

South Portland neighbors get together for summer concerts in the parks

By Polina Olsen
The Southwest Portland Post

It's free for all, and the music is grand at this year's South Portland Summer Concert Series. Held in Willamette Park on Southwest Macadam and Elizabeth Caruthers Park on Southwest Moody Avenue, evenings start with neighbors finding spots on the grass for children, picnic baskets, dogs, and portable chairs. Get ready for dancing. There's plenty of space near the stage.

On July 20, *Vagabond Opera* enter-



Mira Solis and Caire Elton blew bubbles to the tunes of the *Vagabond Opera* on July 20 at Willamette Park. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

tained the crowd. Lead operatic tenor Eric Stern and his troupe bring klezmer, Balkan and "neo-bohemian cabaret" to audiences throughout the United States and Europe.

"Things are great, always great," said Ken Love, chair of the South Portland Neighborhood Association, the group that hosted the event. Joined by Portland Parks & Recreation and with the help of sponsors like OHSU, the Portland Water Bureau and Northwest College of Naturopathic Medicine, the program has gone off without a hitch for the past four years.

"We've never had a band that was disappointing," Love said. "We just have one more concert at Willamette Park, *Malea & the Tourists*. Next month we have two concerts in Caruthers Park in South Waterfront."

Sylvia Bogert, executive director of Southwest Neighborhoods, Inc., chatted with SPNA board members Lee Buhler and Jennifer Daneluk. "I love to see all the neighbors walking to the event," Bogert said. "It's a nice function when neighbors get together. And, the weather is perfect."

Also owner of the Ross Island Grocery & Café at 3502 SW Corbett Ave, Daneluk's nearby booth provided fresh barbecued cheeseburgers and other treats for those who preferred buying



The *Vagabond Opera* performed July 20 at Willamette Park. (Post photo by Polina Olsen)

their picnic.

Other vendors and non-profits lined the perimeter like Meghan Sperandeo from the College of Naturopathic Medicine. "We're here to get the word out to potential students and potential clients," she explained to Leigh Broussard, who brought Captain, her Great Pyrenees, along for company. "He's a small one," Broussard said. "He only weighs 115 pounds. His parents came from a working sheep ranch in Eastern Oregon. He guards my chickens."

Talk turned to the neighborhood. Did everyone hear of a new café next to the Corbett Fish House? "They serve breakfast, lunch and Stumptown coffee," Sperandeo said. Meanwhile young

artists mobbed the Portland Parks & Recreation children's booth.

"They're making spectacular flowers, bugs and crowns out of pipe cleaners, chop sticks and their ideas," teacher Kathy Karuoc said. Portland Parks & Recreation hires artists to teach and create art with children at all the park concerts. Tonight, Karuoc and Spanish speaking Blanca Vazquez led the charge.

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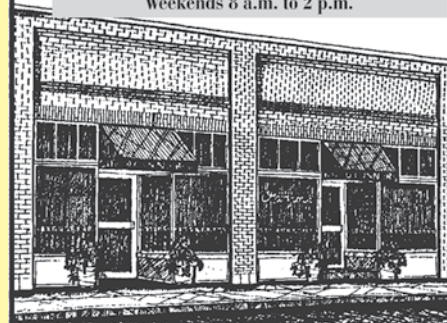
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