

# METRO

The Portland Observer

## Community Calendar

### Business Meeting

Join North/Northeast Business Association meetings on the first Monday of each month from 6 to 8 p.m. at Albina Community Bank, 2002 N.E. Martin Luther King Blvd. Morning networking meetings are the third Wednesday of each month from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at the Blazers Boys and Girls Club, 5250 N.E. Martin Luther King Blvd. For more information, call 503-249-0487 or visit [www.nneba.org](http://www.nneba.org).

### Volunteer for Hospice

Kaiser Permanente offers training for tri-county hospice volunteers Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:30 to 4 p.m. from Jan. 18 through Feb. 3 with one Saturday session on Jan. 29. Volunteers from Tigard, Tualatin, Gresham and Sandy are especially needed. For more information or to register, call 503-499-5285 or 503-499-5408.

### Get Schooled

Learn how to improve schools and jobs at a forum with State Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Castillo and President of Oregon's AFL-CIO Tim Nesbitt at 7 p.m. Jan. 13 at the Hollywood Senior Center, 1820 N.E. 40th. Free, sponsored by Multnomah County Democratic Party.

### Learn in London

Portland Community College offers a learning opportunity to earn credit in London. An informational meeting is from 6 to 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 10 in the Spruce Room of the CC Building at the Sylvania Campus, 12000 S.W. 49th Ave. The London trip is set for March 31 through June 11. For more information, call 503-614-7151.

### Get Fit, Stay Healthy!

Sankofa Health Institute offers a free diabetes support group from 6 to 7:30 p.m. every third Thursday at Alberta Simmons Plaza, 6707 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. For more information, call 503-285-2484.

### Creative Space For Dance

Aurora Dance Studio, 5433 N.E. 30th (at Killingsworth), offers an array of classes for children, teens and adults at all levels of ability. Call 503-249-0201 or visit online at [www.hevanet.com/auroradance](http://www.hevanet.com/auroradance) for additional information.

### Work For Change

Community Advocates invites those interested in protecting children from abuse to become an event volunteer, event outreach, technology expert, graphic artists or office support team member. For more information, call 503-280-1388.

### Home Improvement

The Community Energy Project holds free workshops on water conservation and weatherization. For more information, call 503-284-4962.

### Birth Ready

Whether you need childbirth preparation classes, or just a refresher, Providence Health Systems has a workshop for you. Prepare for pain, take a weekend seminar or prepare big sisters and brothers-to-be throughout the summer by visiting [www.providence.org/classes](http://www.providence.org/classes) or call 503-574-6595.

### Love that Pooch

Problem pooch classes are a must take for anyone who may be new to the world of pet parenthood or is interested in considering adopting a new friend. Come to the Oregon Humane Society to find out why your dog does those silly little things. Meetings are every first and third Saturday of the month at 11 a.m. For more information, call 503-285-7722.

# Last Thursday on Alberta



PHOTOS BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

R. Lyne Martin (right) stops on Alberta Street to look for the perfect wine to complement an evening meal and gets some help from Everyday Wine shop owner Beth Boston.

## Galleries engage in multi-cultural neighborhood

BY MARTHA S. FLETCHER  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Alberta Street has experienced phenomenal changes in the last decade. The transformation of a vice alley to an arts district has skyrocketed rents and pushed out some lower-income residents, including some longtime members of the local African-American community.

Two gallery owners, Donna Guardino and Reggie Petry, have different approaches to making Alberta work for them and build pride in a multi-cultural neighborhood.

While Guardino embraces both the new and old community, which has poured money into blossoming Alberta Street businesses, Petry makes an effort to engage the original community more by hiring locals and encouraging them to keep their money in the

neighborhood despite the flight of gentrification.

"I was here before the punk rockers," Donna Guardino said proudly, sitting at the

front desk of Guardino Gallery, a gallery and frame shop at 2939 N.E. Alberta. Small quilted and appliqued pieces made of sparkling metallic silks are displayed on the walls, and

several sculptures of women are scattered throughout the front space.

Originally from Illinois, Guardino arrived in Oregon and acting on a long-cherished

street at that time were churches and crack dealers. Other properties had been abandoned and boarded up. Real estate prices were so low that people could pay for properties with their credit cards.

But McMenamins had just purchased the Kennedy School building on Northeast 33rd Avenue and Nature's was building a grocery store at 15th and Fremont. Guardino felt that these would be good "anchors" for her business.

"We had some vandalism at first. Someone broke our window, she said. "They spray-painted the anarchy symbol, 'Gardens not galleries' and 'Yuppies go home.' A policeman told me that home-ownership would turn the neighborhood around."

In 1997, a real estate broker friend of the Guardinos suggested that they begin a "Last Thursday" art walk.

At first only a few artists and businesses, such as the newly opened Videorama, participated. Unfortunately, the week before the event was scheduled to occur, there were a rash of shootings on the street.



Alberta Arts Pavilion owner Reggie Petry

dream of owning a print shop and living above it, she and her husband Sal purchased her Alberta site in 1996.

Much of the other enterprises on the

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## Last Thursday Observations from the art walk

BY MARTHA S. FLETCHER  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

My Last Thursday walk started on a dark and windy night sprinkled with rain. I began at Everyday Wine, at 1520 N.E. Alberta. Upon entering, I was greeted by a friendly black lab, who did his best to make me feel welcome. Everyday Wine has the ambiance of a family TV room, with gentle Enya music playing in the background, sturdy square tables, and soft cushy chairs arranged around a large-screen TV and baskets of children's books. The wine is displayed on shelves and the place is well lit by halogen track lights. A few couples occu-

piated a table; another table was held by well-dressed middle-aged women, discussing the importance of owning an emotional issue. I downed my wine as quickly as possible and headed out into the night.

I wandered up Alberta, stopping in at 1627 Studios, 1627 N.E. Alberta, a gallery and studio space shared by several artists. I noticed people of different ages, octogenarians and babes in arms co-existing with art students and collectors. The artists commented on the slowness of the night; the trickle of participants were only a fragment of the hundreds that usually show up for Last Thursday. Further down the street, at Guardino Gallery and Toot's, the

shop owner gossiped with friend as I fingered a \$300 handmade shantung silk dress and sipped their complimentary wine.

I entered a building that had a large event room, classically restored, on the first floor. Upstairs, a man gave an entertaining slide lecture on the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The next room was a tattoo and piercing studio, Optic Nerve Arts, with a notable buffet of salmon on rye, baklava, and spinach pastries. After eating my fill, I ran into a friend and proceeded to Joe's Place, where we spent a comfortable hour drink-

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A passerby is in motion near Star E Rose Café on Alberta Street.