

Peace March, Rally

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the Vietnam Veterans Against the War 1971 testimony that exposed possible war crimes.

After the rally, costumed men on stilts and a band led demonstrators along the march route. As they walked down Southwest Park Avenue and Madison Street, General Strike, a small acoustic group, played *Down by the Riverside* on a guitar and mandolin.

Wilson High School Students for Social Justice walked by, one young woman wearing a bright poncho special for peace rallies. “We’re promoting the ideas of peace and allowing youth to have a voice,” said student Gabriel Erbs. “We have about 10 people here from the group but I expect there are quite a few

more Wilson students.”

Four blocks of flags staked into the South Park Block’s grass made up the Iraq Body Count exhibit. “There are 120,795 flags. Each represents five dead people -- white for dead Iraqis, red for dead Americans,” explained Rudy Dietz from the information table at the corner of Southwest Park Avenue and Market Street. People walking by stopped and stared at the evocative memorial. Many carried anti-war signs for the rally.

“A number of people have lost interest in what’s happening in Iraq,” Dietz said. “I think we’ve lost perspective of the sacrifice that American troops and Iraqis have made -- the number of people who have died, or been injured, and forever will be affected by this war.”



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Proposed Hillsdale Plaza dis-regards little league, softball programs

As a longtime supporter of Wilson High School and Southwest Portland youth athletics I am appalled at the proposal by the Hillsdale Neighborhood Association to develop property within the Wilson High School athletics complex as a “Hillsdale Plaza”, amphitheatre and trails hub.

The so-called “Rieke Triangle” and the adjacent ball field have long been eyed by community activists and organizers of the Hillsdale Farmers Market for their own purposes, disregarding the existing heavy use of that property by Wilson students and other area youth.

When the Hillsdale Neighborhood Association promotes development of this Portland Public School property, its representatives never mention these existing uses. So let’s be clear.

The ball field is the home field of the Wilson Women’s Softball program. The field is also heavily used by Southwest Portland Little League for both its boys and girls programs. The hillside above is used as an overflow area for other athletics programs, mostly soccer and lacrosse.

The entire property is integral to the future of these student and youth athletics programs. While the Hillsdale Farmers Market can be located elsewhere, and irrespective of dysfunction within the Hillsdale commercial area,

Letters to the Editor

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there is no more suitable place for student and youth athletics programs than within the Wilson High and Rieke Elementary school complex.

When my daughter, her teammates and their classmates walk to their athletic fields, when they run and play and laugh within the open space that our predecessors put into trust for them so many years ago, I feel good about living in Portland.

When I see and hear that influential commercial interests in Hillsdale seek to displace without recognition our voiceless children, I begin to question the values of our self-proclaimed civic leaders. I hope that others will stand with me and say “Hands off!” Portland Public Schools property.

Thomas Benke
Southwest Portland

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