

street \$1 roots

All the world's a stage

Drummers, singers and performers compete for attention on Portland's sidewalks. Now the city is looking at revisiting an aging agreement on how buskers and businesses can peaceably share the spotlight.

BY AMANDA WALDROUPE
STAFF WRITER

Walk just about anywhere in downtown Portland and odds are you will be serenaded by a stranger. But don't take it personally. This is business.

For 16 years, street musicians, businesses and the city have operated under an agreement that allows performers their place in the sun. But now, City Commissioner Amanda Fritz's office will dust off the agreement, starting with a public forum for all those involved.

The forum is scheduled for Feb. 10, and Sara Hussein, Fritz's policy assistant, says that Fritz is hoping attendance will include a large number of street musicians, business owners, representatives from law enforcement, Paul van Orden, the city's noise control officer, and the city's ombudsman.

Hussein says the forum was prompted by a number of concerns Fritz's office has received from street musicians and business owners about the Street Musician Partnership, which was created in 1994. Street musicians, the Portland Business Alliance (PBA) and the City of Portland

are members of the partnership, which sets down rules and regulations for musicians playing on Portland's streets.

The rules include mandating that a street musician can only play in a particular location for 60 minutes, then either take a 60-minute break and resume playing, or move to another location. Musicians are not allowed to play more than twice on a corner or given location in the course of a day. Street musicians are asked to understand the city's noise ordinance, and to be spaced at least one block apart. Amplification is allowed, but if the music can be heard more than 50 feet away, then it's in violation of the agreement.

Businesses agree in the partnership to not interrupt musicians while they are playing, be courteous and respectful to the musicians, and to "abide by the decision of the police or a volunteer mediator appointed as a result of this agreement."

The PBA also agreed to pay for the printing costs of a brochure detailing the partnership and the rules. It is distributed by Clean and Safe, the private security firm the PBA employs to patrol downtown.

Some of the specific concerns, Hussein says, concern the 60-minute time limit, musicians occupying certain, especially lucrative locations, and not giving other musicians a chance to make money. Businesses have become increasingly concerned, she says, that some musicians are playing directly underneath office windows for long periods of time.

Hussein says there are no specific expectations for the forum, but that it will be a chance for community members to air their concerns. It is not clear whether the ordinance will be changed, or what the next steps will be. "That all depends on what ideas people have," Hussein says.

Halley Weaver, 25, is involved with PDX Busk, an advocacy organization for street musicians. She thinks that certain parts of the ordinance need to be changed. "It's antiquated," she says, pointing out that it has not been changed or reviewed in its 15-year existence.

She and many other street musicians would like to see the 60-minute time limit extended to at least



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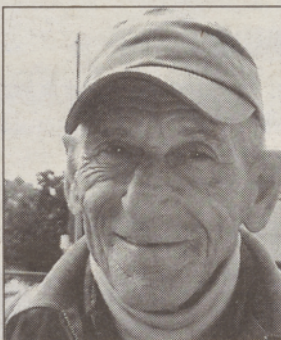
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Health care, once — and for all

An interview with Dr. Margaret Flowers on the single-payer movement

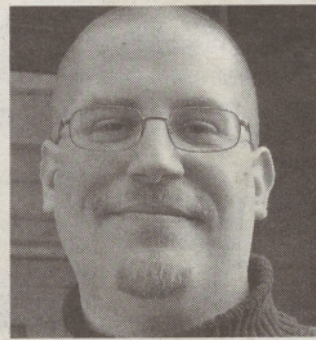
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A student of the streets

Spend a few minutes with vendor Terris Harned

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