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Union-Vancouver Business Development Project receives \$1,000 from Pacific Power & Light. Left to right are: McKinley Williams, John Thompson, Carl Talton, Mike Debnam and Mary Lennox. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

## Partners in progress

by Mary Lennox

The Union-Vancouver-Williams Business Development Project, popularly known as the UVW-Partners in Progress, held its first general meeting September 12, at the Grayson Inn.

This group is dedicated to the revitalization and restoration of the once prosperous commercial areas of Albina. The newly formed 17-member board of directors is dynamic and enthusiastic — fresh from winning a bid with the Oregon Downtown Development Association and the city of Portland to become certified as an Urban Center project. With a projected yearly budget of \$60,000 — \$47,000 has been raised to date from City and private sector contributions — the UVW has hired a district manager, established an office on Union Avenue, and looks toward a program of changing the image of the area from one of abandonment to one of attractive possibilities and of economic restructuring to ensure achievement of long term goals.

Fund raising is still a high and enjoyable priority with UVW, with Carl Talton of PP&L stepping forward to hand UVW President Mike Debnam a check for \$1,000. Carl Talton said this is only a token of PP&L's support. John Thompson, owner of American

Appliance and Director of Finance for UVW, convincingly assures people that for every dollar they invest in UVW they are sure to get many more back in some form or another. At this suggestion over \$300 left the pockets of this meeting's participants. "Knowing a good thing when they see one!"

President Mike Debnam introduced the newly hired project manager, McKinley Williams. Mr. Williams, a recent immigrant from Los Angeles, brings many fine strengths in leadership, business, management and communications skills. During the meeting he presented a brief outline of his intended focus of activity over the next year. One of his first tasks is to network with diverse interest groups in the area and develop with the UVW Board a set of management objectives and strategies for the next year.

County Commissioner Earl Blumenaur spoke suggesting the UVW should challenge the accepted notions of how, when, what and where the County and other government monies are allocated and also the ways in which they participate in community economic development. He pointed not just to the County but to the City, Tri-Met, the School District and Port

of Portland as potential resources. The first step is to start a dialogue with these offices; ask for a clarification of their role; look toward partnerships and joint ventures; present some specific, non-traditional ways for the governments to invest in our community. He said, think in creative terms. Resources may take the shape of leveraging around facilities' surplus equipment, or allocations toward a youth program, or technical assistance on a special project. Commissioner Blumenaur stated he would engage in a "rolled up sleeve" session with UVW in order to get this process of dialogue underway.

Melissa Cole, a volunteer in historic preservation, treated everyone to some early pictures of a bustling Union Avenue and related her intention to send copies to property owners on the commercial strips so that they could be inspired to participate in the spirit of restoration and regeneration. Chuck Hayden, local businessman, interested everyone with the fact that in 1977 he had made up a slide show showing a Union Avenue during a period of prosperity.

The meeting adjourned with the next one planned for the second Thursday in October.

## Corinto mayor visits Portland



(Left to right) Margaret Thomas, interpreter, Corinto Mayor Francisco Tapia Mata, and Portland Mayor Bud Clark. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

by Robert Lothian

Portland and Corinto, Nicaragua drew closer this week with the visit of Corinto's mayor.

Francisco Tapia Mata is an outgoing dentist with a sense of humor. He arrived Sunday for a six-day sister city tour which included meetings with Mayor Clark and city officials, port managers, local Latinos, college students, union members, a dentist at the Kaiser Hassalo Clinic, and many of the activists who worked to establish sister ties.

Friday at 5:30 p.m. Tapia Mata will meet with members of the Black community at an Urban League reception.

The mayor brought a message of good will from his beleaguered town and country. "I feel a great pleasure to be in this great city," he said at a Monday press conference in the mayor's office. The sister city program, approved by the City Council after an eight-month campaign and many visits to Corinto by Portlanders, means "great hope for the people of Nicaragua," he said.

"Welcome, friend," said Mayor Clark, extending warm greetings on behalf of the city. Clark stressed the non-political nature of the sister relationship. "In order to find peace, you need to have a dialog at all levels," said Clark.

Tapia Mata said the CIA-backed contra war continues to disrupt Nicaraguan life, taking a psychological toll on the people. Corinto's harbor was mined, and oil tanks near the waterfront were attacked, starting a fire which necessitated evacuation of the town, which is Nicaragua's major port. Defenses have been beefed up and residents are safe now, though "the U.S. Navy is stationed just outside Corinto," he said. The main municipal problem, said the mayor, is relocating families who live close to the oil tanks.

"If I could speak with the President of the United States," said Tapia Mata, "I would ask him to remember that 200 years ago 13 colonies fought against English colonialism to have the right to live the way the colonies wanted to live." Nicaragua is in the position of the American colonies, and wants the right to live in freedom and peace, he said.

Tapia Mata said Corinto's main export products, shrimp and lobster,

are now shipped to Canada because of the U.S. trade embargo. Speaking of trade possibilities, he said Nicaragua could use lumber from Oregon because its forests were destroyed by foreign companies.

Corinto committee staffperson Diane Hess said the mayor's visit "opens the doors" for future delegations between the two cities. She said several thousand dollars worth of supplies have already been sent from Portland to Corinto, and that a major new fundraising project will be announced soon. Serving as translator for Tapia Mata was Margaret Thomas of the Council for Human rights in Latin America.

Tapia Mata spoke in Spanish, but drew a laugh when he asked a reporter to repeat a question by saying, in English, "pardon me," in just the right tone. Mayor Clark, admiring Tapia Mata's shirt, asked if he could buy one. Clark was delighted when Tapia Mata replied that he had brought along an extra shirt as a present for Portland's mayor.

Tapia Mata, 47, flew on an airplane

for the first time in this, his first visit to the U.S. He landed in Los Angeles and was slowed by the sheer number of people going through customs. His own custom delay was resolved quickly by a phone call to get the address of his Portland hosts, but he missed his plane to Portland and arrived a day late. Sunday night, he was welcomed during an ecumenical service at Lincoln Street United Methodist Church, which has a sister church in Corinto.

After the service he talked with Portlanders about Corinto's rainy summer weather, and he described an active volcano near the town. He clutched a rose and a small gift-wrapped package of Mt. St. Helens ash from a Made In Oregon store.

Tapia Mata was born in Corinto and practiced as a dentist until he became mayor in 1979. A member of the Sandinista party, he offered his family's house as a safe house during the 1979 insurrection. His wife, Mercedes Corea, is a home economics teacher. They have two children, Claudia, 18, in her last year of high school, and Modesto, 14, who attends junior high.



Bill Gaboury of Ashland and Jim Gates talk with Sandra Levinson, Executive Director of the Center for Cuban Studies following her lecture at PSU Campus Ministries on Sunday. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

## Sales Tax Defeated

For the seventh time in 52 years Oregon voters overwhelmingly rejected a sales tax by nearly a 4-to-1 margin at the polls Tuesday. The legislative measure, which promised property and income tax relief, received a 78 percent "No" vote.

Opponents of the measure, which included groups from the Gray Panthers to consumer activists, felt the vote showed a refusal to shift the tax burden from business to consumers. A representative of Oregon Fair Share commented that the vote indicates "Oregon voters cannot be bought."

Supported by most Oregon political and business leaders, the tax measure was the subject of an intense media campaign. Opponents charged that the pro-tax effort was financed by banks, insurance companies and other big businesses who stood to gain by the property and income tax provisions. Sales tax proponents, such as Governor Victor Atiyeh, objected to these charges.

Vera Katz, speaker of the Oregon House and a leading proponent of the sales tax, acknowledged, "The voters have spoken," adding that the question now was what do the voters want. One alternative that has been suggested is a homestead exemption. The issue of where to find the money for property tax relief will send the tax planners and legislators back to the drawing boards.

Oregon remains one of five states without a sales tax.