

northwest

Dancer Synergizes Open Space

If all the world's a stage and we are merely players, then an empty house for sale may require a creative eye to fashion the void and show potential homeowners that this environment is livable.

Nik Murrow, 40, owner of Synergy Staging, uses his experience in dance and costume design to establish a sense of definition to rooms that would otherwise display a cold, uninhabited area. Raised in New Hampshire, he was trained in the styles of tap dance, hip-hop, ballroom and contemporary dance for Princess Cruise Line. He moved to Los Angeles in 2002 and became a project coordinator for Silvia Costumes.

"Defining space is important," said Murrow.

"Staging can highlight certain features of a room while minimizing its weaknesses. Drawing attention to a beautiful fireplace while placing a rug over tacky tiles can do a lot for an open house."

Operating out of his home in Oregon City, Murrow is an accredited staging professional and a member of the International Association of Home Staging Professionals.

Working mostly with Realtors, Murrow offers consultations for

occupied homes and bid proposals for vacant homes. Although the prices vary for proposals according to size, Murrow says staging is an investment, not an expense. "Staged homes are proven to sell faster and often for more money. Some homes I've staged have sold the first day they were put on

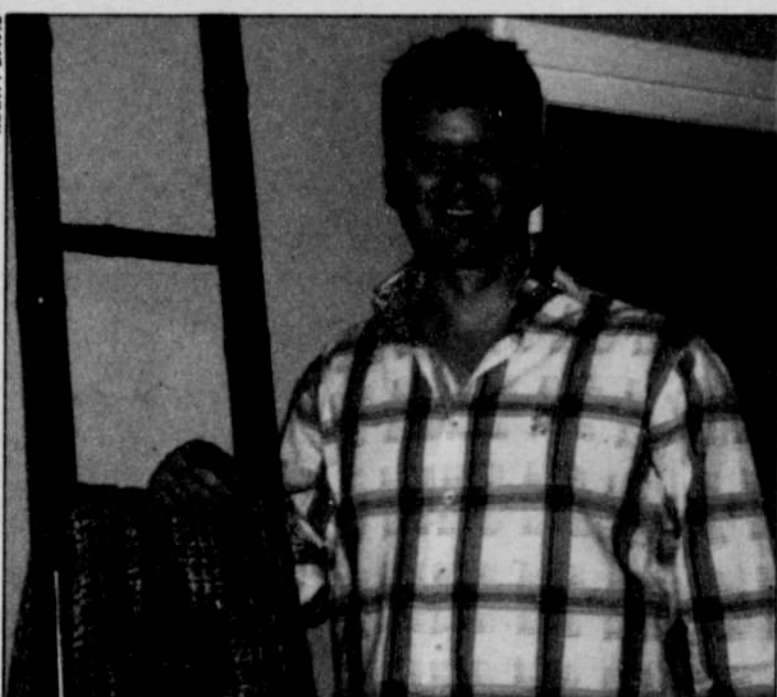
the market by showing buyers the potential of living in a beautiful space."

With an inventory of furniture, art, rugs, electronics and accessories, Murrow charges a labor fee for loading and unloading as well as a monthly rental fee. He uses his talents with spatial awareness, traffic flow and visual impacts to temporarily add a sense of purpose to sterile rooms.

Several houses and condominiums in Portland were staged by Synergy Staging.

"Variety is the spice of my life," said Murrow, "and I want a range of locations within the Portland area. I like meeting different people and having them allow me to add beauty to their lives for that short amount of time."

business watch



Nik Murrow turns dull into décor with a dancer's finesse.

For more information call 503-557-2244 or visit www.synergystaging.com.

New Java Joint Opens

"Eat, drink and be merry," owner Justine Hollinger replied when asked about a mission statement for Trippin' Billie's Coffee, Portland's newest lesbian-owned cafe. Opened Aug. 17, Trippin' Billie's has the potential to grow into a crowded hot spot in North Portland.

Hollinger and her partner took time and converted what used to be a Mexican restaurant at 3226 N. Lombard St. into Trippin' Billie's using friends as support and inspiration. "[The art] is done by a friend of mine; he's a metal sculptor. He did the lights, too," said Hollinger. She hopes to showcase local artists and musicians in a large room adjacent to the main sitting area, which is also designated as a space for groups to hold meetings.

The shop sports much more than just coffee and espresso drinks, including teas, soups, sandwiches and an array of vegan pastries. A license was obtained to serve beer and wine for events such as artist premiere nights. Trippin' Billie's also offers free Wi-Fi for tech-savvy customers and discounts will soon be available for seniors and students.

As a former Starbucks employee, Hollinger hopes to focus on developing interactive relationships with customers. "I think many chains have become so large as corporations that the coffee is mass-produced. All of the quality is gone, and although you can get the same thing anywhere and the service is quick, you don't leave with anything personal. When I walk into a place and get a good cup of coffee and interact with someone on a conversational basis, I leave with a feeling that's almost



Justine Hollinger owes the inspiration for her new cafe to her friends and a Dave Matthews lyric.

euphoric. The more you grow [as a corporation], the more you lose. That's why I left corporate coffee."

The cafe has eco-friendly features such as discounts for bringing one's own cup, plastic cup recycling, composting biodegradable waste, takeout containers made from recycled paper products and produce from local vendors and farmer's markets. It also offers certified organic coffee beans from Cafe Vida, a roaster based out of Seattle.

The shop is "a way to bring people together and create a community," Hollinger said. "The name is lyrics from a Dave Matthews song. In the urban dictionary, it means 'to seize the day.'"

For more information call 503-283-0205. **JO**

By MELANIE ALTARAS and JULIUS CALASICAS



HOLLYWOOD ANTIQUES
PORTLAND'S PREMIER ANTIQUE MALL
EST. 1982

FUN, FUNKY & FABULOUS!

SEE OUR EXPANDED MID-CENTURY SECTION

1969 NE 42nd Ave.

1 block north of Sandy • 2 blocks from Max

Phone: 503-288-1051

E-mail: hollywoodantique@comcast.net

www.hollywood-antiques.com

I'm straight...
when it comes to real estate.

Straight ... as in
Straight shooter
Straight forward
Straight to the point



Deborah Betron CRB, GRI
Principal Broker

For over 30 years, straight when it counts.



503.287.9370 x104
deborah@bridgetownrealty.com

When only the best will do in diamonds, rubies, sapphires, etc.

**BLOW OUT ON
GOLD CHAINS!**

Only \$18 per gram
Retail price \$32 per gram

**Jewelry by
Ponce**

Gay Owned & Operated Since 1983

3288 SE HAWTHORNE BLVD • CORNER 33RD AVE
PORTLAND OREGON 97214 • 503 233 2698 • TUES-SUN 11-7
WWW.JEWELRYBYPONCEPORTLAND.COM



NW Relocation

For a moving experience
that won't make you cry.

A Portland-based company for
your moves across the nation
and around the world.



Call us at 1-888-8NWRELO or
visit www.nwrelocation.us for a free estimate

