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# The Multnomah Village Post

Southwest Portland's Independent Neighborhood Newspaper

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Volume No. 15, Issue No.11

www.multnomahvillagepost.com

Portland, Oregon

Complimentary

September 2007

## New Holly Farm Park skate spot scores with shredders

By Mark Ellis  
*The Multnomah Village Post*

West Portland's Holly Farm Park has four big corners, but all the action is in one of them. On a mid-August evening there were grinds, ollies, and wipe-outs galore as area skateboarders tested their skills against what all agreed is a "tight little park."

Taking a break from his rail-riding, bank-busting aerials, 16-year-old Brian Seibert approved of the skate park's design. "It's got a good flow," he said, and then flashed off to teeter along a handrail like a tightrope walker.

Jordon Marchand, 17, visiting from Louisiana, took off his brain-bucket (helmet) long enough to say that the Holly Farm layout is "creative, better than some of the bigger parks I've ridden."

It's not all about the skateboarding. The new park, scheduled for a formal ribbon cutting ceremony on Saturday September 15, at 3:00 p.m., boasts a lush lawn, handsome benches, and children's play structure.

Perusal of a parks department hand out reveals that opening day will include games, crafts for kids, and self-guided interpretive tour. Celebratory food items will be available, but families are encouraged to bring a picnic.

"It was a long-time dream of the West Portland Park Neighborhood Association," says Portland Parks Business and Development spokesperson Sarah Schlosser-Moon, "for a place to gather and play as a community."

The farm's history is a far cry from the shredding vertical jumps and quarter pipe descents, which began at the park only days after construction crews, planted the new sign.

Legendary holly horticulturist John S. Weiman began his hybridizing of English holly at the location in 1926, and went on to register twenty-seven new varieties between 1959 and 2000.

The Weiman family lived in the large home on Capitol Highway until

1998, bearing witness to the eventual development of the area, including PCC Sylvania. The farm's main residence was set back on the property, shaded by trees, and singular for its one-story stucco exterior.

Weiman received the highest award from the Holly Society of America in 1983, and varieties of his hollies can be found in Hoyt Arboretum and many places in the United States and Europe.

"This is great," said Ron Cusick, over from Lake Oswego after spotting the park on his way home from work. His daughter Brooklyn had only one complaint: there aren't enough swings.

Lucy Koch strolled the pathway with her husband and two Siberian Huskies while their children checked out the play structure. "This is our first time here," she admitted, but there's no doubt that her family plans to make regular visits.

Back at the skating area a female skater gets her board out into the mix. Kelly Murphy takes a ramp or two, all the while watching for where exactly the next skater will hurdle by.

The buzz around skate culture that week was focused on a certain professional skater who grabbed so much air at the recent X Games he ended up in a 35-foot freerail.

The miscue made video headlines, and Holly Farm skaters--like skaters around the country-- high-fived when Jake "Nothings Broken" Brown walked away unhurt from what has to be the ultimate bail.

The skaters had a thing or two to say about the new park, but they had come to skate. By the time rush hour hit on Capitol Highway there was a bit of a cluster in the skate area too.

Soon table top-jumps and tail sliders were flying every which way, long curving arcs known as carving flying into almost horizontal realms, all ages, both sexes, and a good representation of fairly young children. Young Recan Rasheed, his brain-bucket strapped on and his skateboard half as big as he is, probably sums it up best. "It's fun."



A pair of skaters try out the new Holly Farm skate spot August 14. (Photo courtesy of Hans Marshall Ellis)



Portland police officer Angela Hollan and her horse Ian of the Mounted Patrol Unit were part of the Central Precinct's Open House during the Multnomah Days Festival held on August 18. Taking a special interest in Ian were (from left) Siena Kelso, Jenna Thompson and Madison Carbo. Additional Multnomah Days photos on Page 16. (Photo courtesy Portland Police Bureau)

## Neighbors complain that Southwest Community Plan doesn't enforce design standards

By Lee Perlman  
*The Multnomah Village Post*

In discussing a new development proposal for Multnomah Village, longtime community activist Mike Roche expressed frustration not just with the proposal itself (he called the design "atrocious"), but also with the process, or lack of it, by which it had come about. "The deal we made in the Southwest Community Plan was that in exchange for higher density we'd have design review," Roche said.

Well, Multnomah sort of has it and sort of doesn't. The Southwest Community Plan, passed in 2001 after a lengthy process, zoned much of Multnomah Village CS (storefront commercial), and R1 [medium density, one residential dwelling per 1000 square feet]. Either allows residential development at densities up to one unit per 1,000 square feet of lot space, or about five times the density of single family dwellings, and a minimum density of one unit per 2,000 square feet of lot space.

The CS zone requires buildings to be situated at or near the property line and forbids parking between the building front and the sidewalk, pretty much in keeping with the character of the area. Both have a height limit of 45 feet, allowing structures far taller than their neighbors to be built as a matter

of right.

Because Multnomah Village is designated a 'main street,' development there is governed by the Portland zoning code's community design standards and their "two track" system. These are a series of design elements normally required for new development.

They include pitched roofs, ornamental columns on front porches under some conditions, and lower height limits for new projects when the development site abuts residential land with a lower height limit. A developer who wants to deviate from these rules must go through a design review process.

The bad news, for people such as Roche, is that the rules were designed for the city as a whole, not just Multnomah, and do not necessarily fit the character of the area. Further, if developers meet these rules, they can build as a matter of right, with no review by the city or the public.

A state law passed in 2004 stipulated that except in Downtown, Gateway and designated historic districts such as Lair Hill, developers had to be given the option of being allowed to build if they passed objective standards, without public review.

Planner Marie Johnson, who shepherded the Southwest

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