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The Southwest Portland Post

Southwest Portland's Independent Neighborhood Newspaper

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Volume No. 19, Issue No. 9 www.swportlandpost.com Portland, Oregon Complimentary July 2011

History comes alive in walking tour of Maplewood

By Polina Olsen
 The Southwest Portland Post

"You are standing in what was the first homestead in Maplewood," Karen Williams said as she coaxed the crowd of 24 "tourists" away from the table laid out with lemonade and apples. It was time to start the Maplewood History Tour.

Sponsored by the Maplewood Neighborhood Association, the June 12 event started in April Hill Park and included nine stops ranging from the site of a five million year lava flow to recent triumphs of community activism. Everyone received a map and walking tour guide.

The first homestead, Williams continued as she looked around the park, started right here when Francis and Caroline Nieber received a donation land grant of 320 acres in 1873. "Western settlers, of course, were not the first inhabitants," she added. Settlers found Native American artifacts from earlier times.

As the tour meandered through

woody paths and winding streets, Williams held up geological maps and referred to Marjorie E. Hoffman's *Maplewood Centennial 1875 - 1975* for historic information. Marjorie and John Hoffman's families lived in Maplewood since 1885. Stop #5 showed the site of the Hoffman homestead.

"J.P. Hoffman bought this land in 1885 and built a successful dairy," the handout read. "Chinese laborers lived in a log cabin near SW 55th and Texas."

In addition to building Hoffman Road, "They cut down trees and burned them into charcoal in a pit located near SW 53rd and Texas."

Generations of the Hoffman family remained at the ancestral home where Southwest 53rd Avenue intersects with Vermont Street..

History came alive as the tour continued. The building at 5206 SW Custer St. housed the Maplewood Grocery and post office beginning in 1911.

Elderly neighbors remember the 1962 burglary; owner Myrtle H. Rogers reported no missing postage stamps. When the store closed in 1976, an Oregonian advertisement read: "Maple-



Karen Williams used a geological map to point out the site of an ancient lava flow, during a historic tour of Maplewood. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

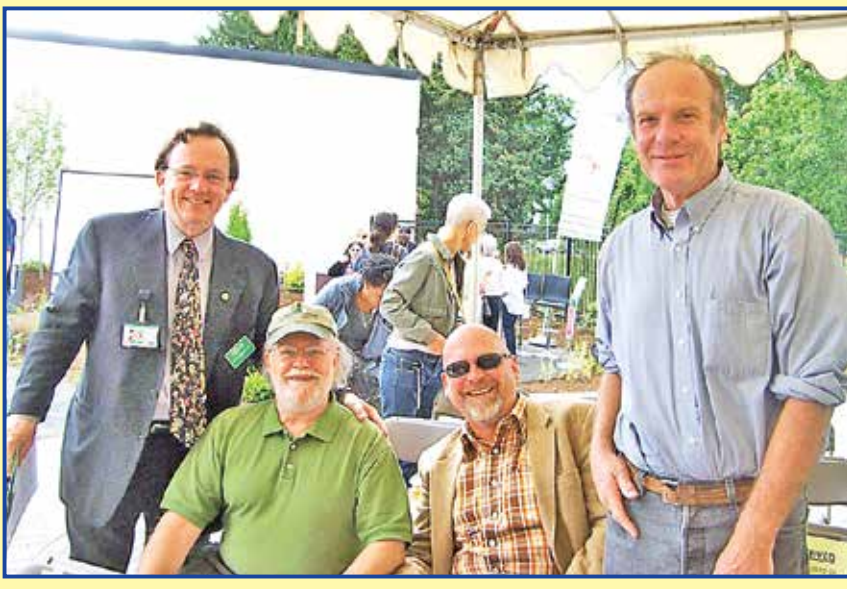
wood, Grocery Store with Living Qtrs and Basement; \$22,500 for BLDG & Land, Good Contract Terms."

The Oregon Electric railroad station on the south side of Maplewood Road was Stop #9. Its 1908 arrival prompted a flurry of interest in the area, which at that time was called Kusa. One November 1908 *Oregonian* notice posted

by "R.H. Fay, Hillsdale" read: "Twenty acres suitable for milk and/or gardening, with suitable buildings, near Kusa. 25 minutes from Portland on Oregon City Electric."

A Feb 27, 1910 *Oregonian* announcement predicted further development: "Kirchner & Hanno have purchased" (Continued on Page 3)

Four Guys in the Healing Garden



National College of Natural Medicine president David Schleich with South Portland Neighborhood Association board members Jim Gardner, Bill Danneman and Lee Buhler at the dedication of the college's new Min Zidell Healing Garden, June 24. Additional photos on Page 5. (Post photo by Lee Perlman)

City prepares to study Barbur corridor between PSU and Sherwood

By Lee Perlman
 The Southwest Portland Post

The City of Portland is about to embark on the Barbur Corridor Concept Plan, a venture that involves far more than its name implies.

As City planner Jay Sugnet told the Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission, the multi-jurisdictional project is expected to look at everything within a half-mile of Southwest Barbur Boulevard between Portland State University and Sherwood.

It will consider making the state highway the next light rail route. It will consider such local issues as the 140 miles of arterial streets without sidewalks, long a priority for the area. The venture will not even be limited to transportation issues.

"The idea is that land use should inform transportation decisions," Sugnet told the Commission. "We're not just focused on transportation, but on building great places."

In addition to the Barbur corridor the study will look at the Portland Community College Sylvania campus, Multnomah Village, Hillsdale, Oregon Health and Sciences University, the South Waterfront and River Place, he said.

Sugnet said that Washington County, the City of Tigard and Metro would be involved in addition to Portland. The



The crossroads of Barbur Boulevard, Capitol Highway, and Interstate 5 on June 29. (Post photo by Leslie Baird)

project will have a large and diverse Citizen Advisory Committee, and this will be the "glue" that keeps its participants connected, he said.

Other plans for community involvement include a series of community "walks" in September and an open house in October.

Sugnet said the study area contains "major regional destinations" where Metro expects an employment growth of 47 percent and a population increase of 54 percent in the next 25 years, and "twenty-five miles of one of the most congested transportation corridors in the region."

Commission member Mike Houck asked that the study include consideration of Southwest Portland's trail network and its potential as a commuter route.

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