



# The Other Side of the Fence

E-News from ONI ~ June 2006

Enhancing the quality of neighborhoods through community participation

**You know summer is really here** when folks start plans for the next National Night Out in Portland. Last year neighbors at NE Dunkley and 31<sup>st</sup> got together for a potluck.



*Register your party now for Aug. 1 citywide celebration*

## **National Night Out 2006 preparations begin**

By Nell Wagenaar

Never underestimate the power of the potluck. It works especially well the first Tuesday in August when it brings neighbors together throughout the nation and here in Portland to exchange pleasantries, gossip and focus on public safety issues in their neighborhoods.

The concept started in Boston 22 years ago when folks were urged to turn on their porch lights the first Tuesday in August to bring crime prevention awareness to neighborhoods. So said William Warren, Special Events Coordinator for Crime Prevention who is spearheading the organizing effort again this year. Registration for neighborhood parties was opened today and will close July 20.

ONI's Crime Prevention Program has primary responsibility for planning the event but gets help from many city bureaus including Police, Fire, Parks, Transportation, BES and BDS.

This year's Planning Committee, which consists of city agency representatives, community members and business partners including utilities, met June 1 to start organizing. Committee members discussed the registration process, banners, permits and noise variances, promotions and premiums, party planning packets, and are gearing up to handle the hundreds of other details that go into the annual city-wide public safety celebration.

The major sponsor again this year is Applebee's Restaurants, which will provide financial support. KINK and its family of radio stations will help out with publicity.

### **Close to 15,000 expected to participate**

In Portland, there typically are about 160 parties throughout the neighborhood—in the streets, on lawns and in nearby parks—with close to 15,000 people participating. Since some prefer to have their NNO party on a weekend, ONI registers parties happening from one week before to one week after the official date of the first Tuesday. Most of the parties will happen on August 1st, but about 20% will happen on a different date within that two-week time frame.



### **Bringing you the party**

The Crime Prevention team, front row (l-r): Celeste Carey, William Warner, Stephanie Reynolds, Walter Garcia, and backrow: Roseanne Lee, Katherine Anderson, Galina Grigoryan, Teri Poppino, and Tom Peavey. Not shown are Havilah Ferschweiler, and admin support, Travis Koopman and Nell Wagenaar.

“The parties are a place for neighbors to connect with each other and with local public safety officials to promote a safe and peaceful community,” said Stephanie Reynolds, interim Crime Prevention Manager.

Neighborhood parties can be small and intimate with a handful of neighbors getting together to share food. Or they can be large with musical entertainment, games and events for the kids. The Fernhill park gathering last year drew nearly 400 folks. Kids like the parties because many of them are visited by Police Officers and Fire Fighters with their flashy trucks and equipment .

## New this year

New this year is a streamlined process for getting noise variances. Noise variances are necessary for amplified sound whether band, bullhorn or other loud sounds. NNO parties will be able to share one noise variance and not have to get individual variances for individual parties. There's no charge for the variance.

The Parks Bureau has again agreed allow NNO parties in city parks without charging reservation fees. Requests for street closures will continue to go through neighborhood coalition offices and will also be free of charge.



Lawn signs, new last year and locating party sites were a big hit at some of the parties. They will be loaned out again this year with requests they be returned.

Last year ONI sent the popular pre-party planning packets to all registered party organizers to answer many questions about how to throw an NNO event. Packets will again be sent out after they are updated for this year. Lawn signs locating party sites will also be loaned out again with requests that they be returned after the party.

So, start planning your party today.

You can register on the NNO portion of the ONI website, through your crime prevention person, or by calling Nell Wagenaar at 823-4064. If you want to go on the lists for police and fire visits, get giveaways, etc., you need to register your party.

Have fun! Be safe! For more details:

[Click here for National Night Out information](#)

## A fond farewell to the Crime Prevention interns

Aaron Hodges, Michael Boyer and Ben Mitchell attend their last staff meeting with Crime Prevention staff at the East office last week.

PHOTO BY CELESTE CAREY



## Interns rose to the challenge with Ready. Safe. Go. event

by Travis Koopman

Crime Prevention Interns Aaron Hodges, Michael Boyer, and Ben Mitchell are now finishing their internships with ONI. All three interns described their experiences as being very positive.

Interns were able to participate and provide support for a variety of Crime Prevention and Liquor Licensing projects. Michael and Aaron worked out of Southeast Uplift with Galina Grigoryan for the first part of their internships, then moved out to North Portland to help with some of Havilah Ferschweiler’s projects. Michael Boyer aided Liquor Licensing during his internship as well as working on various projects with Walter Garcia and William Warren.

Ready. Safe. Go. would not have run as smoothly without the incredible help from the three interns. Crime Prevention Staff would have been scrambling all day trying to manage everything from setting up tables and lunch, picking up evaluations, and moving boxes. The three interns stepped up and provided staff support that allowed trainers and event organizers Stephanie Reynolds and William Warren to better focus their efforts throughout the day. Aaron Hodges commented that he thought the Crime Prevention Internship was uniquely valuable to him. No other internships provide the opportunity to meet so many people and gain experience in so many communities an on such a wide range of different projects. Aaron enjoyed meeting staff from other agencies and getting a sense of what those types of jobs entail. He was particularly impressed with the work that Neighborhood Response Team Officers do, and how community policing is actually carried out. Michael Boyer did a little bit of everything for everyone. Michael and Aaron both thought their experiences were great because of their opportunity to work an a variety of different projects throughout their three months with ONI. Michael learned how Portland’s neighborhood system works and about all of the different jobs it takes to make it work. He caught on quickly when it

‘Working at ONI, you get the feeling of being connected to something bigger than yourself; something that helps to make this city so great.’

--Michael Bover

came to staffing the Liquor License program. He became very familiar with processing applications from start to finish and problem-solving difficult ones. Michael went above and beyond his call of duty for Ready. Safe. Go. He showed up at the event at 6:30am and setup almost everything before most people showed up.

Overall the interns, set a terrific example for the type of individuals ONI Crime Prevention seeks in an intern. The interns rose to many challenges during their time with ONI and their assistance was invaluable. We would not have been able to accomplish so much without you. Thank you Aaron, Michael, and Ben! from the entire ONI Crime Prevention staff.

## Information and Referral



**Anna Dibenedetto demonstrates the new shortcut to the breakroom for staff at the east part of the ONI office complex.**

## Safety Committee recommendation opens up cubicle for safer office traffic flow

By John Dutt

One of the result of the ONI Safety Committee recommendations happened over the weekend last week when the cubicle reconfiguration in the I&R unit was completed. It took a few days for staff to adjust and get all the phones back on line but all ONI staff can now use the new short cut to get to the breakroom faster and without walking by the front entrance in case of emergencies.

Besides recommending physical changes, the Safety Committee is also organizing trainings.

Kathy Saunders of the Safety Committee has been working with Barbara Agoun from the Parks Bureau to get our bureau involved in some of the “Verbal Judo” trainings that the Parks bureau has done for its staff. She was successful in putting together a training to take place June 22<sup>nd</sup> at the Community Music Center in SE Portland. Let a member of the Safety Committee know if you are interested in this training.

Progress on implementing the CPTED recommendations at City Hall have been slow due to difficulty in getting a contractor install a couple of gates at the front of the office to create better separation of space between public and staff areas. We’re still working with BGS and are now working with our third contractor. The previous two contractors did not work out. The BGS staff finally finished our cubicle reconfiguration to provide access between the front and back parts of our office. Next, we’re also hoping to get the back fire door by Nell’s cubicle equipped with an emergency release to make this an escape route in the event of an emergency.

The Safety Committee has also begun prioritizing other needs identified through the safety survey. We feel that the highest priority is around better equipping staff on field safety with hostile individuals. Another high priority is to begin working on establishing better worksite safety plans for all of our worksites and have begun the research process.

## New I&R team settling in and progressing nicely

The new team members are progressing nicely in their training and already making tremendous contributions to handling their share of the call load. For the month of May we ended up answering 12,290 calls, with 89.53% answered under 25 seconds. The new phone system is working well though we are stilling waiting on telecomm to work out a few final kinks with regards to our connectivity with the county phone system. Laura just recently completed a project of updating our brochure inventory and cataloging it. We have cleaned out our inventory and now have the latest of the city's offerings displayed at the front display rack.

### Neighborhood Livability



## Kids clean up the mess

Top left: High school students in the Kerns-Buckman neighborhood help wipe out graffiti along E Burnside April 22. At top right: OCHA-OLI Cleanup in Montavilla – a chronically tagged business is painted over by Marshall and Binnsmead students May 30. At right: OCHA-OLI students work on a Cully fence, also a chronically gang-tagged property, May 31.

PHOTOS BY MARCIA DENNIS



## Students pitch in to improve city neighborhoods

By Marcia Dennis

The Oregon Council for Hispanic Advancement-Oregon Leadership Institute (OCHA-OLI) Mentor Program held their 2<sup>nd</sup> annual graffiti wipe-out on May 30 and 31 with a third event planned for June 5. The May 30 event in the Montavilla neighborhood featured the mentors from Marshall High and their Binnsmead Middle School 'mentees'. They cleaned up buildings

and fences around NE 82<sup>nd</sup> and Glisan, with lots of help and support from Youth Employment Institute crew leaders and crews. This event was a huge media event as Channels 2, 6, and 8 were all there, as well as reporters from KEX and KXL radio, AND the Oregonian!

At the May 31<sup>st</sup> event, held in the Cully Neighborhood with student mentors from Madison High and middle schoolers from Gilbert Heights resulted in two large fences, one apartment building, and many “right of way” properties being cleaned of graffiti. Thanks go to Hacienda property manager Tanya Stagray, Officer Jim Quackenbush from NE NRT, and again, to Carey, Bert, Brandon and the crews from YEI, for all their help and support.

On Monday, June 5, the Marshall mentors and students from Lane Middle School will remove graffiti from properties in and around Brentwood-Darlington and Foster-Powell neighborhoods.



## Mission #2: Help my granddaughter speak French with natives

On a personal note, I went to France April 23-May 5. This was a very special trip, as my travel-mates were my daughter, Shelley and her daughter, 7-year-old Hannah Russell.

We spent a week in Normandy, visiting the city of Rouen; the Normandy beach towns of Sotteville sur Mer; Lyons; St. Valery; and the British D-Day landing sites, Sword and Juno Beaches.

A highlight was our visit to Giverny, home of the impressionist artist, Monet. The tulips were in bloom in the gardens and they were spectacular! Everywhere we went, Hannah charmed the people by speaking their language like a true French child. She’s finishing her second year at the Portland French School, and has become very fluent in the language after only kindergarten and first grade.

The second week we stayed in Vincennes, a suburb of Paris, and wore ourselves (mostly me) out, riding the Metro, climbing Montmartre and the Sacre Coeur – only 2,000 steps, I’m sure– (I thought I would drop dead!)



Top: Hannah, with British tank near Normandy at Sword Beach memorial – 62 years after D-Day. Bottom: View of Paris from main dome of Sacre Coeur...we thought we were walking down to the crypt, but instead got stuck walking up a thousand (it seemed like) steep, winding, one-way stairs. The view was worth it when I stopped gasping for breath. PHOTOS & TEXT BY MARCIA DENNIS.

Hannah's favorite things were: the Eiffel Tower at night, and the Louvre, where she loved Mona Lisa, Winged Victory, and "the girl with the broken arms" (Venus de Milo). She also became infatuated with Joan of Arc, and her story. Every cathedral we visited, we lit candles to St. Joan.

Except for the lousy exchange rate of the dollar v. Euro, and the horrendous amount of graffiti on all sorts of public and private property, it was a wonderful, memorable trip. My 'English son' Cameron, met us for dinner one night...he flew from the UK just for a two-hour visit...I hadn't seen him since 1994!

Next month I will report on new services that will be available in Graffiti Abatement for FYU 2006-2007.

## **Graffiti impact widespread, instills fear in neighborhoods**

Graffiti is a problem that goes well beyond the frustration of the property and business owners who have become victims.

"Graffiti has a dramatic effect on just about everything," said Officer Matt Miller, graffiti investigator for the Portland Police Bureau. "Ninety-nine percent of the victims I've talked to associate it with gangs, and they think their neighborhood is being taken over."

The City of Portland spends about \$250,000 a year in graffiti clean-up, "which isn't near enough to get it all," Miller said. Graffiti in an area scares away new businesses and homeowners, and also potential shoppers. "People think the area is gang infested and are intimidated," he said.

Marcia Dennis, the graffiti abatement coordinator at ONI, said the problem is wide-spread and costs Portlanders \$1 million a year in overall damages.

But according to the Police Bureau and Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI) statistics, only 15 percent of the graffiti reported in Portland is gang related. A surprising 82.5 percent of the reported cases are by graffiti "taggers," or those who do it to compete against other graffiti vandals.

Of the remaining graffiti cases reported to the City of Portland, 1.5 percent is hate/bias related, and the remaining 1 percent are personal messages or were politically driven. And who is doing the tagging? Miller said it's a common myth that taggers are generally youth. According to the statistics, most of the taggers are adults, ranging in age from 18 to 25 years old.



**Officer Matt Miller, the Portland Police Bureau's graffiti investigator, and Marcia Dennis, ONI's graffiti abatement coordinator.**



Since Miller has been investigating graffiti cases, there have been more than a thousand different tags identified, and 122 taggers arrested. "It's a daunting task to handle all these cases," said Miller. "I would speculate that for every one tagger we catch, there are 50 taggers out there just starting out. And once they have one under their belt and they don't get caught, they get more bold and they do it again and again."

And taggers do not discriminate. Marcia Dennis, the graffiti abatement coordinator at ONI, said the problem is wide-spread and costs Oregonians \$1 million a year in damages. "Graffiti vandals are equal opportunity criminals," said Dennis, who works closely with Miller to document all graffiti-related activity in Portland. "They will tag almost every surface. You name it, they'll tag it."



**Ted Okrasinski, left, a volunteer** graffiti fighter in his Northeast Portland neighborhood, agrees. "If I were to eradicate all the graffiti in my neighborhood, it would take me two weeks of full-time work," said Okrasinski, a retired financial advisor who began his fight against taggers four years ago.

ONI has a number of volunteers like Okrasinski who help rid communities of graffiti. But even with the help, it's still an ongoing process. "You have to keep after it," said Okrasinski. "If you don't, it sends a message to the taggers that the neighborhood has lost control and given up."

On the law enforcement end, the community is just as important as well. Miller said that with the Police Bureau's limited resources, it will require the community's continued support in catching the taggers. "Of those taggers caught in the act, most of arrests were because the community acted," he said.

## **For Portland residents who are victims of graffiti vandals, there's help**

ONI has a program geared toward helping property and business owners get rid of graffiti. In most cases, the removal is free of charge. With the help of the Youth Employment Institute, a nonprofit youth organization, and Goodbye Graffiti, all it takes is a signed permission form for the process to begin. Dennis supervises the program and works with crime prevention coordinators throughout Portland to deal with graffiti-related issues. "Without exception, property and business owners feel violated by graffiti vandalism," said Dennis. "They are afraid they're being targeted by a gang, and they are angry. They have somewhere to turn."

For more information about ONI's graffiti abatement program, graffiti removal, becoming a volunteer, or to report graffiti, go to the City of Portland's website at

<http://www.portlandonline.com/oni/index.cfm?c=32420>

To report someone in the act of tagging, call 9-1-1.

## Neighborhood Inspections

# New Meth Drug Lab Clean Up Program working

By Ed Marihart

As of May 1, there are 11 properties on the Meth Drug Lab List, a 50 percent decrease from last year when there were 23 properties on the list. Three of the current properties are less than six months old and eight are more than six months old. Of the eight properties that have been posted for Clean Up as a Public Nuisance because the State of Oregon designated them as unfit for use and they have not been cleaned up within six months, three are owner occupied and five are vacant.

The 50% decrease I believe is due to increased public awareness, publicity & enforcement & a move of Drug Labs to more rural areas. Both the State & our office declaring identified Meth Drug Labs that haven't been cleaned up in 6 months as a public nuisance also helped.

A majority of the new drug labs are located in East County, East of I-205. Clean ups are done by state certified contractors. We contract with them to do the actual clean-ups.

## Peggy Whelan hired as summer code specialist

I forgot to mention and announce to all that Peggy Whelan was hired as our Summer Code Specialist II inspector. She will be with us for five months, until mid-October. If you haven't met her yet please introduce yourself and welcome her to our team.

Peggy is a city employee & comes to us from Abandoned Autos where she is a Code Specialist I inspector. Once trained she will be doing nuisance coverage for several districts on the east side and filling in where needed. Welcome aboard Peggy, we are pleased to have you joining our team this summer.

## NIT Statistics for FY 05-06 (July-March) vs. FY 04-05 (July-March)

|                     |       |       |
|---------------------|-------|-------|
| # of Case Intakes   | 6330  | 6110  |
| Community Court     | 118   | 83    |
| Disabled Vehicles   | 697   | 798   |
| Housing             | 1156  | 1148  |
| Nuisance            | 4359  | 4081  |
| <br>                |       |       |
| # of Case Closures  | 6913  | 6517  |
| Community Court     | 82    | 84    |
| Disabled Vehicles   | 738   | 818   |
| Housing             | 1100  | 1134  |
| Nuisance            | 4993  | 4481  |
| <br>                |       |       |
| # of Inspections    | 15254 | 14165 |
| Disabled Vehicles   | 1401  | 1657  |
| Housing             | 3516  | 3321  |
| Nuisance            | 10337 | 9187  |
| <br>                |       |       |
| # of Mailed Notices | 9627  | 9285  |

|  |      |      |
|--|------|------|
| Community Court  | 116  | 83   |
| Disabled Vehicles  | 822  | 1077 |
| Housing  | 1677 | 1589 |
| Nuisance   | 7012 | 6536 |
| <br>   |      |      |
| # of Warrants Served                                     | 244  | 261  |
| Disabled Vehicles  | 33   | 58   |
| Housing  | 8    | 0    |
| Nuisance   | 203  | 203  |
| <br>   |      |      |
| # Cases Contractor Abated                                | 243  | 248  |
| <br>   |      |      |
| # of Waivers Requested                                   | 265  | 215  |
| # of Waivers Granted                                     | 235  | 196  |
| Active Permit  | 5    | 2    |
| Administrative   | 15   | 61   |
| Demo Delay   | 3    | 3    |
| Get Legal  | 4    | 7    |
| Low Income   | 15   | 11   |
| Multnomah County   | 3    | 2    |
| New Owner  | 79   | 48   |
| Non-Profit   | 1    | 0    |
| Paint & Roof   | 25   | 12   |
| Renovation   | 79   | 46   |
| Warehouse  | 4    | 6    |
| # of Waivers Denied                                      | 30   | 19   |
| <br>   |      |      |
| # Admin. Reviews held                                    | 882  | 1038 |
| <br>   |      |      |
| # Cases sent to Code Hearings                            | 17   | 3    |
| <br>   |      |      |
| Average # of days between case in date & case close date |      |      |
| Community Court  | 224  | 211  |
| Disabled Vehicles  | 32   | 35   |
| Housing  | 163  | 195  |
| Nuisance   | 34   | 34   |

The average number of days for nuisance and disabled vehicle cases reflects increased work load/case load with the same number of inspectors, 11. This is evidenced by more cases opened, more inspections, more notices mailed and more vulnerable population properties assisted. This reflects an overall positive impact on and an overall improvement of Neighborhood Livability.

The significant decrease in the average number of day for Housing cases reflects a more proactive working of the cases and case management for resolution by again the same number of Housing Inspectors, 7. This is evidenced by more inspections, more notices mailed, more Code Hearings and the increase in the number of waivers granted. This also reflects an overall improvement and a positive impact on Neighborhood Livability by providing safer housing and preventing the deterioration of existing housing.

**Regarding the NIT stats generally:** a 7.7% increase in inspections with the same Number of inspectors, thus we appear to be more productive. The number of waiver requests of Code Enforcement Fees has increased 23.2% & the number approved & granted has increased 19.9%.

The number of cases taken to the Code Hearings Office increased from 3 to 17, which resulted in several vacates which is in response to our new policy of being more aggressive of taking rental properties with Serious fire.life,safety issues to the Code Hearings Officer for additional sanctions to achieve compliance.

They are located throughout the City: one in NE; six in SE; and one in SW. Of the five vacant properties, four were residential and one is a commercial storage unit.

The eight properties' current status within the nuisance abatement process is as follows:

- two properties have been cleaned up and our office is waiting for the Certificate of Fitness notices from the State;
- three have hired Certified Contractors and have Work Plans filed with and are approved by the State;
- one property was served a Search Warrant and had a pre-bid meeting with six contractors; and
- one property has a bid awarded to a certified contractor to do the clean up and one property is at the Final Inspection stage and we are in the process of obtaining a Search Warrant from the Court in order to access the property to have a clean up done.

## CITYHALLBEATCITYHALLBEATCITYHALLBEAT

Vission Vessel seeks your input on what Portland means to you. At right Morgan Curry, project director with Public Media Works, is working with Mayor Tom Potter's *VisionPDX* in presenting this mobile civic engagement tool to give Portlanders the chance to help shape the future of the city. The display left Friday for other venues but will be back at City Hall in July. Other sponsors are Flexcar, Film Action Oregon and OBP Digital.





## Elders in Action

# Seniors launch community survey at Pioneer Square as part of visionPDX project

By Vicki Hersen

To launch their participation in the **visionPDX**, a group of 16 Elders in Action volunteers surveyed community members at large in Pioneer Courthouse Square for much of the afternoon on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

Elders in Action is representing “The Senior Vision” which is possible by a grant from the City of Portland. We are speaking to local seniors and asking what kind of city seniors wish Portland to be in the future.

This summer, Elders in Action will be collaborating with other community partners to maximize outreach and will involve their Elder Friendly certified businesses who will help by advertising and promoting the event. Through focus groups, Elders in Action hopes to connect with individuals who may be hard to reach and who would not normally participate in a public process. Leslie Foren, Director of Program Services, commented: “We will ask people some specific questions targeted for seniors to learn how ‘elder friendly’ they feel their community is.”

When the project is concluded, the results of the focus groups and surveys will be compiled in a “Senior Vision” report that will serve as a guideline for public policy in years ahead. Elders in Action is one of 29 grantees involved in the project and the only agency that will be targeting the sage advice of seniors. To obtain more information on the project, contact Leslie Foren at (503) 823-5269 or [leslie@eldersaction.org](mailto:leslie@eldersaction.org)



"Elders in Action is a powerful voice for Portland area seniors." Add your voice to ours! Keep current on issues facing Portland area seniors and Elders in Action's work in the community. Sign up for our free bi-monthly electronic newsletter at [www.eldersaction.org](http://www.eldersaction.org)

## Do you know your city?

*Congratulations to Diana Hinton from the Willamette River CSO Tunnel Projects on being our May winner. She correctly identified the photo last month as famous Piggot's Castle in the Southwest Hills of Portland.*

***For this month we'll go with another visual clue. This picture is of another prominent Portland institution. However, this building no longer stands but was once located on land between 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> and Belmont and Hawthorne in SE Portland between 1862 and 1883 and had a reputation as "the leading institution of it's kind in the U.S."***



The first person to correctly respond by emailing the Trivia Guru at [jdutt@ci.portland.or.us](mailto: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.



### **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 503-823-4064 or email [nwagenaar@ci.portland.or.us](mailto:nwagenaar@ci.portland.or.us)