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Rose Festival Early Call

Waterfront Village opens this Memorial Day weekend for the first time ever, starting three weekends of Rose Festival fun.



PORTLAND ROSE FESTIVAL
Best Festival In The World



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Heated Discussion Emotions boil over for high schools do over



PHOTO BY JAKE THOMAS/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Roosevelt High School Boosters got up early Saturday morning to demonstrate their commitment to the north Portland school during a high schools redesign forum at neighboring Jefferson High School. The Roosevelt supporters also are battling a school district decision to transfer their popular school principal without a public process. Parents and alumni say Deborah Peterson has been extremely effective at leading Roosevelt.

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A community forum to consider a complete redesign of the city's public high school system provoked emotional and at times heated reactions from local residents, revealing underlying tensions between the school district and the community it serves.

Saturday at 8:30 a.m., about 200 parents, students, and community members trickled into

the basement of Jefferson High School to share their thoughts on Portland Public School's ambitious and daunting plan to redesign its high schools.

Zeke Smith, chief of staff to PPS Superintendent Carole Smith, stood before the crowd speaking into a microphone asking for opinions on the specific aspects of the redesign. Smith and at least two board members also attended

The responses began on a

tense note.

One woman complained that it wasn't clear where Boise-Elliott Elementary fit into the plans. Another exclaimed that "we shouldn't be experimenting with our kids." And another declared that the whole conversation was premature since the district's kindergarten through eighth grade system was so flawed that students entering high school were woefully unprepared.

As Smith got ready to move to another question. Teletha Benjamin, a former educator and PPS volunteer, rose to interrupt him.

"You know there's something in this room today that if we don't acknowledge it we're just whistling in the dark and that is a level of distrust in this room," said Benjamin to applause. She then went on to ask that the district apologize for implementing past changes without listening

to the community first.

Carole Smith quickly seized the microphone and acknowledged that the district had made mistakes in the past that have generated suspicion, but added, "We're not going to overcome that today."

"I don't ascribed ill intent anywhere but I also think we've ended up doing things where you try and solve one problem and it creates three others," said Smith.

PPS's high school redesign aims to drastically reshape the high school system in hopes of addressing the achievement gap, unequal access to course offerings across high schools, and Portland's 8.4 percent drop-out rate.

The district is currently grappling with three broad conceptual ideas, one of which Smith will settle on next month.

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Coach on Mission to Help Jefferson

Matthew Todd returns to his roots

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Matthew Todd, 47-year-old Jefferson High School alumni, can be found on the baseball field behind his Alma matter trimming the grass and making sure that the grounds are in tip-top shape.

Todd is on a mission. He wants to revive the sport at Jefferson in hopes that it will inject a new sense of pride in the north Portland school and the area surrounding it.

"I'd like to see baseball played on that field every night of the week," said Todd.

Having played the sport as a student at Jefferson he remembers developing bonds with other players that are still with him today, and wants students to have the same opportunity he had.

The sport has steadily declined at Jefferson over the years, and currently only has a junior varsity team.

Todd explained that it's trying to keep interest sustained in baseball

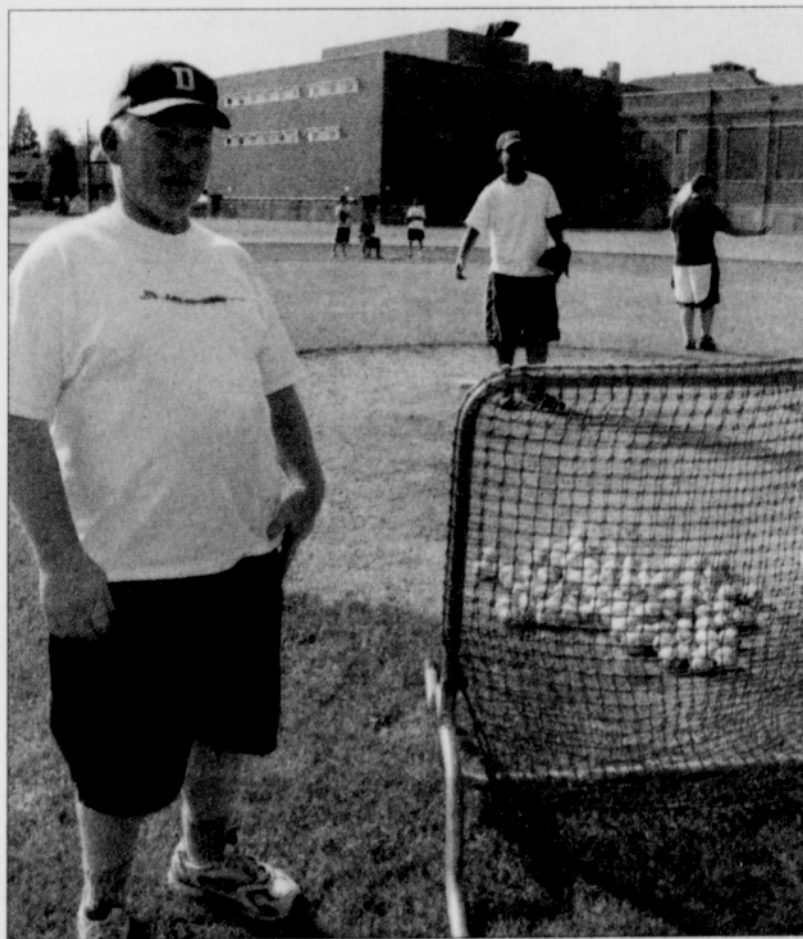


PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Baseball players at Jefferson High School get some tips on the game from long time volunteer community coach Matthew Todd. A former graduate of Jefferson himself, Todd is working to revive the sport for his Alma matter and the school's Portland community.

at the high school level. He said that the sport needs to be played regularly in order to keep kids interest. But in the Pacific Northwest, this is especially hard because the high school season ends just as the weather turns sunny.

"It's hard to keep kids interested, unless they're truly committed. When the weather is so horrible it's easy for them to get distracted and want to do different things," said Todd.

Todd wants to breathe new life into the sport by starting a Babe Ruth team based in north and northeast Portland that will compete against other regional teams during the summer. He already has 16 kids from the area tentatively on the roster.

Although the team will be independent from the school, Todd hopes that it will eventually attract enough interest to eventually jump start a freshman, junior varsity, and varsity teams at Jefferson.

So far he has support from the school's administration.

"I am totally excited about Matt Todd," said Jefferson High School Principal Cynthia Harris who regularly sees Todd priming the field and

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Brian Grant

Former Blazer has Parkinson's Same disease afflicting Ali

(AP) -- Former NBA forward and Portland Trail Blazer Brian Grant revealed Monday that he has Parkinson's disease and is starting a Web site devoted to his fight with the neurological disorder.

The 37-year-old Grant told ESPN.com that he was diagnosed in January with "young onset Parkinson's" and began having tremors in his left hand last summer. He consulted two other well-known

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Week in The Review

Tisdale Dead at 44
Former Oklahoma star and NBA player Wayman Tisdale, 44, died Friday after fighting cancer the past two years. The 6-foot-9 for-



ward was a three-time All-American for Oklahoma. He spent 12 seasons in the NBA with Indiana, Sacramento and Phoenix.

Dealers on Closure List

Timberline Dodge in Portland and Gresham Chrysler in Gresham are listed among nearly 800 Auto dealers nationwide that will lose their new auto stock as part of Chrysler's bankruptcy plan. Timberline plans

to fight the closure. See story, page A11.

Racism Shocks Mom

A white woman who moved with her adopted African-American son to the small town of Alesia in western Oregon, says she's shocked someone burned a cross on her lawn last weekend. It appears somebody wrapped an old sheet around the wood cross and set it afire.

Jobless Stays at 12 Percent

New figures released Monday show that Oregon's unemployment held steady in April at 12 percent. The rate is still more than double the 5.5 percent in March 2008. That means more than 250,000 people report being out of work.

Nike to Cut 500 Jobs

Nike says it will cut about 1,750 jobs worldwide, including about 500 jobs

at Nike's world headquarters in Beaverton. The cuts represent 5 percent of the shoe and apparel company's global work force.

39 years of community service