

South Portland neighborhood wins Spirit of Portland Award



Members of the South Portland Neighborhood Association receive the Spirit of Portland Award for Neighborhood of the Year from City Commissioner Randy Leonard at City Hall, December 11. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)

By Lee Perlman
The Southwest Portland Post

Two groups and one individual from southwest Portland were among this year's Spirit of Portland Award winners. The awards, selected by a jury of community representatives from nominations submitted by the public, are awarded annually to groups and individuals who increase the city's livability. At the awards ceremony last month, Portland Mayor Tom Potter referred to the recipients as "heroes."

South Portland Neighborhood Association won this year's coveted Neighborhood of the Year award. They were officially honored for co-sponsoring five free concerts in Willamette Park in cooperation with the Bureau of Parks – the first southwest neighborhood to stage such an event – drawing more than 400 people per

concert, and for helping organize a new business association.

The neighborhood association also oversaw one of the city's most dramatic new development areas in the South Waterfront, defending the rights and interests of the older neighborhood to the west while welcoming the newcomers.

They helped secure traffic calming for Southwest Corbett Avenue. Finally, they were active participants in the Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. Coalition, where South Portland chair Ken Love serves as board co-chair.

As Love received the award he gestured to the four board members who accompanied him and said, "It's all due to these people."

George Wolff, a Wilson High School senior, was named Youth of the Year. He is a gifted classical guitarist who won an Oregon State Student Association state music championship in 2007. Wolff uses his skills to perform

Southwest leaders plead for bike paths in Maricara, Marshall parks

By Lee Perlman
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By law any citizen can request to testify before the Portland City Council for three minutes at the start of their Wednesday morning sessions, time permitting, on any subject they wish. Last month three local leaders used the occasion to address a Southwest parks and transportation issue, and appeal an administrative decision they didn't agree with.

Hillsdale Neighborhood Association chair Don Baack, former Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc. chair Glenn Bridger and SWNI Trails Committee bike route planner Keith Liden all called for creating bike paths through Maricara Natural Area and Marshall Park, utilizing and slightly reconfiguring existing trails and adding a harder surface.

Bridger noted that much of southwest consists of steep hills ("There's no place called Flatsdale"), and in many places no regular system of streets. He told Mayor-elect Sam Adams he meant Mayor streets, not just sidewalks. Thus, he argued, the city needs to take advantage of what opportunities it has to make transportation connections.

Liden, who has just completed a draft bike master plan for southwest, pursued this point. "There are no good east-west connections

between Lancaster and Dickinson," he said.

Baack said that Maricara is "a beautiful park, with really great wild areas." Utilizing his strategy, a useable path could be constructed with "very minor" impact, he said.

According to the three, the Parks Bureau hierarchy rejected the request. "They didn't even consider it," Liden complained. Their reasoning was that such a path would be inappropriate for natural habitat areas such as Maricara or Marshall.

Parks and Recreation suggested using Southwest Huber Street or creating a trail on the edge of one of the parks. According to Baack, representatives also commented that bicyclists who wanted to could ride through the parks without having it designated a path, saying, "We don't have bicycle police."

Bridger noted that there is a bike trail through George Hymes Park, so there is precedent for such a facility. Liden said that Huber would be "not ideal" due to its high traffic volume and lack of useable shoulders.

Baack said that building a path on the side of the park would have far greater impact and expense than what he proposed. As for encouraging unauthorized use of a pedestrian path, he said this course would have "a built-in conflict." With his proposed course, Baack said, "We can have a park we can all be proud of."

for hospice care patients in a variety of locations, and has given private recitals in the rooms of patients too ill to be moved. He is also a National Honors Society member who plans to study astrophysics in college.

Hoopin' It Up, the result of a partnership between SWNI, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement's Neighborhood Crime Prevention Program, the Housing Authority of Portland, Portland Police Bureau, Camp Rosenbaum and Basketball

Institute, Inc., is a four-day basketball camp for children living in the Hillsdale Terrace and Slavin Court affordable housing projects. In addition to teaching basketball skills and providing summer recreation, the camps preached hard work, team spirit, respect for peers and a sense of community. Last summer, the camp's second year, organizers included a track and field and writing components. The camp ended with a Family Fun Night barbecue.

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