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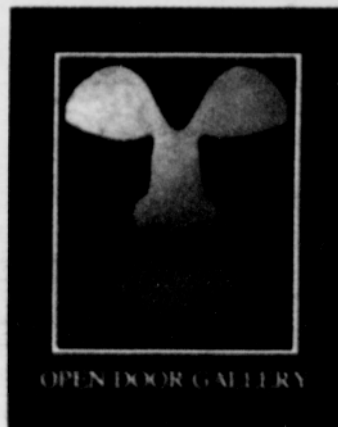


### Diversity in Style

Six new public art murals take shape  
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### Art on the Boulevard

Holiday weekend at  
McCoy Academy gallery  
See Arts & Entertainment, page 13



# The Portland Observer 43

'City of Roses'



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PHOTO BY MINDY COOPER/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Opinions are running high over a plan to add fluoride to Portland's water supply in an effort to fight tooth decay and improve public health.

## Public Health Debate

### Should fluoride be added to our water?

BY MINDY COOPER  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A debate over whether or not fluoride should be added to the public water supply has taken center stage in Portland, after City Commissioner Randy Leonard scheduled a public hearing next week, Sept. 6, with a council vote scheduled less than a week later.

As the second largest city in the country to not have

fluoride in its water, Portland also stands out with one of the highest rates of tooth decay among children and adults in the nation.

According to the Oregon Dental Association's 2007 Oregon Smile Survey, more than 35 percent of Oregon children suffer from untreated tooth decay — more than double the rate in Washington (15 percent) and other neighboring states.

Although poor dental health outcomes can't be directly pinpointed to the lack of fluoride in the water, many experts believe the missing ingredient is the number one reason for the metro area's low rank for childhood oral health.

"This public health crisis is having devastating effects on our children, the poor, and the uninsured," said John Snyder,

DMD, dental director and chief executive officer of Permanente Dental Associates.

Access to oral health care is a critical problem for low-income, underinsured, and uninsured families, who are particularly vulnerable to tooth decay and associated health issues, he said. "This reality, coupled with an uninsured rate higher than 40 other states, has created an oral health emergency in Portland and all of Oregon."

Although Portlanders have voted three times against the fluoridation in the past, Leonard, along with Commissioner Nick Fish and Mayor Sam Adams, have announced their support of the plan, in hopes to decrease the exponentially

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