



Business

Alberta Businesses Work to Dispel Stereotypes

By GIDEON LANTZ,
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
The owners of an art gallery

located at 29th and Northeast Alberta are happy graffiti appearing on shop windows in the area

has died down. "I haven't seen any sort of problems on the street at least since April 1," said Carrie Wright, co-owner of Plain Jane Fine Art Gifts and Décor.

Slogans such as "Beans, not bombs," "Gardens, not Galleries," and "Confusion, not Infusion," appeared in the area as an example of what authorities and media called message graffiti.

The Vita Café sported the more humorous message: "Where's the beef?" Political messages appeared such as "Capitalism Sucks," "Yuppies Get Out," and the anarchist symbol of an "A" inside a circle.

Artists and business owners in the area complained about the taggers, but some say the "media frenzy" reports on the incidents put the emerging community of artists in a negative light.

"We're just small businesses trying to make a living. We do our best just to get our store running. We're not trying to make a million dollars a year, we're just trying to show some art," Wright

said. Others thought people were making much ado about nothing.

"The April 1 tagging I believe was a joke. Actually they were very humorous and it was just on glass so it was easy to clean up," said Sal Guardino, Co-Owner of Guardino Gallery, located at 2939 NE Alberta Street.

The graffiti prompted Wright and Plain Jane Co-Owner Jane McClain to write a letter to the public

"What is it that you want? Do

you want the board to stay up, empty buildings, no restaurants, no shopping, no community centers, dark streets polluted and unsafe? Please explain yourself," McClain asked the taggers.

So far there has been no answer.

Portland Police Bureau Northeast Precinct Commander Derrick Foxworth recalled that in February flyers were pasted on 10 sport utility vehicles in the area saying the cars were gas guzzling and not environmentally friendly.

About 30 incidents of graffiti in March and April followed which carried anti corporate, anti establishment and anti government messages. "I don't have any idea as to why it occurred," Foxworth said. Donna Guardino of Guardino Gallery, 2939 N.E. Alberta, says the area is now enjoying a renaissance due to individual business owners risking everything to operate there.

"Five years ago when we bought this building it was a dangerous street. Right after we bought it we heard on television Alberta was the street with the most murders in Portland," Guardino said.

That image is changing as mothers walk babies on strollers, people buy movies and listen to music where formerly they did not venture out at night. However, a renaissance of activity among businesses and artists here has apparently led to fears of the same kind of gentrification which occurred in Northwest Portland.

"It's an economic environment here. We all have to pay the rent and make it go," Guardino said. Her husband Sal thought taggers might unfairly characterize local artists as yuppies who have come from New York.

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By GIDEON LANTZ/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Carrie Wright of Plain Jane Fine Arts, Gifts and Décor, is looking on the positive side as her business and others bounce back from a rash of graffiti.

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Club Closes For 'Cooling Off' Period

The Cleo Lillian Social Club, 3041 N. Williams Ave., voluntarily closed its doors Memorial Day weekend for a four-day "cooling off" period, after a recent shooting and less serious incidents at the members' only club.

Manager Xavier Browning, board member Elizabeth Waters and other club representatives met with Oregon Liquor Control Commission officials and representatives of the Portland Police Bureau's Northeast Precinct Thursday to discuss recent problems, including the May 19 incident in which shots were fired inside the club.

No one was injured in the

shooting, but the gunman escaped.

"We consider this a positive move from club management," said Gary McGrew, OLCC field operations director. "They're willing to address the problems, and they're sending a message to customers that things will change for the better."

McGrew said the club agreed to present a management plan to OLCC May 29 that will address public safety issues to avoid an immediate liquor license suspension. This could include increasing security personnel and duty hours, and closing earlier.

New Warning Would Call Lottery Hazardous

(AP) — Warnings that playing the lottery "may be hazardous to your financial health" would be placed on state lottery billboards under a bill approved Friday by the Oregon House.

Currently, billboards flashing jackpot totals carry the statement "Lottery games should not be played for investment purposes."

Rep. Jeff Merkley said a "punchier" message is needed, one stating that playing the lottery can be addictive.

"Hopefully, because it plays a little bit on cigarette warnings, it will draw a little more attention," the Portland Democrat said.

"Lottery games do not present a win-win situation," he said. "To the individuals who participate, they pose serious risks."

The new warning introduced by HB3192, passed 45-9 by the House, would read "WARNING: The lottery may be hazardous to your financial health" and be printed in more prominent bold, 12-inch high lettering.

A recent study shows that there are around 50,000 problem or pathological gamblers in Or-

gon "for whom gambling has seriously affected their quality of life," Merkley said.

The new warning, he added, may help discourage people addicted to the lottery.

Other lawmakers questioned the state's involvement in the gambling industry.

"The mission of the Oregon Lottery Commission is revenue and only revenue. That is not a good mission," said Rep. Cedric Hayden.

The Elmira Republican was also critical of ads touting the lottery as a means of giving back to the state while having a little fun.

"You're really not helping the state when you consider that we have to bail out all these families that fall apart (because of gambling debts)," he said.

Rep. Phil Barnhart, D-Eugene, said he looked forward to the day when the state wouldn't have to rely on the lottery for revenue.

"This is a bad tax on the addicted and the poor," he said.

The measure now goes to the Senate for consideration.