

Community News

Get-together planned for North Catholic High School alumni

This summer marks the 45th anniversary of the fire that destroyed North Catholic High School on Lombard Street, where Arby's is now located.

The alumni of the school are using this anniversary as an opportunity to renew relationships, connect with each other and give back to the North Portland community.

Five years ago over 500 alumni, guests, parents and former teachers met at De La Salle High School for a barbeque and party. Proceeds from the event were donated to the high school.

This year the event is scheduled for **Saturday, July 18 from 3-9 p.m.** at De La Salle High School.

For additional information and to register for the event go to: <http://northcatholicalumnipdx.com>.

Parents and former teachers may attend for free. Alumni and guests will pay \$35 per person if registered by June 15.

All proceeds will again go to De La Salle High School. Food will be catered by North Portland's Po'Shines.

Naturescaping Workshop planned

If you are interested in creating your own backyard wildlife habitat, an upcoming naturescaping workshop, hosted by North Star Village, will provide the know-how to confidently move forward. "Naturescaping - It's for the Birds and Bees" will be held Sunday, May 31, 1:00 - 4:30 pm at the BES Water Control Lab, 6543 N. Burlington Ave. The gardening workshop will cost \$15 - \$30 on a sliding scale basis. All workshop proceeds will benefit the North Star Village start-up fund. To ensure that enough materials are available, RSVP at www.NorthStarVillagePDX.org or call 503.978.0540.

Naturescaping is the art of garden design with native plants to provide food and shelter for birds, bees and other beneficial insects. The workshop will focus on native plants and non-invasive adaptive plants and how to transform your garden into a restful retreat that mimics Mother Nature. You will come away knowing how to create a beautiful, unique and healthy outdoor environment for wildlife, pets and your family.

NatureSheds NorthWest instruc-

tor, Patt Opdyke, has shared naturescaping principles and her love of native plants for more than 20 years.

North Star Village is part of the aging-in-place movement sweeping the US which helps people age in their own homes and neighborhoods safely, affordably and comfortably.

Red Cross seeks blood donors

The American Red Cross is asking eligible donors to help ensure blood is available for patients in need by giving blood in May before the busy summer season kicks in.

Blood and platelet donations often decrease when regular donors are vacationing and school is out of session, but the need for blood is constant. Donors are needed in the weeks leading up to summer to help alleviate this seasonal decline.

Donors of all blood types - especially those with types O negative, A negative and B negative - are needed to help ensure blood is available for patients this spring. Those who come to donate blood between May 23 and May 25, 2015, will receive a limited-edition Red Cross-branded RuMe@ tote bag, while supplies last.

To make an appointment to give blood, download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit redcross-blood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

St. Johns Main Street Tree Well work party planned

On May 17 neighbors and friends are welcome to help plant tree wells in downtown St. Johns for phase 2 of an ongoing community beautification effort.

This spring 130 University of Portland students planted half of the tree wells as part of a bi-annual Clean Sweep event.

To sign up a community group, church or business, or to volunteer yourself, contact Sydney Leonard: sydney@stjohnsmainstreet.org or call 503.841.5522.

Send your unique (personally taken) photos of the St. Johns Bridge to the Review.

You could win a \$100.

See page two for full details.

Gentrification Hits Home

Gentrification is a growing concern among those in St. Johns as older houses and businesses are demolished to make room for high rent apartment buildings. In some cases, existing multi-unit housing is being sold or upgraded. Additionally, Oregon legislators have been persuaded by lobbyists to no longer require a percentage of moderate or low income housing with each project. As a result, the current building boom is pushing out neighbors who have called St. Johns home for decades.

One such resident is Maria, nicknamed "little mama" by town center regulars. She is small, solid and stocky with a friendly smile and often seen cheerfully walking to and from part time jobs, or volunteer work helping translate for Hispanic neighbors. She has worked for years cleaning Slims Lounge on swing shift and takes other small jobs when possible to make ends meet. She does not drive due to a disability with her leg and relies on her apartment's proximity to Slim's to walk to work at 2am. "I sleep a little bit and then get up and do what I need to do," she said. Other disabilities make her tire easily. Nonetheless, Maria can be seen sweeping and cleaning the tree wells and sidewalks in the town center as a volunteer, just to improve their appearance. She confides that she gets calls asking for help with Spanish translation constantly and is proud to take on the role of interpreter for the Hispanic community. She is nearing 62 and has little family nearby though she was married once and has a grown son. She said, "I'm on my own, with my Chihuahua and my 19-year old blind kitty."

Her apartment is part of a four-plex that sold to out of town landlords in January. A section 8 voucher helps Maria make the rent payment and she worries that she didn't get enough notice to do the usual tidying before their inspection. She confides that she has "a little bit of stuff since I've lived there for 30 years." Two days later on Feb 2, Maria was shocked to receive a letter giving her 60-days notice. The letter which she carries with her states, "This is not an eviction, the building needs renovation." Nonetheless, she says, it may as well be an eviction. "I can't go back because they are making the rent higher. I'm out there going crazy looking for something I can afford." She feels the new landlords don't want section 8 tenants and worries that prospective landlords won't either. She doesn't want to lose her



two pets but they present another challenge in finding a new apartment. "My kitty is blind and old. She probably isn't going to live very long anyway."

"I've been very depressed since it happened," she said choking up, "My friends had to carry out my furniture. I can't afford a moving van." Her voice breaks and tears appear. "I've been in there since 1985. Nowadays, the tenants have little rights especially if they are section 8. Not everyone is a druggie. Some are individuals that work hard. We're just working people minding our own business even if we have disabilities."

She continued, "I used to clean up around there, sweep and make sure the garden was weeded. I didn't get paid for it, I just did it because you know, you have pride. You want the place where you live to look nice. That was my home for many years and I loved it."

Speaking of the landlords she

says, "They are forgetting their humanity."

The small town atmosphere of St. Johns and the sense that neighbors care for each other that makes this community unique could be seriously undermined if outside developers are allowed to maximize their return by creating only one kind of housing—expensive. That achieves neither humanity, diversity, elders aging in place, or a true sense of community—just exclusiveness, the refuge of the banal who belong in the gated neighborhoods to the west.

If you have any leads on a new place for Maria, email barbaraqn718@gmail.com. If you would like to offer feedback to our legislators Tina Kotek and Chip Shields, they can be reached by email available on their websites. Stay tuned for dates for future community meetings on gentrification hosted by the St. Johns Neighborhood Association.

Michael Allen Harrison Concert

Peace Lutheran at 2201 N. Rosa Parks is hosting a benefit concert on **Wednesday May 20th At 6:45 PM.**



Proceeds will help support Teisha's Place, A temporary home for transplant recipients in North Portland.

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