



The Portland Observer

Young and Talented

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years of
community service

'City of Roses'

Committed to Cultural Diversity

Living Green

North Portland eyes river path

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Gravel cracks and pops under the bike tires of Francie Royce and Paul Maresh along an unpaved section of industrial property along the Willamette River in north Portland. They dodge potholes along a stretch of the river that is lined with towering and gritty industrial equipment.

This isn't exactly an ideal place for a quiet walk or a leisurely bike ride. But if Royce and Maresh get their way, this part of Portland will be a very different place. And they might be in striking distance of making their dream a reality.

Since the late 1990s, southeast Portland has had the Springwater Corridor trail, which provides residents with a quiet, tree-lined path along the banks of the Willamette River. In 2005, a group of north Portland residents, including Royce and Maresh, banded together to form npGreenway, which has been steadily lobbying various government enti-



Paul Maresh and Francie Royce promote the creation of a public greenway in north Portland that would follow the Willamette River from downtown to the Columbia River.

PHOTO BY JAKE THOMAS/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

ties to get funding for an expansion of the trail into north Portland. Building such a trail just about anywhere in Portland seems like a no-brainer. There are several government reports bolstering their creation, including one by Metro that points out that trials like

the Springwater Corridor increase property values, improve public health by providing a walkable space, and provide wildlife habitat. But fulfilling the vision of a north Portland greenway seems like a daunting task. The expansion of the trail would be extremely

ambitious. It would pick up at the Steel Bridge where the Springwater Corridor tapers off and then snake along the banks of the Willamette through Swan Island before head-

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Tax Measures before Voters

Jobs and essential services at stake

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

When Frank Synogron lost his eyesight in 1988, he resigned himself to being "a professional blind guy."

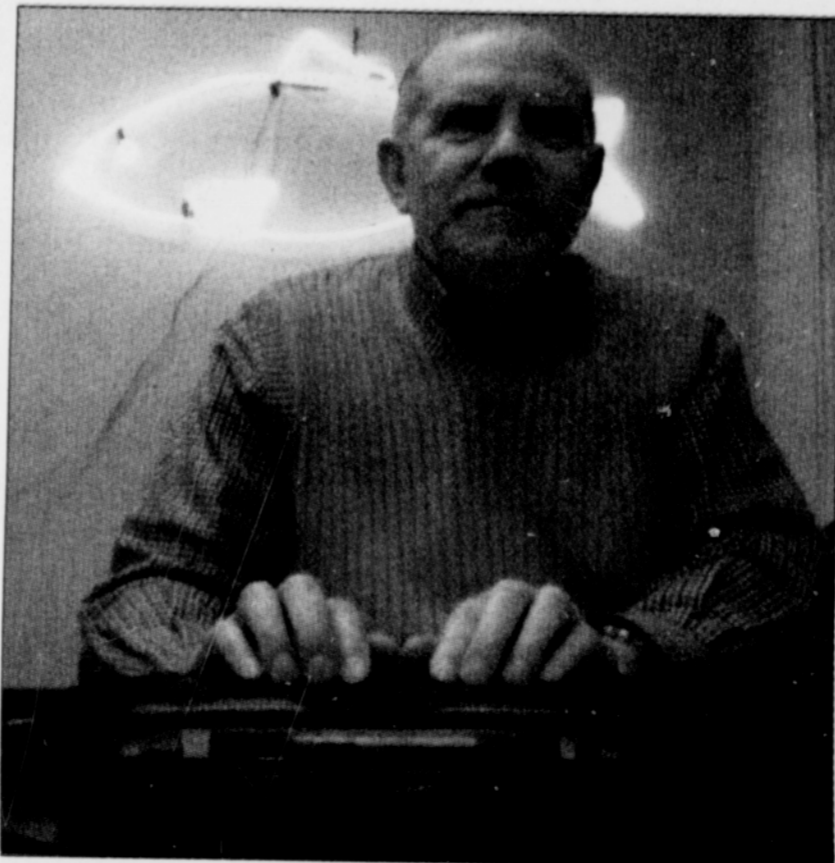
He sold his audio-visual retail business, and started collecting disability payments. But Synogron began to feel more useless and dependent with each check.

So he started taking classes at the Oregon Commission for the Blind, where he learned how to use a computer and better cope with the loss of his sight. The next year, he was hired full-time with the commission managing services for elderly people who've

become visually impaired.

In a few days, Oregon voters will start turning in ballots on two controversial measures that will have a hefty impact on people like Synogron.

When the Great Recession struck Oregon it blew a gaping hole in the state's budget, which jeopardized education, public safety and other services provided by the state. The Oregon Legislature responded by raising taxes by 1.8 percent on households making more than \$250,000 and \$125,000 for individuals. It also upped a \$10 corporate minimum tax to \$150, in addition to business taxes and fees. The mea-



asures are expected to up revenue by \$733 million to cover basic services.

However, businesses and the well-to-do scrapped together enough money to refer both measures to the voters, who will have their say beginning this week when ballots go out for the Jan. 26 vote-by-mail election.

Proponents of the tax hikes argue that the measures will affect just 3 percent of the population that is already doing relatively well, and the money will

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Frank Synogron (left), a visually-impaired person who manages rehab services for the elderly at the Oregon Commission for the Blind, types with 'notepad,' a device that helps him function without sight.

PHOTO BY JAKE THOMAS/
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER