

METRO *Life*

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Alberta Art Hop Participants Wanted

The Alberta Art Hop is a one-day festival to celebrate the arts and culture scene in the vibrant Alberta Street Community. On Saturday, May 10 the street will open up and spread around the glory of music, dancing, theater, art and great food. There will be art exhibitions, a shrine contest, live music, a parade and hands-on art projects for adults and children. Art on Alberta is currently seeking volunteers, artists and performers for the Art Hop. For more information, call 503-493-7246

Online Adopt-a-Pet

The Oregon Humane Society has put a new twist on on-line personals. With just two clicks, those looking for a loving pet can find it with the dog, cat, rabbit or rodent of their choice by logging on to www.oregonhumane.org. Those interested in pet adoption can scroll through photos of all the pets available for adoption at the northeast Portland shelter and read pet profiles that are expanded daily.

Alternative Medicine Classes

Portland Community College will feature a non-credit lecture series that explains how natural medicine can help you rely on wholesome cures that prevent illnesses as well as heal them. Naturopathic physician Dr. Suzanne Lawton will lead a series of six lectures during which students can discover practical, safe and natural approaches that can be immediately be incorporated into the home. Each lecture will be held from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays through May 7 at Tigard High School, 9000 S.W. Durham Rd. Cost is \$14 for individual lectures or \$66 for the series. For more information, call 503-538-9774.

Ladybug Nature Walks

Parents can discover the natural world with their pre-schoolers every Friday morning. A naturalist will hand out magnifying glasses, bug boxes and other tools to explore the soil, water, bark, flowers and animals in Portland's parks. Join the group each Friday at 10 a.m. in Hoyt Arboretum. There is a \$2 charge for each child, but adults are free.

Radical Women Meeting

Emiko Omori, a Japanese American filmmaker who spent part of her childhood in a 'relocation' camp, will expose the U.S. Government's targeting of Japanese Americans during World War II and their resistance to this stereotyping in the video screening of her film 'Rabbit in the Moon' at the Bread and Roses Center, 819 N. Killingsworth. The film will begin at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, April 9 after a Radical Women Meeting. A buffet with vegan and vegetarian options will be served for a donation of \$6. For more information, call 503-240-4462.

Parkinson's Disease Movement Class

A 10-week exercise program for people in northeast Portland with Parkinson's disease will begin on Thursday, April 10 from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at Irvington Village, 420 N.E. Mason St. The class incorporates techniques from theater, dance, yoga and tai chi to increase flexibility, strength, balance and coordination and to improve communication, voice power and speech clarity. The

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Schools Charged with Serial Neglect

Economic bias cited against minority neighborhoods

By JAYMEE R. CUTI
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Race and poverty issues have led to serial neglect of some neighborhood schools, according to a Portland School District official.

African American School Board Member Lorenzo Poe said there is clearly an economic bias when it comes to the support given to schools that serve minority and low-income families in north and northeast Portland.

One northeast Portland neighborhood has seen no less than five school closures in the last 30 years, with the most recent being Meek Elementary School at 4039 N.E. Alberta Ct.

While the Portland Public School District claims the closures are solely related to population, Poe and others attribute the declining enrollment to the district's lack of commitment to keep schools in poor neighborhoods thriving.

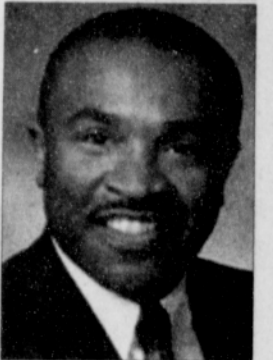
Poe voted against Meek's closure and wants to know why there is such a disproportionate impact to poor neighborhoods? "There's clearly an economic bias," he said.

A long-time resident and community leader, Poe said there has been an absence of strong advocacy in poor neighborhoods that contribute to this trend of abandoning schools.

He fears that local school closures and low achieving schools directly lead to gentrification, the phenomenon where one class of people displace an existing population. In this case, African Americans are forced to the outskirts of the city.

"You continue to disperse students out to more inviting academic environments with the pretext that you will increase their academic success, but you don't give them a true neighborhood school," Poe said. "There's a sense of loss in neighborhoods. It manifests itself in so many ways as students are assimilated to other areas of town and younger kids move away from the northeast core."

Lorenzo Poe says chronic neglect of some local schools has pushed kids away from the northeast core and displaced black families.



Poe identifies another negative side effect resulting from the closure of local schools: The loss of two school principals who are African American.

He said two African-American principals and role models are being removed from the public's view and the view of students.

Portland Public Schools spokesman Lew Frederick, also an African American, said declining enrollment and low achieving schools were not exclusively a northeast Portland problem.

Frederick said the district has closed more than 25 schools in 25 years in all parts of the city.

"It hasn't been tied to economic level or ethnicity," he said.

Frederick says the school closures can be chalked up to an over-estimation of the city's growth and housing areas being rezoned for industrial use.

"It really is a population issue," he said. "We used to have 80,000 students in Portland. We now have 54,000."

District officials said it would take a bond measure to reopen Whitaker Middle School, just blocks away from Meek, which closed two years ago because of the building's dilapidated condition. In that same building, declining enrollment caused John Adams High School to close in the 1980s.

The same community also watched as

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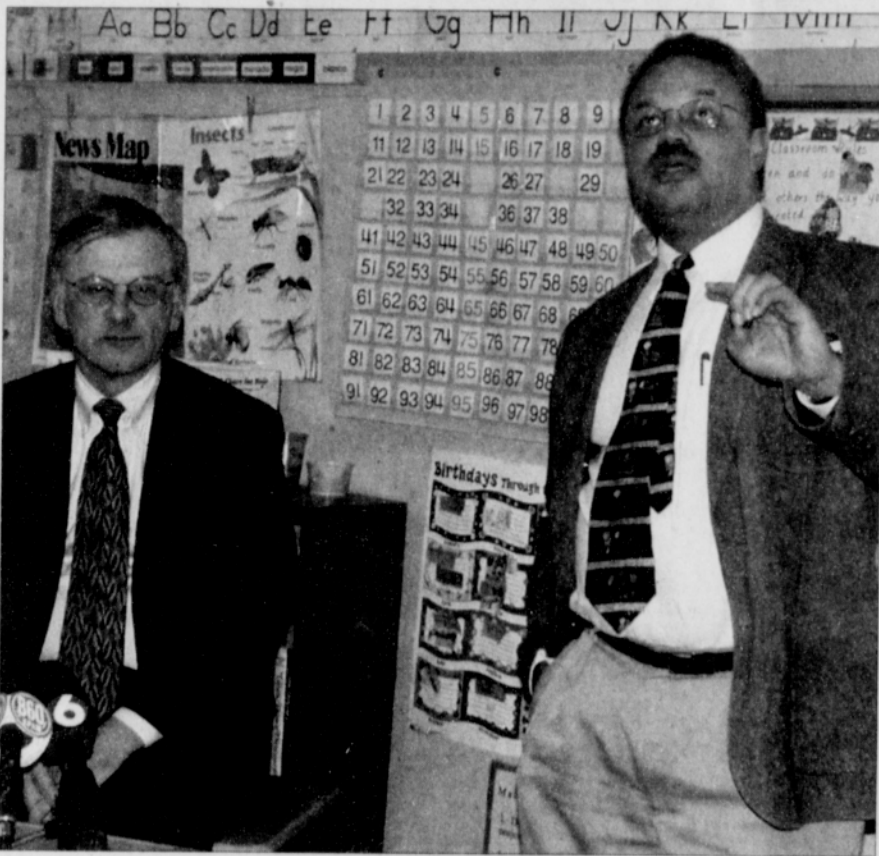


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland School Superintendent Jim Scherzinger (left) and school district spokesman Lew Frederick urge support for a new income tax levy on Monday during a news conference at Chief Joseph Elementary School in north Portland. Scherzinger said voter rejection of the May 20 ballot measure would result in the loss of 600 teaching positions and school sports.

New School Tax Urged

Sports and 600 teaching positions hinge on May 20 ballot

Portland Public School's Superintendent Jim Scherzinger told a tale of two cities on Monday night — one where schools are well funded under a new ballot measure and another of a city that will lose more than 600 teaching positions and all athletic programs if the measure fails.

On May 20, voters will decide if schools will operate on a budget that contains new revenue from a county income tax.

Passage will keep one in five teachers on

the job, continue all school sports, Outdoor School and funding for foreign language immersion programs.

Unlike property tax measures, which require a majority of registered voters to participate in the election, Measure 26-48 will only need a majority of those who voting to win approval.

If the measure passes, Multnomah County residents with a taxable income of \$30,000 after deductions would pay an additional \$21 a month for three years to restore school funding, school officials said.

If the measure fails, Scherzinger said class sizes would increase as much as 30 percent and all athletic programs will be eliminated.

Villa in Race to Get New Library

Commission pursues site over North Lombard location

By LEE PERLMAN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A divided Multnomah County Commission is pursuing plans for a new library in a refurbished Columbia Villa in north Portland.

Commissioners Lisa Naito and Maria Rojo de Steffey dissented on the vote after testimony against the proposal by members of Advocates for a Lombard Library. However, the group was given credit from Commissioner Serena Cruz for initiating a push for a new library in the area.

Cruz wants a new library in the Villa, a major low-income housing project that being refurbished into new homes for people of all income levels. The Housing Authority of Portland runs the development and is also proposing to provide space for the new library.

Cruz and commission chair Diane Linn argued that being part of the New Columbia Villa would allow a library to be built at reduced cost. It would also contribute to the success of the re-development by placing a major public resource within it. It was crucial, both said, for the county to grasp the "window of opportunity" provided by the project. "It's an opportunity to capture resources

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PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Historic Walls Fall for College Expansion

The walls from a long-forgotten theater on North Albina Avenue, just north of Killingsworth are giving way for the expansion of the Portland Community College Cascade campus. The building, which served as a home to the Albina Christian Life Center for 30 years, is being demolished. The African American church sold the property after a long struggle over the purchase with the college and moved to another church building on North Willamette Boulevard.