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Two Sections



Sabin dispute continues

by Robert Lothian

It appears that the city's system of neighborhood associations will have to live with the Sabin/Irvington Heights Neighborhood Association, at least for the time being.

The new association, led by its president, Betty Garner, was created in a split from the Sabin Community Association (SCA). Garner said recently that in spite of opposition and charges against her of dividing the neighborhood, the group will continue with its plans.

The situation has perplexed city neighborhood office officials because it is the first time a neighborhood association has formed under those circumstances. Changes in the rules governing neighborhood associations may be in the offing.

Meanwhile, the City Attorney's office said recently that pending approval of Sabin/Irvington Heights' by-laws, there is nothing legally standing in the way of the new group calling itself a neighborhood association. But it remains a question whether Garner's group will be able to receive funds and be accorded the full status of a neighborhood association.

Garner, former president of SCA, and supporters split from the SCA after she charged leaders of that group with denying her access to the association bank account and records. The two groups have been wrangling for over a year, and the wrangling is not likely to end soon.

The area in question is bounded roughly by N.E. 14th and 22nd Avenues, from Fremont to Wygant Streets.

"The more, the merrier," Garner said about the new association. "Just leave us alone, let us do our work," she said, describing her attitude toward the members of the original association, who she said have been calling, disrupting meetings and engaging in other forms of harassment.

But the Sabin Community Association, led by its president, Don Blount, the Office of Neighborhood Associations, and community leaders have criticized the new group for dividing the neighborhood.

Blount said Garner was disruptive, dictatorial and did not follow neighborhood association rules as SCA president. "It's got to be Betty's way or not at all," he said. "She needs to learn process."

Starting a new group is the wrong way to resolve the conflict, according to Blount, a real estate broker. "If it's recognized, I'm going to be very disappointed in the system. We're going to have little neighborhood associations all over the place."

The dispute started when Garner and her neighbors on N.E. 16th Ave.

organized to have a streetlight installed on their street. The "16th Ave. people" were successful in getting the streetlight installed and in organizing two Neighborhood Watch groups as part of a crime prevention effort, said Garner, a Jefferson High School teacher.

She described a grassroots effort that threatened the leadership core of the SCA, who resisted, she said. "They told us in no way should a neighborhood association fight crime."

Blount had no problem with the streetlight, but he was unhappy with the way Garner allegedly worked outside the association channels to pressure city officials.

Garner was elected president of SCA in November 1984 after packing the election meeting with her supporters, according to Blount. Garner said her supporters were all from the neighborhood and therefore entitled to vote.

One of Garner's projects as president was to organize a door-to-door canvas to educate the community about streetlights and crime prevention. Each canvasser was paid \$20 by an organization called the Streetlight Levy, and the effort raised \$400 for "the association," Blount says Garner kept the \$400 for her new group. The two groups are still wrangling over the money.

When a dispute arose over control of the association bank account, Garner withdrew to form the new group. Blount said Garner withdrew when the SCA board called her on what he described as a series of divisive activities that weren't approved by the board. "She alienated virtually every member of the board" with her unconventional methods, Blount said.

"They're just a social club," said a member of the new group about SCA. "Betty outshined them."

Blount and other SCA members went to a Sabin/Irvington Heights meeting to try to initiate a dialog, he said. "The chair, Betty Garner, looked me square in the eye and adjourned the meeting." He criticized the group for meeting outside the community at the Jade West restaurant.

Garner said SCA tried to stack one of her meetings to elect their own officers and have harassed the new group in other ways.

Blount wants the two groups to join. "I would like to see her get involved in SCA again. She's got great energy and ideas," he said about Garner.

But Garner wants nothing to do with SCA. The new group just wants to get on with its activities, she said, which include organizing more crime watch groups and starting a community center in a former laundromat near 15th and Prescott.

Initiative would ban mandatory measured phone service

by Robert Lothian

Backers of an initiative campaign to prohibit the Oregon Public Utility Commission from ordering mandatory local measured telephone service kicked off their campaign Monday.

The initiative is sponsored by Oregonians for Affordable Phone Service, a joint effort of the National Federation of Independent Businesses, and the Oregon State Public Interest Research Group. It would prohibit the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) from requiring telephone customers to pay for local service based upon number, length, distance or time of calls.

Backers of the initiative say that mandatory measured service will mean higher bills for customers and higher profits for phone companies.

According to Jim Bernau, a lobbyist for the Oregon chapter of the National Federation of Independent Businesses, the customer with measured service would break even with six five-minute calls a day, but with ten calls the bill goes up 40 percent.

"Measured service provides a tremendous opportunity for the phone company to increase its revenues and profits at the expense of the user," said Eric Stachon, utility program director for OSPIRG.

According to Bernau, the PUC announced its intention to require measured service of Oregon businesses over a year ago, but rescinded its decision in mid-November. Bernau said that citizen pressure caused the PUC to change its position, and that pressure needs to be kept up or the PUC could change back again.

Business owners and regular customers have no guarantee that the PUC and Pacific Northwest Bell, working together, will not attempt to force mandatory measured service on the public in the future.

He said mandatory measured service would cause hardship for small businesses. "The only way to effectively prevent the Public Utility Commissioner from harming Oregon's economy is to have a state law preventing him from doing so."

"This is the only resource we have" in the citizen effort to keep mandatory measured service out of Oregon, Bernau said of the initiative.

Stachon charged that the PUC and Pacific Northwest Bell have for years wanted to force customers to pay for all calls the same way they pay for long distance.

He said the current initiative is in the tradition of recent Oregon initiative campaigns that have prohibited utilities from charging customers for unbuilt power plants, that required a nuclear waste depository before another nuclear power plant can be built in the state, and that called for creation of a Citizens' Utility Board.

Bernau said his group lists approximately 12,700 Oregon business owners as members. He cautioned that the campaign is not against all measured phone service, only mandatory measured service. He said the service should be kept as an option.



Last Thursday and Friday were fun days for youngsters at the North Portland Branch Library. The kids were entertained with a puppet show, much of which was based on library use and encouraging the kids to read books. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Youth services to change

by Jerry Garner

The Portland Private Industry Council (PPIC) is planning on changing the method in which juvenile offenders and non-offenders receive job training and placement.

Under the new plan, non-offenders and offenders will have initial screening and evaluation at the Donald E. Long Home, and job training and further education at the Youth Employment Institute. Under the present plan all this is done at the Donald E. Long facility.

Marnella Bingham-Mosley, supervisor of the Youth Employment Institute (YEI), stated that the new proposal by PPIC will make it possible to serve more youths and adults. She also said the new plan would allow non-offenders seeking service from YEI to receive their job training or education at the Youth Employment Institute.

"Having the kids attend education and job training at the Donald E. Long Home is a turnoff to many kids. The environment at the Institute is more conducive to learning. As a parent, would you want your child to be trained at a detention center or at the Youth Employment Institute?"

Several County officials criticized the new plan. Dave McNanny, Assistant Director of the County Juvenile Court, said that juvenile offenders will not make it at the Institute. "It represents everything these kids are running away from."

YEI is a strict goal-oriented Institute. It has been in operation since February of this year. Since this period, 145 youths have enrolled in the Institute; 60 are already working and 24 are currently seeking work.

Multnomah County District Attorney Michael Schunk was one of the several county officials who said that any changes would ruin a successful youth employment program.

Dennis Cole, President of PPIC said that the plan will not decrease the services available to youth offenders. County and City officials were also critical of the process that led to the proposed change. Cole said the plan was approved by the full PPIC Board at a retreat two weeks ago.

Another meeting will be held at the Youth Employment Institute, Nov. 26, at 6:00 p.m. If the plan goes into effect, two staff members from the Donald E. Long Home will be placed at YEI.

Rainbow coalition formalized

Supporters of the Rainbow Coalition gathered this week in Northeast Portland to renew their commitment to the movement begun with the Rev. Jesse Jackson's 1984 candidacy for President. About 75 people met to formalize the local Rainbow Coalition into a membership organization, to discuss their goals and plan for future political action.

In his keynote address, Coalition co-chair Ron Herndon challenged the notion that the public is becoming politically more conservative, noting the relatively strong showing by Jesse Jackson in the 1984 Oregon primary and the success of other local candidates and ballot measures which went against the "conservative trend." Herndon encouraged those in attendance to continue to work to unite activists in disparate movements (disarmament, women's rights, Blacks and other people of color, environmentalists and others) behind a

common program for social change. In particular Herndon noted a need to confront leading candidates in the current Oregon Governor's race with the Rainbow coalition's agenda, stressing the crucial role that the Rainbow constituency could play in a close contest.

In a reference to the recent meeting between Rev. Jackson and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Herndon and others in attendance expressed satisfaction that the Rainbow Coalition has been represented in Geneva.

In addition to the 1984 Jackson campaign, the local Rainbow Coalition has been active in the campaigns of State Representative Margaret Carter, City Council candidate Herb Cawthorne and most recently in support of South Africa divestment legislation in the Oregon legislature.

NAACP: 40 years in Portland

by Nathaniel Scott

For almost 40 years the Portland branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) has been meeting on the third Sunday of the month at 4 p.m. The general meetings are held at different churches. At most meetings a guest speaker is invited to speak about what he or she is doing in the field of civil rights. Sunday's local meetings at Antioch Missionary Baptist Church, 5935 N. Minnesota Ave., was no different: Michael L. Benjamin was the guest speaker.

Benjamin and Associates are providing Portland's police bureau with cross-cultural training. The cross-cultural training is taught in five areas: Black, Hispanic, Native American, Asian and white.

Benjamin said Michael L. Benjamin and Associates have a six-month contract to provide cross-cultural training with Portland's Police Bureau. The 40-hour course provides eight hours of training per week.

Benjamin said one of the things he explores is "the myth that we are all

alike." Benjamin said what they hope to accomplish is to develop and expand what cross-cultural training is all about: to increase the officer's knowledge about various tactics and beliefs, and to learn specific techniques police officers can use.

"We begin by eliminating stereotypes," he said. "We talk about the population changes that are taking place."

In addition to Benjamin's cross-cultural training with the police bureau, the meeting also stressed the need for a membership drive.

In other areas, Oregon's Liquor Control Commission's position on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday holiday celebration was discussed, and Judge Charles Johnson of Seattle, WA received the support of the branch for national board member.

Vocational Village, 5040 S.E. Milwaukie, which offers "an excellent opportunity for vocational training," also received the support of the branch.

The date and place where the next general meeting will be held will be announced at a later date.