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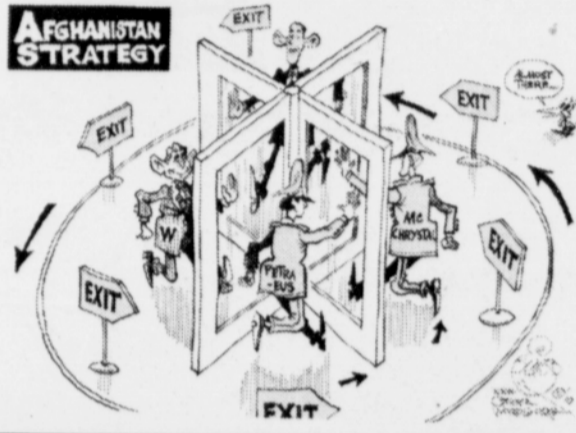


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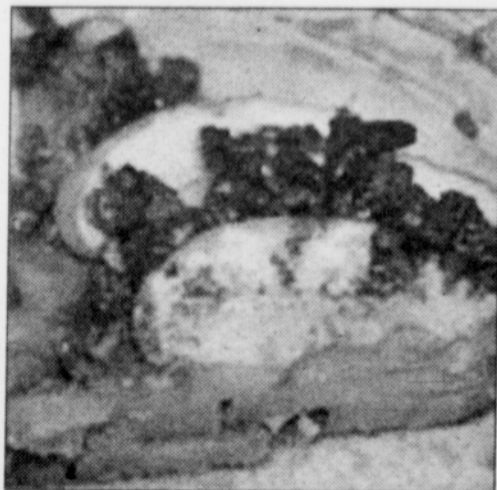
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What's on your list today?

LOCAL NEWS



A Permanent Home for Miracles Club New building will include drug-free housing

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

After years of scurrying from building to building in northeast Portland, a group of Portlanders trying to hang onto a second chance at life seems to have found a permanent home.

Some of Portland's top politicians and community leaders gathered on 4222 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard last week to celebrate the groundbreaking for the new Miracles Club, a social outlet in northeast Portland for people recovering from drug and alcohol addictions. Its new digs will also include housing for people getting back on the straight-and-narrow.

The Miracles Club began in the 1990s as a place for people trying to stay sober to get together, relax, play a game of dominos, and generally have a place to socialize without the presence of drugs or alcohol.

However, its membership has often been nomadic, occupying several different places in northeast Portland.

City Commissioner Dan Saltzman described how he first came into contact with the group in the mid 1990s when he was serving on the

Multnomah County Commission, and almost instantly became a supporter of the group and the concept behind it.

"I was clearly impressed with just the power and the simplicity of the idea of having a social club for those who were in recovery; what a beautiful, powerful, simple idea," said Saltzman, who helped the Miracles Club get through the red tape to move into its most recent location at 4069 NE Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard about three and a half years ago.

Since then the group, which is predominantly African American, has clashed with its neighbors in the gentrifying part of town about their sometimes boisterous meetings.

In 2006, the building the club used was sold by its owner. Although the deal fell through, it became clear that it was time for an upgrade from the building that lacked air conditioning and was a bit dilapidated.

In December of that year, Saltzman helped the group get \$500,000 in city funds to help it look for a new home, which he called a very fitting Christmas present.

After years of wrangling, city

officials and supporters of the club cobbled together \$12 million in stimulus money, urban renewal funds, and other public and private money for a new home for the Miracles Club.

But the building will further the mission of the Miracles Club by providing 40 units of affordable housing for individuals recovering from addictions, giving them a stable and supportive place to get clean.

Speakers at the event took turns gushing over the project and how the groundbreaking is a positive development in northeast Portland that brought a variety of people together.

"It is a good day in the neighborhood. It is a good day," said former state Senator Avel Gordly, who added that the project was proof that we hadn't lost our ability to trust, hope, or dream.

Herman Bryant, the executive director of the Miracles Club Board, spoke, saying that he never doubted that the project would happen and that it had brought together many people from different backgrounds to make it happen.

"I don't like the term diversity because the first three letters are like divide; it's just family," he said.

Correction

Last week's cover article, "Ghosts of New Columbia", incorrectly stated

that there was a fatal homicide on June 15 on the 4900 block of North Fessenden Street. The shooting actually occurred near N. Fiske

Avenue and N. Fessenden Street and was not fatal. "Hitmakers at Spirit Mountain" also included a misspelling of "Spirit Mountain."