



HOUSING *Special Edition*

Preserving Local Homes, Neighborhoods

continued ▲ from Front

"There's an ongoing struggle for this black history," she says, gesturing off her porch to the building that once held Mt. Olivet Baptist's congregation.

"When I first came to Portland (in 1948), all of this was housing. We're coming into a phase now where we could have another negative-equity situation that will destroy the remnants," she says.

But the efforts to preserve Portland's black legacy will not end with people like Bradford, if neighborhood historian Roy Roos gets his way.

Roos, 45, who quit his fulltime surveyor job during the '90s building boom to become a handyman specializing in historic restoration, takes the loss of cultural significance to heart.

"It's so depressing how if you look through the ads in (Portland's first black-owned newspaper) the Advocate, all those businesses are gone, gone, gone," he says.

Taking particular care in digging up what evidence he can of

this African-American heritage, Roos searches everything from Oregon Historical Society records to a series of recollections gathered by the Bosco Milligan Foundation. His decade-old volume on the Irvington neighborhood produced increased awareness that became a key factor in historic conservation.

"History is technically supposed to help make sure that we don't make the same mistakes again," says Bradford. "I haven't seen many lessons learned by those dealing in Albina."

Roos' "History of Albina" research will also have personal significance when he expects to publish it in about two months. He lives in a Victorian house that had served Mt. Olivet for the many decades that the parsonage hosted every black politician who came through town. When developers threatened to tear it down, he moved the 1899 structure six blocks north to a safer foundation.

While historic registry now protects that Victorian, the same level of preservation is not guar-



PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDLEMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Roy Roos and Pauline Bradford have created a powerful partnership when it comes to protecting local African-American heritage like the former Baptist church near the Rose Quarter coliseum.

anteed for Bradford's properties that were built by the Flowers, one of the first African-American families in Portland.

The city has identified Bradford's land as more suitable for high-density commercial and industrial uses requiring proximity to major thoroughfares. Serving as extra incentive to turnover the residences, assessors sent her notice of over \$3000 additional she can expect to pay in taxes due to the area's proposed streetcar system.

Bradford argues that governmental policies should be for the benefit of everyone and that progress is carried too far when it comes at the expense of minority groups.

Believing "she won't let those houses go for anything," Roos, a self-described "hardcore history buff," also worries about Bradford's strength waning in the fight against their destruction.

"If it comes down to it, I'm not going to let any developer get away with what would amount to murder," Roos says.

Lead Paint Dangers Abound at Home

Make sure your family is safe

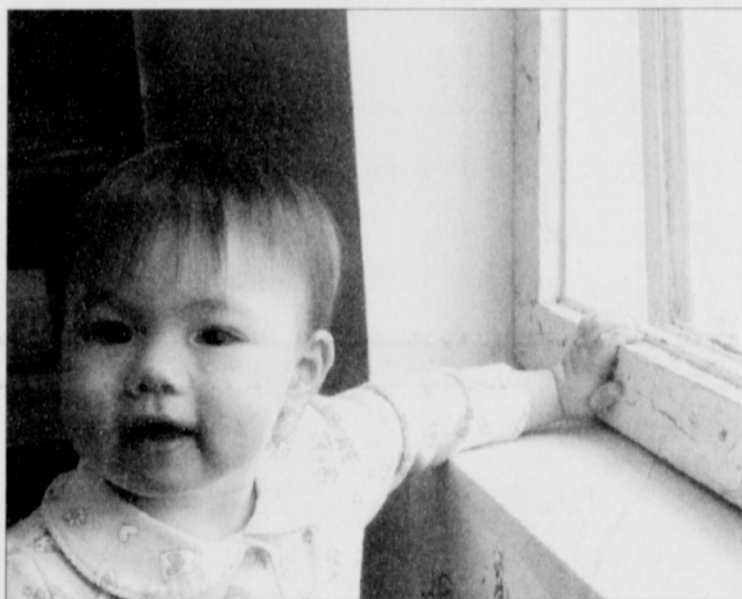
BY SARAH GOURDE

Lead-based paint is very common and very toxic. Industry has used it in everything from gasoline, jewelry, make-up, toys, household paint, and a number of other applications for thousands of years. It is relatively cheap and its properties made engines run smoother and paint colors more vivid and durable. Great for industry, toxic for all living things.

Given that lead is so poisonous, many parents of young children are very concerned that lead is still currently used in many every day objects in and around the home, including their child's toys.

While lead-based paint was banned from residential use in 1978, recent stories of toys recalled for lead-based paint and garden hoses made with lead containing plastic have many people asking how they can make sure that their family is safe.

The first step is to assess painted surfaces in your home. If your home



A child plays near a window that could contain lead paint.

or apartment was built before 1978, it may contain lead-based paint. If lead-based paint is intact or covered over by many layers of paint, it usually is not a hazard but if it is disturbed, it has the potential to create a dangerous situation especially for young children and pregnant women.

Water leaks, daily wear and tear, friction on doors and windows, or deterioration can all lead to paint

failure and the creation of lead dust. Even a little lead dust is enough to poison a child and it is the dust that you can't see that is the most dangerous.

It will take a concerted and sustained effort but knocking out lead poisoning is vital to the health of the youngest among us.

Sarah Gourde is the lead grant program coordinator for the Portland Development Commission.

Free Help to Reduce Lead, Test Kids

There are a few ways you can assess the risk from lead in your home.

One is to determine if you qualify for a lead grant from the Portland Development Commission. The program offers grants of up to \$10,000 to low-income homeowners in pre-1978 homes with children under 6 or someone pregnant in the home.

Another way is to request a free dust wipe kit available at the PDC website, pdc.us/leadhazard or at many local children's resale shops.

The second step parents and health care providers should take is to have your child's blood lead tested. The Josiah Hill III

Clinic and the Multnomah County Health Department offer free blood lead testing.

When you have your child's blood lead tested, it is important to know the number of the result. Many doctors still tell parents only that the result is normal but since lead is a poison, it is important to know the exact amount. While zero is probably not realistic given that there is so much lead in our environment, you want that number to be closer to zero than to 10.

The third step is to become educated about the other sources of lead that may be in the home and how to repair an older home safely.

The Community Energy Project offers free lead poison-

ing prevention workshops that provide a good overview. PDC does screenings for lead at many neighborhood events and the public is encouraged to bring jewelry, pottery and toys to be screened.

Families can address all three steps at the Lents Lead Event on Thursday, April 24 in Lents at Kelly Elementary School, 9030 S.E. Cooper, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

PDC will be there with free dust wipe kits and toy screening. The Josiah Hill III Clinic will provide blood lead testing and the Community Energy Project is conducting a free lead poisoning prevention workshop.

Helping Low Income Seniors

Goal is healthier, safer homes

Community Energy Project has received a grant from the Metro North Portland Enhancement Fund to provide safety-related yard debris removal, gutter cleaning, smoke alarm testing, household hazardous-waste removal, and door and window-screen mending for 30 qualified north Portland households.

The project will run from April 1 to May 31. To qualify, a household must meet the income guidelines and have members who are 55 and over or have a disability. To find out if you qualify or to sign up for this free service, call Community Energy Project at 503-284-6827 or e-mail Homes@CommunityEnergyProject.org.

Weatherization services are beneficial year round: from keeping the heat in during the winter to keeping the air cool in the summer.

It's a good idea for those interested in taking advantage of Community Energy Project programs to sign up for service during the warmer months. Staff and volunteers install small-scale weatherization materials for senior citizens and people with disabilities, both homeowners and renters.

The warmer months are also a



Plastic sheeting helps keep the heat in during winter and the air cool in the summer.

great time of year to schedule small safety repairs such as installation of safety grab bars, bathtub benches, handheld showerheads,

and minor carpentry repairs to stairs and porches. As remodeling season begins, families should be aware of how to protect themselves.

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