



# Health/Education

## Alberta Street to Celebrate Art Saturday

The second annual Alberta Street Art Hop is scheduled Saturday, May 12, with festivities beginning at 10 a.m. and lasting until 5 p.m.

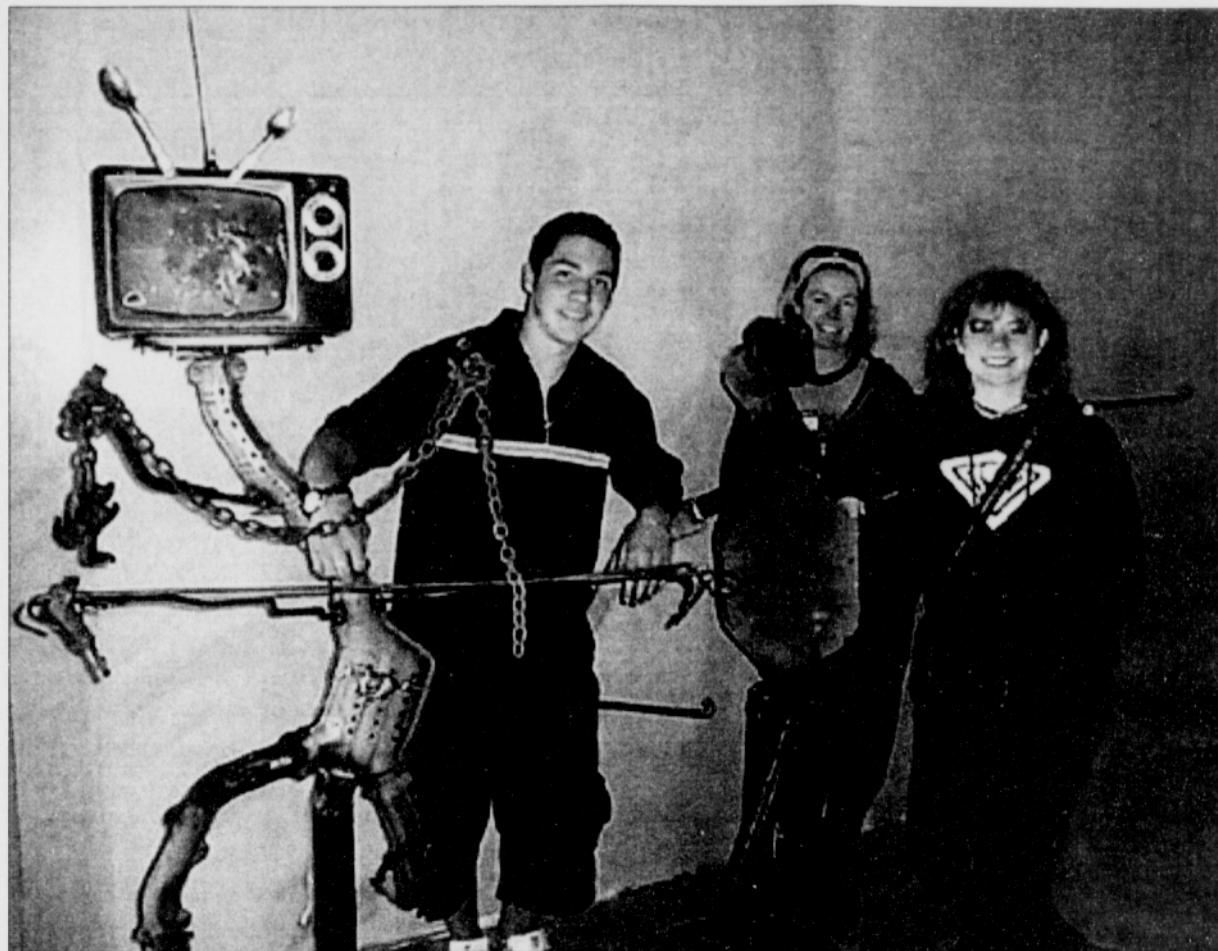
Area merchants will welcome new folks as well as neighborhood regulars to celebrate in the meaning of art, and enjoy a day in a revitalized corridor known for its growing, exciting art culture.

Alberta Street merchants will be open and displaying art in a variety of forms. There will be interactive hands-on art projects, art education, and art-related activities happening all day.

This year, Alberta merchants are promoting sustainable community enrichment by teaming up with Vocational Village High School and the Community Cycling Center for some exciting projects and fund raising.

Vocational Village has created figurative metal sculptures from recycled material, called Art AGOGS.

These artworks will decorate the exterior storefronts of



Metal art is displayed by Nick Bruno, Natalie Davis and Liz Finfield of Vocational Village to bring attention to Saturday's Alberta Street Art Hop. The school is donating 10 of the sculptures to personify the area's community spirit and urban arts culture. The long-term plan is to have hundreds of the so-called art AGOGS lining the street.

Alberta Art District merchants. The long-term plan is to have hundreds of Art AGOGS lining Alberta Street, from MLK to 33rd. The Community Cycling Center's celebrates a grand opening of its new location at

1700 N.E. Alberta St. Scheduled events include a juice ride, live music and outdoor activities. Donated funds will go towards the cycling center's programs for low-income minority youth.

## Mercury-containing Necklaces Pose Health Risk

Mercury-containing necklaces from Mexico that are showing up in Oregon are a potential health hazard, warn public health officials. The colorful necklaces are often on a beaded chain, cord or leather strand with a glass pendant filled with liquid mercury, and they may also contain brightly colored liquid. They come in various shapes such as hearts, bottles, saber teeth and chili

pepper. The pendants are fragile and can easily break, spilling liquid mercury.

"Vapor from spilled mercury is highly toxic," says Michael Heumann, environmental epidemiologist at the state health division. "We want the public to understand this jewelry contains enough mercury to be dangerous to human health. We're concerned because we have already received a report of one

necklace breaking in a classroom at a southern Oregon school." Heumann says that if a pendant breaks, the spilled mercury vaporizes quickly at room temperature. When the vapors are breathed in, mercury enters the bloodstream and may cause headache, cough, chest pain or tightness, and difficulty in breathing. If there is a lot of mercury in the air or exposure occurs over a long period of

time, there can be nerve, brain and kidney damage.

"Whether at school or home, mercury spills of any kind should be treated as a hazardous spill," Heumann says.

For disposal information call Metro or the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality at 1-800-732-9253.

## Somebody Ought To Say Something!

By L.K. Bass



There are times when silence is not golden. There comes a time when confronted by a moment or circumstance that "somebody ought to say something."

Whether it's about the dropout rate of Portland school children, "somebody ought to say something."

Incidents of racial profiling, "somebody ought to say something." Recognizing the accomplishments and extraordinary contributions of ordinary people, "somebody ought to say something."

Or on a lighter and more abstract note, when there is an accident on one side of the I-5 freeway, why are all lanes slow and backed up? "Somebody ought to say something."

Sometimes it takes hearing someone else's words to provoke further thought of what you may otherwise dismiss; or that speaking up is often the best deterrent to

injustices; and that every time we turn a blind eye, a deaf ear or remain silent, our world changes and not for the better.

This column was developed to provide good people of conscious and character with a venue in which you can evolve your thoughts into words that can be heard, giving you an opportunity to take a stand and speak up.

Each of us encounters times where "somebody ought to say something!"

So, if you can shed light on social injustices, share what you are hearing in the community, address impending actions that impact your neighborhood or enlighten others, I want to hear from you.

Contact me by mail at The Portland Observer, attention L.K. Bass, P.O. Box 3137, Portland OR 97208, or via e-mail at [news@portlandobserver.com](mailto:news@portlandobserver.com) or Fax at 503-288-0015.

## School Board Cuts \$20 Million From Budget

The Portland school board approved a budget Monday night that cuts \$20 million.

The board's decision will likely mean an end to many teacher positions. Cuts will also dig into special education, alternative education, English as a Second Language (ESL) programs and the Talented and Gifted program. No department will go unscathed by the budget ax; it will take a slice out of all departments.

The vote also eliminated school police, saving the district over \$1.6 million. The city, however, decided to pick up the tab of funding school police. In a letter Portland Mayor Vera Katz said, "I am recommending that we pick up the functions of the school police because you have given us little other choice."

The cuts come as a result of declining enrollment and the state's failure to adequately fund schools, the school district says.

## Activists Give Food Stamp Program 'C'

Oregon Action, a grassroots low-income organization, is giving the state's food stamp program a "C" grade. The group recently met with state officials in an effort to improve the food stamp program.

"Adult and Family Services gets an 'A' for excellent job in improving outreach and increasing food stamp enrollment," said Oregon Action board member Rose Spears. "But they have a lot of work to do insure that all eligible working families in Oregon get the food stamps they need."

Oregon Action leader Samantha Wattenburg, added, "When it comes to feeding children and families, an 'average' job isn't good

enough."

In the meeting, AFS officials committed to the following food stamp policy and program changes:

To insure that every food stamp applicant is screened for emergency services upon first contact; to have a two-page, shortened food stamp application form in use by all of its offices by June 1<sup>st</sup>; to enforce a "no wrong office" policy (applicants may apply at any office); and to post a recipient's bill of rights (negotiated previously with OA leaders) in every office without further delay.

Copies of Oregon Actin's report are available on the web at the site of the Northwest Federation of Community Organization ([www.nwfco.org](http://www.nwfco.org)).

## Happy Birthday



Kwasi Spears

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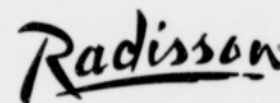
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