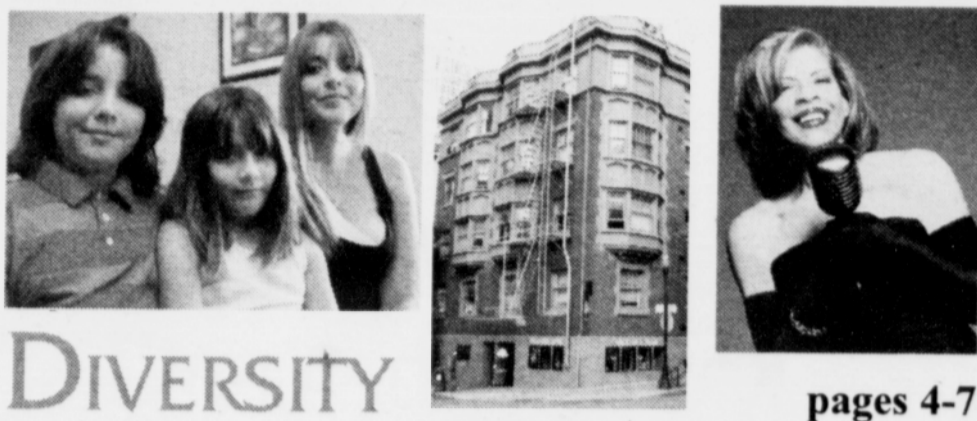


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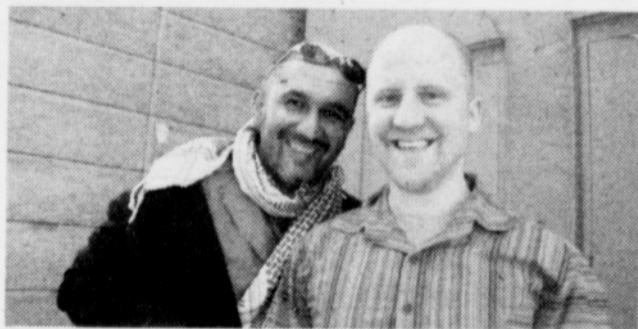
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What's on your list today?

# LOCAL NEWS

## School Administrator Assigned Two Jobs

### Jefferson will start year with interim principal

BY JAKE THOMAS  
PORTLAND OBSERVER

Portland Public Schools Superintendent Carole Smith announced on Friday that Toni Hunter, deputy superintendent for the district, would remain interim principal at Jefferson High School for the coming academic year, which will likely be a pivotal time for the north Portland school.

In May, Hunter was appointed temporary principal of Jefferson after a routine audit of the school's finances revealed questionable financial practices. The audit suggested that they were due to lax management at the school. Cynthia Harris, the school's principal, and Reis Wilbank, the school's business manager, were placed on administrative leave shortly after the audit was released.

The audit found that donations were improperly placed in the principal's account, reimbursements lacked proper documentation, independent contractors were paid before contracts were written, and a number of accounts were running deficits, among other problems.

Harris, who became principal of Jefferson in 2007, is currently under investigation by the district. No conclusive findings have been released. Wilbank was laid off.

While serving as principal of Jefferson, Hunter will retain her duties as deputy superintendent, which include supervising schools in the Lincoln, Franklin and Jefferson clusters. She will also

continue to play a key role in the district by helping make decisions regarding the budget, and will continue to serve on the superintendent's executive committee and academic cabinet.

"As a long-time principal, I am excited to be back on the ground working with educators and students in a high school. I look forward to helping Jefferson continue to build on the successes we've seen in the past two years," said Hunter, who served as principal of Grant High School from 1997 to 2007, in a prepared statement.

The coming academic year will likely be critical for Jefferson. The district is currently in the midst of a stalled redesign of its high school system that would consolidate the number of high schools in an effort to more equitably distribute resources to students.

The superintendent's redesign plan called for closing Marshall High School in southeast Portland and reopening it as a magnet, while drastically shrinking Benson Polytechnic High School in northeast Portland.

Supporters of Jefferson, the state's only majority black high school, praised her plan because it would have boosted attendance and funding at the school, which struggles to meet academic standards.

However, several school board members signaled that they felt that there just weren't enough resources in the district to keep Jefferson open as a neighborhood school, and suggested reopening it as a smaller magnet school.

The board could make a decision on Jefferson's fate this September.

## Cox & Cox Property Sold

continued **▲** from front

"They look nice, very traditional craftsman style," Warwick told the Portland Observer. "They're much better than what we've been seeing. We'll need to see how this progresses, but it looks good so far."

Bluestone will seek to meet the City's Community Design Standards, which would spare them from any sort of a design review process in Eliot's His-

toric Conservation District.

"We've been in business for 13 years, and we've done a lot of development in Portland," Kassebaum said. "We try to provide a product that's equal or better than its surroundings, and that respects the historic style of older neighborhoods."

Neither Kassebaum nor Partain would comment on financing for the project. Both said that Bluestone is spending a fair amount of money on design and the subdivi-

sion process, and is confident that they can obtain financing for construction. However, the project is not likely to break ground this year, Partain said.

Regarding the funeral home building, the former location of long-time African-American business, Kassebaum says he expects it will be used for "something advantageous to the community, either commercial or residential."