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Residents spread gravel along goat path; Capitol Highway planning continues

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

On Oct. 28, Southwest Trails PDX and the Portland Bureau of Transportation, dumped gravel along four sections of Capitol Highway.

Community members brought wheelbarrows and transported it onto the uneven dirt trail which runs parallel to the highway.

This route has been the only way for pedestrians and strollers to travel safely between neighbors, bus stops, or to local grocery stores and shops.

Don Baack of Southwest Trails helped facilitate the project with the transportation bureau. There were concerns from a few residents at the September meeting of the Multnomah Neighborhood Association that gravel wasn't the best material for individuals with disabilities or visual impairments.

"The route in its current condition is even more dangerous for everyone," Baack said at the time. "Remember, this is just a short-term fix until the highway construction is completed."

Subcommittee gets sneak peek at 30 percent design

Over the summer, the Portland Bureau of Transportation and the Bureau of Environmental Services have been busy getting designs ready for improving Southwest Capitol Highway. A variety of events for the community have been scheduled in November.

"I'm pleased to report that our subcommittee will get a sneak peek of the 30 percent design at our next meeting coming up on Tuesday, Nov. 21," said Chris Lyons, Capitol Highway sub-

committee chair of the Multnomah Neighborhood Association. "The meeting will be held from 6:30–8:30 p.m. in Room 7 at the Multnomah Arts Center."

The subcommittee will receive updates from the two bureaus who are working together on the project. They will also present on a couple other topics of interest to the group.

Transportation project manager Steve Szigethy will show off project designs, share cost estimates, and discuss available funding sources. Szigethy will also review highway right-of-way and frontage impacts to the residents along the route. He will discuss outreach efforts and be available to answer questions.

Stormwater updates and designs will be presented by Becky Tillson, project manager for the Bureau of Environmental Services. There have been multiple issues with stormwater runoff and floods from side streets along Capitol Highway.

The total project cost has been reduced to approximately \$11 million for the one-mile segment between Taylors Ferry Road and Garden Home Road.

According to Lyons, the 2011 estimate was around \$19 million.

"Because of the latest design work," Lyons said, "it's helped to bring the cost down considerably since they won't be tearing up the whole road to put pipes underneath it. The [current] estimate is more like \$10 – 12 million."

Stormwater Stars Open House slated for Nov. 4

Lyons also announced a Stormwater Stars Open House and Yard

Computer app to report potholes, graffiti and clogged storm drains

At the September meeting of the Multnomah Neighborhood Association, chair Martie Sucec explained a new computer app to report problems in neighborhoods like potholes, graffiti, and clogged storm drains.

Sucec stressed that the more people who report problems, the better. The app, PDX Reporter, forwards an individual's report as a dot on the map, so the more individuals who report a particular problem, the more dots will accrue to that site.

"We're hoping it just might get the attention of the appropriate bureau," Sucec said. "A neighbor reported that she and her neighbors got a pothole filled on Southwest 26th [Avenue] through their reports."

The "New Report" screen is used to document problem reports con-

cerning various City of Portland infrastructures.

A complete report consists of a photograph of the problem, a brief description of the issue, report location, and other details.

"At minimum, the report must include a report type and location," said Sucec. "After filling the form out, hit submit and it sends the report to the city."

The report also addresses abandoned automobiles, debris in the roadways, illegal parking, sidewalk trip hazards, work zone concerns, and even vegetation grown over sidewalks.

One can access the PDX Reporter from any smart phone, tablet, laptop, or desktop computer at www.pdxreporter.org. – Erik Vidstrand



Gravel was delivered by the Portland Bureau of Transportation for the "goat path" along Southwest Capitol Highway on Oct. 28. Volunteers Josh Byler, Donna Jean Paterson, and Chris Houghton use wheelbarrows to spread out the gravel and then tamp it down. Don Baack of SW Trails organized the event. Nearly two dozen neighbors helped out on the brilliant autumn day. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

Tour to be held on Saturday, Nov. 4, from 1–3 p.m. at the Hillsdale Library (Southwest Sunset Boulevard and Dewitt Street).

The open house begins at the library with refreshments. Participants will learn about best practices for reducing stormwater runoff, conserving soil, installing native plants, and mitigating damage from stormwater.

Attendees will then tour two nearby yards that are past sites of "Stormwater Stars" projects and hear from neighbors who have implemented stormwater management practices.

"The event is free and hosted by the Southwest Watershed Resource

Center," said Hillary Hunt, center manager. "Rain or shine, we will meet and hold the tour."

Children are welcome and activity books will be available. Contact Hunt with questions at watershed@swni.org or call her at 503-823-2862.

"Potential attendees should RSVP at <http://www.swni.org/watershed>.

The Portland transportation and environmental service bureaus will hold a Southwest Capitol Highway Project open house on Wednesday, Nov. 29 from 6–8 p.m. in the Multnomah Arts Center auditorium, 7688 SW Capitol Highway. A presentation on the project design will begin promptly at 6:30 p.m.

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White House confronts climate change only during hurricane season?

OPEN FORUM

By Larissa Gordon

It has been weeks since Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria have left a path of destruction through Texas, Florida and the Caribbean.

President Donald Trump blames the continuing power outages on Puerto Rico's faulty infrastructure and poor leadership. However, Harvey, Irma and Maria were storms of massive proportion and came within weeks of one another, albeit Maria hit Puerto Rico much harder.

Regardless of what the president says of Puerto Rican U.S. citizens, other members in the White House have changed their tone when they speak about the destruction of the 2017 hurricane season.

They are starting to answer the question so many American citizens are asking: What caused such massive and powerful hurricanes?

During a White House press briefing held on Sept. 11, Homeland Security advisor Tom Bossert was asked the question, "Are these storms giving this administration some pause when it comes to the issue of climate change and homeland security?"

Mr. Bossert replied, "I will tell you that we continue to take seriously the climate change—not the cause of it, but the things that we observe. And so there's rising flood waters—I think one



inch every 10 years in Tampa—things that would require prudent mitigation measures."

The tides are beginning to change, in more ways than one.

The White House is now openly acknowledging that our climate is changing. However, when it comes to the "cause of it" the White House still refuses to acknowledge what climate scientists have been agreeing on for years: emission of greenhouse gasses.

Now, in the wake of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, I pose this question: what harm would be caused by listening to climate scientists, and shifting away from greenhouse gas emitting fossil fuels?

With almost unanimous agreement, scientists point their finger towards climate change. Now, after such a devastating (and still ongoing) hurricane

season the political sector is forced to listen.

Society tends to be reactive but when it comes to dealing with climate

change, it needs to be proactive. The White House does not fall outside of this tendency.

They have admitted to a change in climate, a small but meaningful adjustment. However, the White House's plan to deal with this adjustment is purely reactive. Their plan focuses on mitigation, not prevention.

Scientists have the tools to model how our country will be impacted if we do not make a collective effort to stop emitting greenhouse gasses. What we do not have is the time to debate making a shift or not.

In the wake of Harvey, Irma and Maria, I pose this question: What harm could be done by shifting towards renewable energy?

Why wait until more devastating storms make landfall on the United States? And why not use the destruction of Puerto Rico's infrastructure as an opportunity to rebuild more sustainably?

We cannot afford to be reactive with climate change, we need to be proactive.

Larissa Gordon lives in the Bridlemile neighborhood. The Post welcomes reader response. Please stick to one subject and submit letters up to 300 words and essays up to 500 words. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for brevity, clarity, punctuation and libel concerns.



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Metro, Portland hold affordable housing workshop related to future light rail line

SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR PLAN

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

An affordable housing workshop related to the future southwest light rail line was held on Oct. 14 at Markham Elementary School. Over 100 citizens participated.

Sponsored by the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Mayor Ted Wheeler was also invited to share the city's role on the future of housing in the transportation corridor.

To ensure that the southwest corridor is not only a place where people will travel through, but also remain livable for future generations, both the cities of Portland and Tigard are developing housing strategies which will support public investments with inclusion, equal access to opportunities, and diversity in the community.

In December 2016, the Metro Council unanimously voted to award \$575,000 in grants to support equitable housing in seven communities around greater Portland.

Metro planners were on hand to discuss the process. Chris Ford, Metro project manager, said that by the year 2035, an additional 70,000 residents will be living in southwest Portland.

"The southwest corridor project planning began in 2011," Ford said. "By summer of 2018, a preferred route will be decided but we won't really know until 2021 if everything is finalized.

"Then there will be four years of construction and by summer of 2025, we'll be ready to roll."

Ford explained that the current housing crisis has impacted 3,500 lower income renters in the southwest who are paying over 50 percent of their income on housing.

Ford said that parts of an equitable

housing strategy include committing early financial resources, preventing residential and cultural displacement, and increasing choices for new homes.

"The new MAX line is not just about transportation," Mayor Ted Wheeler said, "It's about meeting other goals of inclusion, a sense of community, prosperity, and creating jobs.

"Rents have increased by 30 percent since 2012 while household wages have remained stagnant," Wheeler said. "More residents are sliding into housing insecurity."

Wheeler said when the North Interstate Avenue MAX line was built, the city made many promises.

"We didn't follow up with the community," Wheeler said. "Many in the private sector made speculative decisions and displaced residents along Interstate. We own these mistakes."

Wheeler promised he would work together with partners.

"We need to dig deeper into resources investing in land," Wheeler said. "We need the private sector to make mixed-income housing work with TriMet. Funding would be included in an upcoming proposed bond measure."

Wheeler asked TriMet to include \$100 million for affordable housing in the \$1.7 billion regional transportation funding measure it is preparing for the November 2018 ballot.

The potential bond measure tentatively includes \$750 million as the region's share of the \$2.4 billion light rail line, and \$950 million for local congestion relief and safety projects.

In November 2016, Portland voters overwhelmingly approved a \$258 million bond for affordable housing and unseated City Commissioner Steve Novick in favor of Chloe Eudaly, a bookstore owner and renters' rights activist who campaigned chiefly on housing.



More than 100 residents and government officials met on Oct. 14 to provide input into affordable housing strategies along the future light rail line in Southwest Portland. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

Following Wheeler's remarks, Katrina Holland, executive director of the Community Alliance of Tenants spoke.

"It's very clear who is denied affordable housing: people who look like me!" said Holland, who is African-American.

"We're here to stop that," she said. "We need to enact some tenant's actions policy to prevent issues. Fair housing issue is a civil rights issue. The refugee community needs to be given more safety and stability. We need to pump money into the issue."

Holland said that residents can get involved by connecting with neighbors, volunteer with local housing organizations, and share their comments on the transit planning process.

When the vetting and community input are finalized, a unified, strategic approach to the corridor housing will be presented to the cities to take action. This will include a way to guide action and track housing progress, proposals for financing sources, and supportive land use policies to meet the corridor's housing targets.

(Continued on Page 6)

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Hillsdale and Multnomah to hold joint holiday weekend festivities

THE COUNTRY STORE

By Erik Vidstrand
The Southwest Portland Post

The Hillsdale and Multnomah Village business communities will hold holiday festivals the weekend of Dec. 1-3. On Friday, Multnomah Village will hold its annual traditional Holiday Gala which also happens to be First Friday. The tree lighting ceremony, featuring Santa Claus, is scheduled at 6:42 p.m. on Friday.

Two horse drawn carriages will travel between the Multnomah Arts Center and Key Bank as carolers sing and people shop and visit.

"The Golden Ticket program will be going on again," said Jill Crecraft, owner of Sip D'Vine in Multnomah Village. "The tickets are distributed by participating shop owners and can be used for discounts and special purchases at other participating

businesses throughout Hillsdale and Multnomah."

Creecraft will be having a blues band, the Mighty Michael Project, playing at her wine shop. David Klick, a local licensed massage therapist, will be on hand for chair massages.

The following morning, Santa will make his way to the Lucky Labrador Public House where the community can have breakfast, including pancakes and sausages, prepared by the Southwest Hills Kiwanis.

Hillsdale is resurrecting the once-popular "Chili Feed" at Food Front who will furnish the chili. A local bakery will bake cornbread and hot chocolate will be served.

"We're calling it the Hillsdale Holiday Fling," said Crecraft who attends most Hillsdale business meetings each month. The fling is from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

"We plan to coordinate with the Multnomah Holiday Gala to help publicize our event as well as our participation in the Golden Ticket holiday

promotion," said Mike Roach, owner of Paloma Clothing and co-chair of the Hillsdale Business and Professional Association.

"We're going to have roving choirs from southwest Portland schools singing that day," Roach said.

All proceeds from the event will go to the participating school choirs. On Sunday, the Hillsdale Farmers' Market will also hold its holiday festivities.

Hillsdale looks to bring more people to the town center

The Hillsdale Business and Professional Association meets on the third Wednesday most months. In October, a dozen members met to brainstorm ways to breathe life back into the commercial area of the town center.

Don Baack, a long-time resident who represents Southwest Trails,

wants to look at ways to keep people in Hillsdale after they finish their coffee or fitness class.

Hillsdale does hold an annual book sale in conjunction with the blueberry pancake breakfast each July. A well-

(Continued on Page 5)



Wilson High School carolers stop by the Christmas Tree in Multnomah Village during the annual Holiday Gala. (Post file photo by Erik Vidstrand)

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THE COUNTRY STORE

(Continued from Page 4)

ness fair and the weekly Hillsdale Farmer's Market also take place but Hillsdale wants to find other reasons for customers to come and stay.

As for holiday time, the business association hasn't had holiday themed event for quite some time. No Santa, no holiday lights, no events.

"The community didn't support it unlike Multnomah Village," Baack said.

Multnomah Village holds its annual Multnomah Days each August, a holiday gala the first weekend of December, and trick or-treating on Halloween. These and First Fridays seem to cement Multnomah Village as a destination place with traditions.

Mike Roach, co-chair of the Hillsdale business association, said Hillsdale tried for about a year to hold a Third Thursday. It was suspended the following winter and the business members could not generate the energy to start it again in the spring.

"We just did not have enough retailers or restaurants in Hillsdale to make a go of it," Roach said.

"It should be noted, as well, that Hillsdale began its blueberry pancake breakfast 41 years ago when very few business districts had annual events. Even Multnomah Days had not happened for a number of years until it was resumed in the 1980's after many years of not hold-

ing one."

Jill Crecraft, owner of Sip D'Vine, attends the Hillsdale meetings. She recounted how long it took Multnomah to succeed with their First Friday event.

"It took a lot of work and time," Crecraft said. "We had to have buy-in from business members." Merchants incur a variety of extra costs such as discounts, keeping employees later, and providing wine and cheese and other delicacies.

"We have our Sunday Farmers Market," Roach said. "It continues to thrive and it will make for a vibrant business district of which we can be proud."

Food Front grocery store director shares insights

Food Front Cooperative Grocery in Hillsdale has had a new store director for eight months. Grace Morgan took over the reins this past February from the previous manager, John Conlan.

"I've been with the co-op since 2013," Morgan said. "I was the meat and seafood manager for the Hillsdale store and our other location in Northwest Portland."

Morgan has been a veteran of natural grocery stores since 2004. She said that there are no new plans for the Hillsdale store in the near future.

"Right now we are focusing as a company on stabilizing sales at both locations," Morgan said. "We have

had a lot of turnover in the past year in upper management. In one year alone, the store went through four general managers alone.

"We were also recovering from the strong hit in sales after the opening of a New Seasons market just five blocks away from the Northwest location."

Morgan said that the company is focusing on being a strong community-involved organization to distinguish itself from the competition.

Hillsdale Food Front has been open just shy of a decade but the original Food Front has been open for 45 years. According to Morgan, it was the first co-op in Portland.

"Although anyone can shop at our stores, most of our sales are comprised of people who hold a share and 'own' part of the co-op."

Morgan said that she has a huge passion for locally sourced food and has been heavily involved in helping many local ranchers get their businesses up and running and into the Portland market. Some of the ranches she mentioned include Lan-Roc



Grace Morgan is store director of Food Front Grocery Co-op in Hillsdale. (Post photo by Erik Vidstrand)

Farms, Hawley Ranch, and Wilder Land & Sea.

Morgan is also a journeyman butcher, and has occasionally held private community workshops in everything from whole carcass breakdown, at-home butchery, and sausage making.

Food Front is located at 6344 SW Capitol Highway in the Hillsdale Shopping Center. The co-op is open daily from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

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Questions & Answers
About Our Environment

Dear EarthTalk: How can we keep our kids safe from environmental hazards all around us in our everyday lives?

— Jennifer Nichols, Wareham, MA

Children are affected by the same environmental hazards as adults, only they're more vulnerable given their smaller size and the fact that their bodies are still developing. According to the World Health Organization, harmful exposures can start as early as in utero.

"Proportionate to their size, children ingest more food, drink more water and breathe more air than adults," reports the organization.

"Additionally, certain modes of behavior, such as putting hands and objects into the mouth and playing outdoors can increase children's exposure to environmental contaminants."

Some of the most common contaminants we should be vigilant about avoiding include pesticides (in foods), lead (in old paint), asbestos (in insulation and construction ma-

terials), BPA (in plastic food/drink containers and the lining of cans), PFCs (in non-stick cookware, carpeting and mattresses) and flame retardants (in furniture and drapery).

And, of course, many branded household cleaners contain potentially hazardous ingredients (bleach, ammonia, diethanolamine, triethanolamine) as well.

Given how common these elements are in today's world, keeping kids safe isn't easy. For starters, choose organic food and drink whenever possible to cut down on the pesticides your kids ingest.

While pesticides work well to keep away the bugs that can ruin harvests, they also can cause neurological and reproductive problems for humans who ingest traces of them.

Apples, celery, strawberries, peaches, spinach, nectarines, grapes, bell peppers, potatoes, blueberries, lettuce and kale/collard greens are the worst offenders in the produce aisle, according to the Environmental Working Group, so definitely spring for organic versions of these particular fruits and veggies.

Packaged and processed foods likely contain plenty of pesticide residues, too, unless they are marked as certified organic.

To avoid household cleaners, the Organic Consumers Association recommends ditching the expensive specialized products that likely contain harmful chemical additives.

"A few safe, simple ingredients like soap, water, baking soda, vin-



Children are affected by the same environmental hazards as adults, only they're more vulnerable given their smaller size and the fact that their bodies are still developing. (Photo by Roddy Scheer)

egar, lemon juice and borax, aided by a little elbow grease and a coarse sponge for scrubbing, can take care of most household cleaning needs."

Look for specific formulations on organicconsumers.org, as well as links to some environmentally friendly name-brand household cleaners.

While there is less we can do individually about air pollution if we want our kids to spend time outdoors, at the macro level we can all help by driving our cars less and turning down our thermostats (to reduce the emissions we cause) and ordering less stuff online (to cut down on air pollution from shipping).

Parents, teachers and caregivers should educate themselves about what to avoid and become expert label readers so they can make health-smart choices.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention is urging pediatricians to take a greater interest in the environmental impacts on the health of their patients and discuss with parents how to keep kids safe in and around the home, the neighborhood, and at school.

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SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR PLAN

(Continued from Page 3)

Recommendations also include supporting community and housing organizations to work together to champion and implement the housing strategy. The city will also prioritize early opportunities to identify housing sites.

After the formal presentation, this reporter asked Cupid Alexander, a senior policy advisor on housing initiatives for Mayor Wheeler, about the mayor's thoughts on preventing gentrification in Southwest Portland.

"We're coming up with strategies for older residents with assistance in home repairs and grants to make improvements and being intentional on the front end," Alexander said.

Small groups of participants met to discuss solutions for the city to consider. Some of the ideas included trainings for future city planning managers, avoiding displacement, and increasing communication between the cities of Portland and Tigard.

Another idea described using undesirable locations of a property, such as at the end of a freeway off ramp or where vehicles may idle for long periods of time, to be used for utilities, parking, or stormwater treatment.

Other solutions listed providing tax credits for developers who provide more affordable housing units and having employers play a more dominant role.

"We need more representation of low-income renters at the table where decisions and policies are made," said one participant. "They need to sit on committees."

"Developers should meet quotas for affordable housing before building out the rest of their properties."

Nura Elmagbari, of the Portland Refugee Support Group, spoke about the plight of recently arrived immigrants who come to the U.S. for asylum.

"Many of these individuals have post traumatic stress disorders, depression, and mental or physical health issues," she said. "Many can't work and some don't understand the process of sustaining their benefits once they expire or run out."

According to Elmagbari, "Our program helps them navigate the system. They want to become independent and not rely on government support."

In February 2016, the Inclusionary Housing Zoning Code Project was adopted by the Portland City Council.

It was a collaborative effort between the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability and the Portland Housing Bureau to meet the need for affordable housing in the city.

This code requires that all development projects with 20 or more dwelling units in one building participate in the inclusionary housing program.

It sets the percentage or share of units in a development that must be affordable at different income levels to meet the terms of the program.

A meeting summary will be sent to all in attendance. The city encouraged all to remain involved.

The next Southwest Corridor Community Advisory Committee meeting will be held on Nov. 6 from 6:15 to 8:45 p.m. at the Multnomah Arts Center, room 30, 7688 SW Capitol Highway.



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COMMUNITY LIFE

By KC Cowan and Don Snedecor
The Southwest Portland Post

2 Write your Novel: Looking for a supportive group to help with your writing? Join like-minded people during National Novel Writing Month at the Garden Home Community Library, 7306 SW Oleson Road, Thursdays this month (except Thanksgiving). Gathering takes place from 5–8 p.m. For more information call (503) 245-9932.

3 Arts Instructors Group Show: See what MAC instructors have been doing when they're not teaching classes at the Multnomah Arts Center. New group show features work in ceramics, textiles, sculpture, photography, drawing and more. Opening reception is Friday, Nov. 3 at 5 p.m. at the MAC gallery, 7688 SW Capitol Highway. Show runs through Nov. 28.

To Kill A Mockingbird: Lakewood Theatre presents its version of the timeless classic "To Kill A Mockingbird." Set against the backdrop of Depression-era Alabama, this play about racial and social injustice still resonates today. It will be presented Nov. 3 – Dec. 10 at the Lakewood Center for the Arts, 368 S. State St., Lake Oswego. For tickets, call (503) 635-3901.

10 Handwovens for the Holidays: Join the Portland Handweavers Guild for their Fall Show and Sale on Nov. 10, 5-9 p.m.; Nov. 11 and 12, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Multnomah Arts Center, 7688 SW

Capitol Highway. For details visit www.portlandhandweaversguild.com.

13 Classical Music at the J: The Jewish Community Orchestra performs works by Copland, Mozart, Holst, and Bizet on Sunday, Nov. 13 at 3 p.m., at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, 6651 SW Capitol Highway. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$8 for Seniors, \$5 for students, and children under 6, free. For more information, call (503) 244-0111.

15 The Multnomah Chorus will perform its fall program on Wednesday, Nov. 15 at 7:30 p.m. at the Multnomah Arts Center Auditorium, 7688 SW Capitol Highway. Free, but donations accepted. For more information visit www.multnomahartscenter.org

17 Friday Film Night: The classic "The Big Sleep," starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall is a 1946 film noir directed by Howard Hawks, the first film version of Raymond Chandler's 1939 novel of the same name. Private detective Philip Marlowe is hired by a rich family. Before the complex case is over, he's seen murder, blackmail, and what might be love. This event takes place on Friday, Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. at Garden Home Community Library (Annex), 7306 SW Oleson Road.

18 Botanical Sketches: Learn how to keep your own sketchbook to draw and learn about native plants. This event takes place on Saturday, Nov. 18, from 2–4 p.m. at the Capitol Hill Library, 10723 SW



Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall star in "The Big Sleep," playing Nov. 17 at the Garden Home Community Library (Annex).

Capitol Highway. Registration required: (503) 988-5123.

23 Thanksgiving Day Walk: Join in the annual Thanksgiving Day walk and burn off those dinner calories before you eat them! Meet in Hillsdale, next to the Capitol Highway/Sunset Boulevard entrance between the food carts and ballet studio at 9 a.m. on Thursday, Nov. 23. The route will include some stairs. For more information, contact Glenn Bridger (503) 201-4694.

28 Puppet Show: Tears of Joy Theatre presents "Stellaluna," the story of a fruit bat who learns what it takes to be a bird, a bat, and a friend. Suitable for all ages. This event takes place on Tuesday, Nov. 28 at 4 p.m. at the Hillsdale Library, 1525 SW Sunset Blvd. Free.

Dec. 2 Holiday Bazaar: Garden Home Recreation Center's 33rd Annual Holiday Bazaar takes place on Saturday, Dec. 2, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Breakfast with Holiday Show, 8-9 a.m. Breakfast with all-you-can-eat pancakes, 9-11 a.m. Visit more than 100 local vendors of handcrafted items, plus live music, raffle drawings, beer/wine tasting and sales, food trucks and more. The center is located at 7475 SW Oleson Road. Call (503) 629-6341 for more information.

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Free assessment, minor changes can help seniors live safely at home

By Jack Rubinger
The Southwest Portland Post

The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention defines aging in place as “the ability to live in one’s own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level.”

Not that it makes sense or is feasible for everyone, but for some there are positive changes that can be made to accomplish the goal of living at home as a senior.

Jeff Strang, an environmental health specialist for Multnomah County, addressed this topic at a presentation at the Capitol Hill Library. Strang conducts home health and safety assessments for low-income seniors and the disabled, and is a certified home inspector.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2050 the number of Americans aged 65 and older will be 88.5 million, and nearly one in five Americans will be aged 65 and older by 2030. Senior citizens make up more than 10 percent of the population of Oregon.

Six percent of Oregon senior households have an annual income of less than \$10,000 and 23 percent receive less than \$20,000. According to the bureau, 25 percent of Oregon residents 60 and over received food stamps in the last year.

Many homes in Southwest Portland were built 50 years ago or more

before grab bars, ramps, and even smoke alarms were widely used.

Finding a responsive and reliable contractor who can help with more challenging projects like upgrading electrical systems for your older home can be difficult, according to some of the folks who attended the presentation.

“They don’t call back with estimates or come back to you with ridiculously high estimates,” said one woman. Attendees agreed that maybe it’s a case of supply and demand or maybe all the good ones are getting older or perhaps younger people don’t want to be contractors.

In any event, incremental improvements can begin sooner rather than later whether you do them yourself or hire a contractor.

Some improvements are so simple they can take seconds to complete. Other projects require skill, time and help from a friend or professional. It’s pretty easy to install night lights in a bathroom and in hallways that are used after dark.

Strang offered room by room tips, including opening doors with levers instead of round knobs, as seniors may lack the strength to turn a knob. Surface changes can cause trips and falls, such as going from carpet to hardwood floors.

Also in the easy-to-install category are higher toilet seats which can fit over standard toilets.

LED lights can be an easy replacement as they offer better light and

more contrast which can help seniors with poor vision.

Strang also recommended testing smoke alarms once a month and using a combination carbon monoxide and smoke alarm.

Seniors with asthma are cautioned about using aerosol fragrances. “If it smells bad, it’s bad. If it smells good it’s bad. If it doesn’t smell, it’s good,” said Strang.

Hoarding behavior, while not necessarily a symptom of aging, can cause problems such as crowding open spaces and creating confusion and clutter.

When people own their homes for 40 years, an accumulation of furniture and paperwork is likely.

There’s a lot that can be done, but people don’t know where and when to start, Strang said. “It’s tough for some to ask for help. It may feel like you’re giving up your independence,” he said.



Jeff Strang gave a recent presentation at the Capitol Hill Library on seniors aging in place. (Post photo by Jack Rubinger)

Strang said that if you’re older or disabled, you may qualify for a free home assessment to identify safety hazards and get suggestions of non-profit organizations that can help make improvements.

To sign up for a free home assessment, call Jeff Strang at 503-988-7866 or email him at this address: healthyhousinginspections@multco.us.

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