Amalia Alarcón appointed Interim Director

With her recent appointment as ONI’s interim director, Amalia Alarcón was thrown headlong into the city’s budget process with barely time to catch her breath. Mayor Tom Potter named Amalia to the post just before the New Year Holiday.

‘I’m very excited about this opportunity…. It’s not about the director, it’s about all of us continuing to work together as a team.’

--Amalia Alarcón

PHOTO BY NELL WAGENAAR
She started her job last month and has moved to the corner office, still reeling from the news and adjusting to a litany of new responsibilities.

**Top of the list?** “Working with the Mayor’s office and our community partners on the ONI budget and advocating for putting money back out to neighborhoods (through the 06-07 budget proposal).” She’s also working with the ONI BAC, ONI staff and partners to develop a transition plan to set the stage for the new permanent director to step in at the start of the new fiscal year.

Will she apply for the permanent director post when it comes up? “Yes, absolutely.”

Amalia has been with the city for six years. She started as program manager of ONI’s now discontinued Metropolitan Human Rights Center in 1999, which dealt with civil rights, refugee, immigrant, and disability issues. Two years ago she was named Neighborhood Resource Center Manager. That program includes providing support to neighborhood coalitions and associations and recently took in the Disability Program to provide services to the disabled community.

She has been responsible for the development and monitoring of Affirmative Action goals. She has previously worked for the State of Oregon’s Health Division, Planned Parenthood and as director of the Children’s Care Program of Northern Lights Alternatives in New York.

“As I sought input from a wide variety of stakeholders, Amalia’s name repeatedly rose to the top,” said Mayor Potter. “She has impressed everyone with her management, organizational and communications skills, and her ability to work closely with the City Council and County Commissioners.

“Amalia has established excellent rapport with neighborhood associations, community organizations and city staff in her six years with the bureau, and we are confident she will serve the citizens and the City well,” he added.

She replaces Jimmy Brown, ONI Director for two years, who was appointed manager of the Portland Water Bureau’s community outreach and customer services group.

**She was born in Newark, New Jersey,** part of a multi-cultural family with a rich and diverse heritage. Her mother was from Ecuador and her father was a Polish Jew whose family escaped from a Polish Pogrom during the First World War. He landed in Cuba as a young child. Her family lived in Puerto Rico and then, at age 13, she and her Mom moved to Miami where she went Miami Beach High School. After graduating, she attended the University of Miami and studied theatre and communications.

She landed in New York City working with communities of color on HIV prevention, services and advocacy. Meanwhile she began to write and record her experiences in her journals. “I’ve always kept a journal.” She writes poetry, short stories… “It’s a way I process difficult times.”

She gets a lot of her inspiration from her kids, Carlos and Sam. “They are so loving, so funny. Brilliant, really—not that I’m biased or anything.”
Crime Prevention Coordinator Walter Garcia enjoys being downtown again and has helped initiate several programs to keep downtown safer for residents.

He’s currently headquartered in the ONI office at City Hall until computer connectivity problems at his office in the Smart Park garage at NW First and Davis are resolved.

“I lived downtown for three years. I love the variety, the pace. Restaurants are open 24-hours a day and there’s always something to do.”

Garcia, a former cop, was hired as a crime prevention specialist for the East Portland office in 2001. When he was laid off after three months because of budget cuts, he joined the I&R team downtown. In December 2003, he got a job with the new crime prevention team and worked out of the North Portland office until moving downtown last September.

**Garcia, a former police officer** in Warrenton and McMinnville, has a no-nonsense approach to solving crime. He enjoys going 110 miles per hour working with the downtown business community and other players in recognizing a problem, assessing what needs to be done and doing something about it.

One of his ideas, an example of inter-agency cooperation, is working to provide an extra layer of prevention downtown during the nighttime and early morning hours. He sought the cooperation of the Water Bureau in helping spot crime as it’s happening, whether it be a car prowl, a tagging on a building or a drug deal. Water Bureau security personnel, who regularly check city park fountains, fire hydrants, and Benson Bubblers downtown, are a definite presence on their bikes. They have agreed to report any suspicious activity through their direct line to BOEC, which can then dispatch police immediately.

Phone booths are places crime often happens. It might be a drug deal, an act of vandalism or graffiti and Walter has been working with the Office of Cable Communications & Franchise Management and the local phone companies to help stop it. In North Portland he got aluminum stickers on phone booths that warn callers their phone activity and records at that booth can be turned over to police, at their request. “We’re trying to institute that program downtown.”

**Phone lines used for crime**

There’s a lot of criminal business that’s negotiated across those phone lines, Garcia reported. In an effort to curb potential crime, all public phones outside of business in a core area allow
only outgoing calls. The purpose? So no one can call back for that drug deal, car jacking or prostitution arrangement.

**Garcia has also** been involved in the South Park block project, another example of inter-agency cooperation and community policing that cleaned up a criminal hotspot a few months ago. The Police, ONI, and staff from Water, Cable and Franchise, and Parks all worked together to make that area safer for residents. It’s important to take action and keep monitoring the situation, said Garcia. “If police take ground and then walk away, the criminals take over again.”

Garcia is also working on a pilot multifamily housing project called Enhanced Safety Properties (ESP) with Roseanne Lee and local landlords in Southeast Portland to make multifamily apartments safer and crime free. Large apartment complexes are often chronic police problems with drug dealing, domestic violence, vandalism, etc.

**This project evaluates** building design principals—good lighting, secure windows—trains landlords on how to screen tenants, and sets up Neighborhood Watch programs to help tenants socialize and get to know their neighbors. After it meets a set of criteria, a property will then be ESP certified with a certification logo installed in the building.

If it works well, said Garcia, the program will go citywide and be applied to other types of properties as well including hotels, storage buildings, and other rental properties.

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**Congratulations Eric and Martha!**

It’s been a season of newborn babies here at ONI.

Eric and Martha King celebrated the holidays and greeted the New Year with new son Owen, born Sunday, November 20 at about 1 p.m. He weighed in at eight pounds, eight ounces.
Welcome new Disability Coordinator Nickole Cheron

By Nell Wagenaar

Nickole Cheron, ONI’s new Disability Coordinator, just barely settled in her cubicle at the ONI downtown office, has begun developing a work plan to assess where Portland is and where it still needs to go in terms of meeting the needs of its disabled population.

She’ll be working part-time and is eager to connect citizens and governance in an ongoing effort to promote the quality of civic engagement for the disabled community. The first step, she says, is getting out into the community and seeking input.

Nickole grew up in Connecticut and New York City and was persuaded by a friend to move to Portland because access for the disabled community was much better here. A wheelchair user herself, she says Portland is levels above the East Coast, especially in providing the mobility-impaired access to public transportation. Areas that still need work are in housing, transportation services for the blind, and sidewalk access (curb cuts) on the East side.

Nickole attended PSU and received Master’s degrees in both conflict resolution and public administration. She has worked as a diversity trainer and facilitator for the past three years.

She’s no stranger to City Hall. She served under Mayor Katz for a year, working on community issues around policing and homelessness. She is an active community volunteer with the Portland Art Museum, the Race for the Cure, Holiday Park Plaza, Oregon United, Family Court mediation, and many others.

Travis Koopman takes on additional crime prevention duties

Travis Koopman was promoted to senior administrative specialist recently and will be expanding his crime prevention duties. He is serving as Treatment Coordinator for the ACCESS Street Intervention Program and provides crime prevention support to ONI staff.

He also provides program evaluation services to the ACCESS Program and Crime Prevention Center and is coordinating the upcoming Crime Prevention Internship partnership with Portland State University.

In addition, he is now processing Liquor Licenses for the city and sends out public notifications. He was previously admin support for the ACCESS Program working 15 hours per week. Now he works 30 hours per week.
Koopman, worked as the Police Intern to Mayor Vera Katz for nine months before joining the ACCESS program and helping develop its data management and analysis.

Before coming to Portland to attain a MS in Criminology and Criminal Justice at Portland State, Travis received his BA from the University of Rochester in both Economics and Political Science. During college he worked in London, England at the House of Commons as the executive assistant to a Member of Parliament. His goal is to work in the criminal justice arena. He’s applied to OHSU to get a Masters degree in public health because he wants to combine public health and public safety in his career plans. For fun, he likes to scuba dive, wake board and snow board.

Havilah Ferschweiler on board as North Portland crime stopper

Havilah Ferschweiler, the new North Portland Crime Prevention Coordinator, has extensive experience in conducting outreach, training, and event planning to address neighborhood livability and crime prevention issues as a Weed and Seed Site Coordinator for the Lents/Brentwood-Darlington neighborhoods and as Community Organizer for Southeast Uplift. Her first day was Jan. 3rd and she spent her first few days downtown and at the I&R unit for some basic orientation. She will then be working with North Portland Neighborhood Services and the following neighborhoods: St. Johns, Cathedral Park, Linton, Portsmouth, Kenton, Arbor Lodge, University Park and Overlook. Crime Prevention Program Administrators offer problem solving, community organizing, and education on issues of crime and public safety. In doing so, they work closely with community members, public safety activists, the police, neighborhood associations, city bureaus, businesses, state agencies, school districts, and local service providers. Portland Police Bureau-North Precinct, North Portland Neighborhood Coalition Office, members of the Kenton Neighborhood Association, and the North Portland Youth and Family Center all helped participate in the interview process.

Havilah is a Portland native who grew up in several different neighborhoods including Lents, Centennial and Sunnyside and attended both Lincoln and Cleveland High Schools. She later graduated from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and returned home to Oregon two years later after working as a Grassroots Political Organizer for the Nevada State Education Association.
She has extensive experience in conducting outreach, training, and event planning to address neighborhood livability and crime prevention issues. She enjoys working with neighbors and helping build community bonds and relationships. She has a passion for community organizing and involvement and is looking forward to meeting with all the neighborhood activists that make North Portland such a dynamic community.

**OSD nabs Lauren Norris—ONI’s favorite environmentalist**

*By J. Lauren Norris*

After 10 years at the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, I am sad to announce that I will be leaving within the next two months. I joined ONI in 1996, when Diane Linn hired me into a “temporary” position for the Downspout Disconnection Program. I have always felt great about working for the office that builds community participation. Six commissioners in charge, five Directors, 160 AmeriCorps Volunteers, 50 downspout outreach staff, 5500 diverse community volunteers and more than One Billion gallons of water later, I still love this job and will miss you all greatly. I have been offered a new position at the Office of Sustainable Development as the Master Recycling Program Coordinator. It is an exciting new opportunity for me that I just couldn’t pass up. (You can all visit me at the EcoTrust Building!)

The Downspout Disconnection Program still has flow removal goals and BES and ONI are committed to continue the partnership to increase community partnership and outreach for the program. Thank you everyone for being so wonderful to work with. It has been truly an honor to be a part of this team! I have grown in ways I could never have imagined. As I will still be working with the City, of course, I will continue to have contact with community activists, but just in a different capacity.

**Nicole joins Revenue Bureau**

Nicole Murphy-Garcia leaves ONI after two years of service as an I&R specialist to join the Revenue Bureau. Her last day was Friday after a goodbye party Thursday replete with cake and lasagna.

“It has been a wonderful experience working here, and I have learned so much. I will miss the lively chatter and discussions of this office, as well as the unique personalities of all the people I have had the opportunity to work with. My new office will be at the Columbia Building, which is not too far away so I encourage everyone to stop by and say hello. Happy trails and good luck to everyone in their endeavors!”

Nicole Murphy-Garcia
Unions honored

A group of Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 290 apprentices put together this iron sculpture, left, which is hooked up to an ice machine to frost parts of the metal frame. At right Local 189 member Anna DiBenedetto, ONI I&R specialist, goes postal and tries on a hat from the letter-carriers, a long-time public service union.

PHOTOS BY ANNA DIBENEDETTO

City Hall First Thursday hosts local union art works

By Anna DiBenedetto

Nearly 200 folks attended the First Thursday festivities this month at City Hall honoring the contributions, art and history of our local labor unions. Represented were unions from diverse fields such as: Public Employees, Fire and Police, Trades, Longshoremen, Child Care Providers, and Carpenters.

“General Strike” strikes up some tunes from the labor movement.
The jointly sponsored event Feb. 2 demonstrated the contagion of Sam Adams’ attempts to spice up City Hall. He started the event 13 months ago. This was the first time the Mayor and all of the commissioners participated, this time to celebrate the history and art of our labor community.

City Hall was abuzz with all the attendees there to appreciate the artwork from Darrell Gossett from AFSCME/Local 189—OMF; Katie Risseeuw from ILWU5/Longshore; Rob Wheaton Field Representative with IBEW/Local 483; Ameera Saahir with a new Local: 'Child Care Providers Together'; Staci Zinnel with IBEW/Local 483 Apprentice Low Voltage Program; and Kendra Binney spouse of Parks Bureau Employee.

Music was provided by “General Strike” and “The Northern Alliance Drum Line,” a youth percussion ensemble, which turned out to be the biggest hit of the evening. Their music resonated throughout City Hall drawing everyone out of Commissioners’ offices to listen. The band General Strike donated their portion of payment for the evening to the Drum Line band so that they might afford to go to National competition in Las Vegas next month.

Wine, beer and cheese appetizers were provided by Oregon AFSCME Council 75. Paintings, photographs, mixed media sculptures, and even some paintings by a local elephant from the Oregon Zoo were on display! Each of the elected officials had their offices open to the public to peruse the art, eat and drink, as well as mingle with their constituents. First Thursday is at City Hall from 5-7 pm every first Thursday of the month.

**Neighborhood Livability - Crime Prevention**

**Network Committee to look at housing needs for youth**

*By Tom Peavey*

The North Portland Youth Network Committee is tasked with creating a framework of service providers to address the needs of youth connected with the New Columbia, Iris Court and other Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) administered housing locations in the greater Portland area. The committee currently is comprised of representatives from HAP, ONI, Portland Public Schools, Portland Parks and Recreation and others. Thus far, there have been some interesting developments regarding partnerships with youth service providers involving University Park and the New Columbia. The committee is looking for new members to expand resources to meet existing and future community needs.

The New Columbia, within the Roosevelt High School Cluster boundary is currently at 35 per cent occupancy with 320 school age children on site. By December 2006, there will be an estimated 2000 children (ages 1 to 18) on site. A large increase in school age children will occur in April 2006.

Iris Court, within the Jefferson High School Cluster boundary, is currently in the planning stages for new development, offering new and additional housing opportunities. During the construction phase 32 families with school age children will be relocated, some to the New Columbia. There is definitely a need for all youth service providers, interested government and private sponsors to meet in this forum to consider adequate service provision to Portland’s increasing youth service needs. Come and be a part of this proactive process. For additional information please contact: HAP School Stability and Youth Specialist Vikki Allen (503)240-5600 extension 305 or Vikkia@hapdx.org
City-wide Landlord Forum set for Feb. 23

Do you own or manage rental property in the City of Portland? Do you sometimes wish you had a peer group to problem-solve with? Would you like to meet and hear from informative speakers on topics that can assist you in keeping your rental property safe & livable?

If so, you are invited to come to the next quarterly City-wide Landlord Forum Thursday, Feb. 23 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. at the East Precinct Community Room, 737 SE 106th Ave.

The Topic: Neighborhood-Based District Attorney & Neighborhood Response Team -- Who they are & what they do! We will also have time on the agenda for brainstorming, problem solving and information sharing. For further information, contact Rosanne Lee, Crime Prevention Coordinator at (503) 823-0540 or email at rosanne.lee@ci.portland.or.us.

Hillsdale discusses formation of Neighborhood Watch

Northwest Crime Prevention reports that in late November Central Precinct Neighborhood Response Team Officer Sue Abrahamson and ONI CP Coordinator William Warren met with nearly 40 residents in the Hillside Neighborhood Association to discuss the formation of a Neighborhood Watch. A particular three to four block section of this Association is experiencing a rise in breaking and entering of residences and car prowls.

Pearl, Goose Hollow, Arlington Heights, and the Northwest District Association residents received a second education outreach to stem car prowl activity in their neighborhoods during the second weekend of December.

In late December, they conducted an orientation to neighborhood watch for the Pear’s Station Place Tower residents and a simple street safety education for residents of Pearl Court.

Graffiti program seeks help from garbage haulers

By Marcia Dennis

Last November, I sent a letter to garbage haulers requesting their cooperation and participation in graffiti abatement. Using a list provided by Judy Crockett in the Office of Sustainable Development, I addressed it to the companies that make up 80% of the dumpster/container suppliers in the city. The result is an agreement with two companies (so far) to provide matching spray paint for their dumpsters that will be used by YEI and specific volunteers to cover graffiti on dumpsters.

If a dumpster-container is tagged more than 50%, we will document the location and report it to the company for them to clean/repaint. The participating companies, thus far, are Waste Management (owns more than 7000 dumpsters...
in Portland) and Arrow. We hope to involve the remainder in the near future. Thanks to Ted Okrasinski for suggesting this approach to graffiti removal on dumpsters. The photos below represent the “report for company repair” (L) and YEI or volunteer paint-out®

The Q-Star Flash Cam has been placed on a building in the “Graffiti Free Zone”. We are building a list of likely candidates for placement of the camera. If you know of a building or area that is being heavily vandalized by graffiti, please send me the address so I can get permission from the owner.

A Spirit of Portland 2005 Awards was given to the Oregon Council for Hispanic Advancement/Oregon Leadership Institute Mentor Program for their work on two community graffiti cleanups last spring. The students were very excited to receive the award, and now hope to work on a mural project for spring. We will look into doing a mural at Villa de Clara Vista, a frequent target of gang graffiti and home to many of the students involved in the OLI program.

A problem that has cropped up is the work of the “gray paint guerrilla” or “eastside marauder”. This person is obliterating graffiti on private and public property by applying blotches of (mostly) grey paint on top of graffiti vandalism. This is reminiscent of the “silver donut guy” of a few years ago. The problem is this: By wiping out the graffiti we can’t tell what it said with a photo, and therefore, cannot ask for restitution for particular tags when the vandal is arrested. Also, we presume this person does not have owners’ permission, either – so, he/she is a vandal, too! If anyone has information about this, please contact NE Precinct Neighborhood Response Team by calling 503-823-5700 OR call me at 503-823-5860.

The amendment to the graffiti removal grant and ordinance has been submitted for a portion of the additional money being restored to the budget. This money was already budgeted for FY” 2005-2006. It was given a first reading at City Council on Dec. 21, 2005. Goodbye Graffiti’s amendment was be finalized and sent to the Mayor’s office January 6th. The additional $80,000 has been divided up with $65K being added to YEI’s grant, and $15K going to Goodbye Graffiti for the specific purpose of providing anti-graffiti coatings to porous surfaces on ‘heritage’ properties.

Plans for the New Year include setting up a meeting with Asian community leaders to help improve communication with owners of small businesses (mostly small markets and restaurants) who have become chronic victims of graffiti vandalism. Two colleagues from the License Bureau have offered their assistance and I will work with them to make the appropriate contacts and schedule the meeting.

This is only a first step, as I am aware that communications issues are present in other minority-owned business communities regarding City Code and their responsibility for reporting and removing graffiti.
Vicki Hersen named new Elders in Action director
Vicki Hersen is the new Executive Director of Elders in Action and may be contacted at 503 823-5373 or vicki@eldersaction.org

Becky Wehrli resigned on January 20, 2006 to pursue a career in the long-term care insurance field. If you need to contact her personally she may be reached at 503 758-5725 or info@beckyltc.com

Her New Year’s resolution is to simplify & de-clutter…
“I think my main resolution is to simplify my life. Seriously de-clutter my environment at home and at work. To take better care of myself physically and mentally. And find time to explore my creative side.”
—Roseanne Lee

Information and Referral

Mayor Convenes Emergency Management Committee
By John Dutt

In an effort to improve the city’s preparedness for disasters that could some day take place in our fair city, the Mayor has convened a committee comprised of representatives from each city bureau to work on individual and system planning for catastrophic events.

Former ONI Director Jimmy Brown selected me to be ONI’s primary representative on this committee with Eric King serving as a backup committee member. The committee is scheduled to hold it’s first meeting on Wednesday January 11th in City Hall. The first order of business for the EMC bureau representatives will be to review and complete a Bureau Plan Checklist Template provided to us by the Portland Office of Emergency Management. This will help us to create a status report of ONI’s plans for dealing with emergencies. The ONI managers met briefly to review this template and we have concluded that there is much work to be done bureau-wide to ensure we have in place sufficient plans for handling emergency situations as well as disaster response. Each department manager will be compiling information regarding their individual department and offices information and then we will pull together a managers meeting to figure out our “to do” list. The ONI Safety Committee will be a valuable resource for the bureau in working out these emergency plans as well.

Two ONI staffers trained to help increase city cultural competency

I&R staffer Nell Wagenaar and Crime Prevention Coordinator Galina Grigoryan are among a group of 29 city employees participating in a citywide program to increase cultural competency of city employees. They took part in an intensive 40-hour training in January and were trained to be trainers in the Culturally Competent Management Certificate Training Program.

The Council and the Bureau Improvement Project #5 Committee had identified increasing cultural competency of managers and employees as an important objective. The pilot program is being offered by HR’s Diversity Development/Affirmative Action Office, which is working with the Executive Leadership Institute of Portland State University. The training began last month and will continue until April in this first round. Then trainers will then provide a week of their time each fiscal year to conduct the trainings.
SEUL teams up to film Project Homeless event
By Kristin Wiener

Southeast Uplift teamed up with Portland Community Media to film the first Portland Project Homeless Connect event Jan. 17 at the Memorial Coliseum. We conducted interviews with homeless members of the community, volunteers and public officials. Many of these interviews will be incorporated into a larger documentary film that seeks to promote greater public awareness about homelessness in Portland.

This documentary is a part of the PATHway Project (Public Awareness Transforming Homelessness), a program of Southeast Uplift that has been developed in an effort to educate and inform our community about the realities and complexities of homelessness. Throughout the course of the year, staff and community volunteers will be developing a dynamic media communications campaign that will frame and personalize the stories of homelessness and efforts to eradicate homelessness in our community. We aim to build the political will of the community to become engaged in working toward solutions to end homelessness.

We are beginning to recruit members for our documentary video production crew. For more information on the PATHway project or the video production crew, please contact Kristen at 503-232-0010, Kristen@southeastuplift.org or visit http://www.pathwaypdx.org.

Hundreds of volunteers and community groups launched the project to connect Portland’s 2,300 homeless with much-needed medical, dental, legal, addiction, and housing-counseling services. Project Homeless Connect began a year ago in San Francisco and now thousands of volunteers engage six times a year to help thousands of homeless clients achieve self-sufficiency. That city has seen a dramatic drop in the number of homeless thanks to the human connections made and the new community focus on finding resources for housing.

Portland and Multnomah County are working together on a plan to end homelessness in the metro area by 2015, through the implementation of Home Again, A 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. For more information, visit: www.portlandhomelessconnect.com
To sign up to volunteer, visit: www.portlandhomelessconnect.com/volunteer.html

SEUL’s Neighborhood Networking starts with a bang

Southeast Uplift’s Neighborhood Networking series started with a bang. On Jan. 30, the first monthly forum entitled “Communications: The Lifeblood of a Neighborhood” brought more than 20 people from eight different neighborhoods together to discuss their successes and challenges creating effective websites and newsletters for their neighborhoods. Angela Southwick, the AmeriCorps Neighborhood Services Coordinator at SEUL, organized and facilitated this roundtable discussion. The forum and AmeriCorps post were newly developed this year because many neighborhood leaders expressed a desire to network across neighborhood boundaries.

The next monthly forum: “Adding the Shoes to a Shoestring Budget, Fundraising and Grant Writing” will be held Monday Feb. 27. Other monthly topics not yet scheduled include:

- Neighborhood Power! Advocating for change at City Hall
• Have you cake and eat it too: Enjoy running an effective Neighborhood
• Creating livable, safe neighborhoods: My role in land use and transportation planning
• Discover Diversity: What does my neighborhood really want?
• Get involved…and stay there? Promoting neighborhood participation

For more information contact Angela at angela@southeastuplift.org or 503-232-0010 x 315.

**SWNI hires Watershed Education Coordinator**

Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. (SWNI) is pleased to announce that Jennifer Seamans Blatner has been hired as the Watershed Education Coordinator for the Southwest Watershed Resource Center (SWRC). SWRC is located in the Southwest Community Center building on the corner of SW 45th and Vermont and primarily serves the Fanno and Tryon Creek watersheds. The part-time position is funded through a contract with the Bureau of Environmental Services.

The importance of watershed issues first grabbed Jen’s attention as an AmeriCorps member of the Watershed Restoration Field Team based at Trout Lake, WA, eight years ago. She had previously developed an interest in community and neighborhood organizing in Kalamazoo and Detroit, MI, which she continues now in her volunteer role as co-chair for the Marshall Park Neighborhood Association.

As a former staff member with Friends of Tryon Creek State Park, Jen led natural history walks, school field trip programs, and youth summer camps. Later, Jen received her Masters of Science Teaching at Portland State University (PSU) while serving as a teaching assistant in the Center for Science Education. She has written grant proposals and worked to create and sustain community partnerships for programs at Friends of Tryon Creek State Park, PSU, and Girl Scouts-Columbia River Council.

Jen will be staffing the Watershed Resource Center part-time. Primary functions include supporting the restoration and outreach work of citizen groups in the Fanno Creek and Tryon Creek watersheds, conducting free educational programs, and providing residents with information on current watershed issues and resources for watershed-friendly practices at home. Contact her by phone at 503-823-2862 or by email at: watershedcenter@spiritone.com.

**Hillsdale sets meeting to being planning for urban plaza**

Hillsdale Neighborhood Association has recently been awarded a grant by the Alliance of Portland Neighborhood Business Associations and the Portland Development Commission to develop a master plan for an urban plaza located within the town center. We will be examining potential uses for the plaza as well as locations. We will be holding a kick-off meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 21 from 6 - 7:45 pm, Hillsdale Library meeting room.
Anyone interested in discussing the future of a Hillsdale Plaza is invited to this event. We will discuss the project history and timeline and provide an opportunity for the community to brainstorm a wish list of potential uses. In addition, we would like to form a citizens’ advisory committee to help with the planning process. We anticipate the project to be completed by June. If interested in participating on this committee should attend this meeting or contact Hillsdale board member Meghan MacKenzie, meghanmackenzie@comcast.net or, 503-381-9011, or chair Don Baack, 503-246-2088, baack@pacifier.com for information.

North Portland Neighborhood Services hosts art exhibits

The Art on the Peninsula group held an exhibit of One Mile West, a group show of sculpture constructed using locally salvaged materials, and the Transformed Chairs, a group show of discarded chairs transformed into unique art forms Saturday Jan. 21 at Cathedral Park Place under the east end of the St. Johns Bridge. Both exhibits were a part of Art on the Peninsula’s St. Johns Window Project from July 2005. For information about the Sculpture show contact JD Perkin at 503-289-5421 or for information about the Chair Show contact Mary Jaron Kelley at mkelley@ci.portland.or.us

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Do you know your city?

Apparently December’s question was a tough one. Only one correct answer to the month’s trivia question. Kristen Erbes, from the City’s Ombudsman Office, was the only one to correctly name the Rose City Golf Course as the site that once paid host to such events as greyhound racing, flying exhibitions and a spectacle sponsored by the American Legion featuring a head-on collision between two locomotives in the early 1900s.

For this months question we’ll go with a little better-known piece of Portland history but continue on in the neighborhood theme…

In what neighborhood would you have once found the world’s largest log cabin until it burnt to the ground in 1964?

The first person to correctly respond by emailing the Trivia Guru at jdutt@ci.portland.or.us will be crowned our monthly winner. At the end of the year we will have a final showdown of our monthly winners to determine the grand prizewinner and the ONI Portland Trivia champ.

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The Other Side of the Fence

The Other side of the Fence is a monthly newsletter published by the City of Portland’s Office of Neighborhood Involvement. If you have questions or story ideas, please contact Nell Wagenaar, editor, at 503-823-2569 or email nwagenaar@ci.portland.or.us