

# Alberta district making progress

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Several artist enclaves in Northeast Portland have organized a week of street festivals to celebrate the diversity of art and music in the neighborhood. The festivals will run through the summer and focus on community building with events such as "Face painting for Peace," "Joy to the World, Art is Expensive," and "Drink for the Cure."

"We are hoping to create a "Burning Man" atmosphere without the desert," said festival organizer Jerry Dead. "It's about being free in a world hindered by personal slavery. We want people to have fun. It's a festival for the locals by the locals. We want people to buy, buy, buy."

In an effort to partner with law enforcement, permits have been obtained for street closures that will allow for festival participants to drink wine out of plastic cups and get high in nearby parking lots while enjoying art walks, live music and local food.

In preparation for the throngs of participants who will arrive from all over the region to partake in the festivals, police have announced they will arrest and detain minorities hanging out in groups of two or more in targeted areas from May until September.

Minority youths who live in the neighborhoods increasingly have been loitering on street corners adjacent to coffee shops where patrons and their dogs hang out on sidewalks. Dozens of early goers at local breakfast establishments on both Alberta Street and Mississippi Avenue have complained of unwanted sneers from individuals forced to move from the area because of economic reasons.



Alberta's wild days are a thing of the past, but remnants remain, such as these stickers on the back of a stop sign.

PHOTO BY ISADORA BULL

"Gentrification is a thing of the past," said Betty, who carried her son in a baby sling bought at a local boutique. "Where's my voice in all this?"

Minority leaders in the community have pointed to a long history of racial profiling by the Portland Police Bureau, unfair housing practices directed at African Americans and the lack of new local businesses hiring minorities in the neighborhood.

Throughout the years, the city has set up many neighborhood roundtables and listening sessions with residents on institutionalized racism in the community

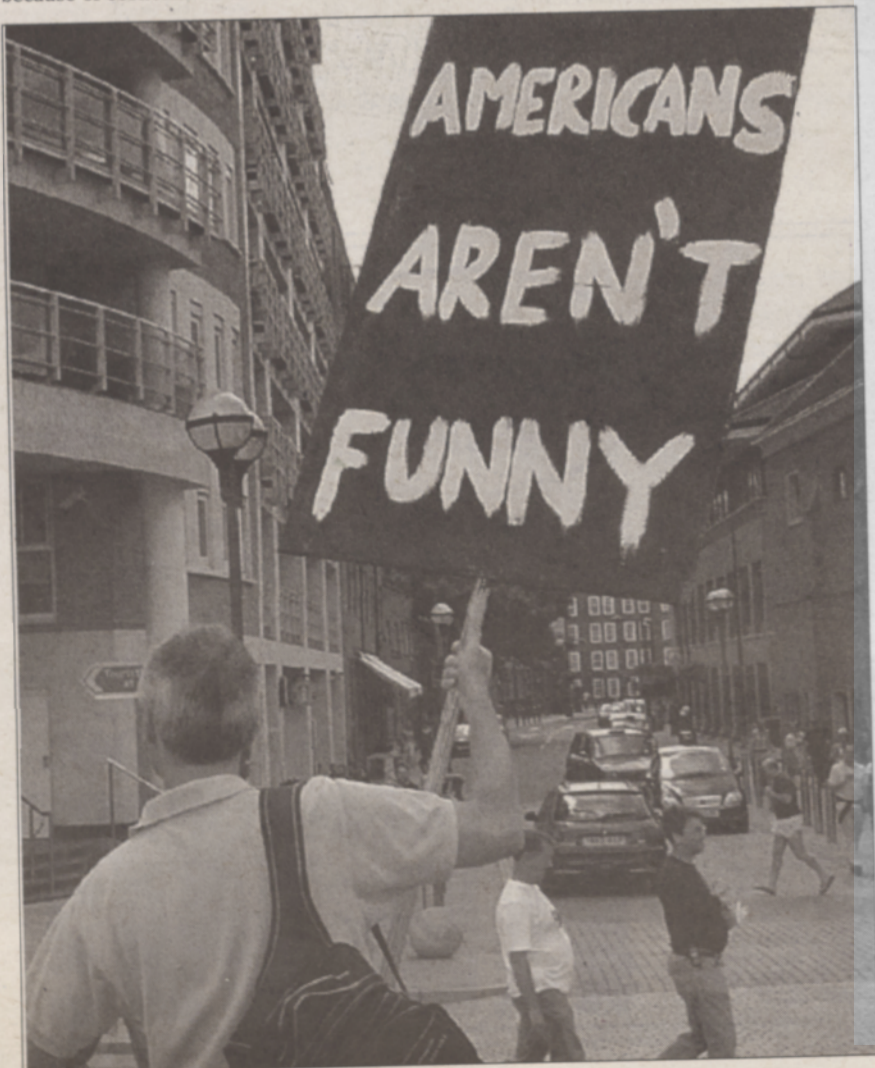
that the city has never done a thing about. Still, newcomers like Betty think things are changing for the better. "Look, we live in one of the only racially diverse neighborhoods in the state. We should be proud of the progress we're making."

Since the early 1990s the minority population has been largely displaced throughout the city. However, Northeast Portland is still a racially diverse neighborhood.

City planners say the enclaves of local art scenes and mixed-income neighborhoods promote a sense of smart urban planning that will last for decades. "Look, these

neighborhoods have historically been bad, bad neighborhoods. If you lived here in the '80s, you would understand. I lived in the Southeast and you just didn't go there. We have come a long way to export crime and poverty trends to the city of Gresham. We're proud of the makeup of Northeast Portland today."

The festival organizers have said they are doing their best to incorporate as many community voices as possible. "We even have a Polish festival now," said Dead. "It's going to be a summer of change. Obama is president now. Let's celebrate."



**Visions & Voices:**  
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 in the Sex Industry

Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup> at 7pm @  
 Food For Thought Cafe  
 PSU, Smith Basement

Art Exhibit & Free Food  
 Dance Party Reception  
 Featuring music by  
 DJ Niko  
 &  
 DJ Jamie

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