that the funds were given freely, with no attempt to direct or interfere with her artistic plans. Once the money was approved, she "drew on my roots and connective tissue" to recruit participating artists. Each of the performances has brought 200 to 300 people into the area, and engaged 40 to 50 immediate residents.

Johnson herself is easy to spot during the day. As a work uniform she has adopted a red jump suit reminiscent of the construction workers still employed in building the area. Her last performance, under the contract, will be something connected to the annual Time Based Art festival in September. At that point, Johnson says, "I'll find another project."

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