



The

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Season for Making Deals

Calendar brings yard and garage sales see page 13



Urban Renewal

Wins support of local leaders see page 3



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Principal Sidelined

Jefferson leader removed shortly before audit release

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Jefferson High School Principal Cynthia Harris and the school's business manager Reis Wilbanks were placed on administrative leave last week by Portland Public Schools.

Matt Shelby, district spokesperson, wouldn't discuss the reasons for decision, but it was made shortly before the release of an audit of Jefferson's finances, which paints a damning picture of how money was handled at the northeast Portland school, and points a finger at top management for lax fiscal practices.



Cynthia Harris

The audit found "... a lack of internal controls over the operation of the Student Body Funds and an inconsistent tone at the top which resulted in an override of established policies and procedures without written justification."

According to the audit, which examined school finances for the school year that ended June 30, 2009, 16 student body funds were in the red, an increase of six funds from the last year that carried a deficit.

"Fund deficits should not be allowed to occur; expenses should not be approved without sufficient funding," stated a letter

in does not always fit within the end of the fiscal year."

The audit also found that two donations of \$5,000 or more to Jefferson that were designated for a specific use were improperly placed in the principal's discretionary account.

It also found 21 reimbursements, totaling

a lack of internal controls over the operation of the Student Body Funds and an inconsistent tone at the top which resulted in an override of established policies and procedures without written justification.

— from text of Jefferson High School financial audit

from auditors to district officials outlining their findings..

The letter includes an explanation from Harris who noted that the student body funds are made up of grants and donations, and that, "The timing of these funds coming

\$7,590, did not contain receipts or adequate supporting documentation, and on four occasions money was spent out of accounts that were running deficits.

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Making Amends

Memorial would pay tribute to discriminated Chinese

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A new effort by a coalition of civic organizations and government officials want to make sure that the lives of two previously marginalized groups aren't forgotten by building a memorial in their honor in a neglected section of a pioneer cemetery in southeast Portland.

The Lone Fir Cemetery has been the resting place of people with names that may be familiar to many Portlanders like Dekum, Hawthorne, Lovejoy and Curry.



PHOTO BY JAKE THOMAS/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Local leaders promoting the construction of a memorial at Lone Fir Cemetery in southeast Portland stand next to 'Block 14' where discriminated Chinese immigrants and mental health patients in the late 1800s and early part of the 20th Century were buried and forgotten.

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