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## Fluoride in the Water?

Portland divides but not along the usual left-right faultlines

By Helen Silvis  
Of The Skanner News

Unless we see a high-speed u-turn, Portland City Council will vote Sept. 12, to add fluoride to our water supply. Three city commissioners – Randy Leonard, Nick Fish and Mayor Sam Adams — already have declared their support for the idea, along with commission candidate Mary Nolan.

The council will listen to public comment Sept. 6, and there will be plenty of it. Feeling runs strong on both sides of the debate.

Those in favor say fluoridation is a low-



Plenty of opposition is expected

cost, safe way to improve Oregon's dental health, considered the fifth worst in the nation. More than 200 million people in the USA, as well as 60 other countries, already have fluoridated water with no ill effects, they say.

"There is not a single study showing that low levels of fluoridation cause any negative health effects," says Kylie Menagh Johnson, spokesperson for the Everybody Deserves Healthy Teeth Coalition. "And it will lower tooth decay by at least 25 percent

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## CHURCH VS STREET



PHOTO BY HELEN SILVIS

A group of 25 Black men got together for a networking brunch that aimed to bridge the gap between church and street. Pastors, concerned men and gang members all sat down together to discuss spirituality, struggle and how to work together for the benefit of youth. The no-holds barred discussion was sponsored by The Aristotle Project and supported by Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church.

### Tough Discussion for Change

Pastors, concerned men, gang members build network of care

By Helen Silvis  
Of The Skanner News

A group of 25 men came together Aug. 4, at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, to bridge the gulf between church and street. Convened by Royal Harris of The Aristotle Project, who works with gang-affiliated men, the networking brunch included church leaders, youth workers and men who grew up in street gangs.

The conversation looked at

the reasons for mistrust between church and street leaders, as well as ways to collaborate and support one another. Everyone agreed on the value and importance of religion. Almost all the men professed a strong belief in, and reliance on, Christianity. Some of the men had known each other for decades; others were meeting for the first time. Men who once were enemies from rival gangs declared their friendship and commitment to helping young men stay alive

and out of prison.

"I was at my cousin's funeral last week," said Elder Elmer Yarborough, a youth worker. "He was murdered. I'm tired of going through it. I'm tired of young people dying."

Everyone in the room seemed to understand that feeling. Many had lost friends or relatives to violence. Marcus Miller and Deandre Clark were just two mentioned by name. Others had been shot, stabbed or incarcerated as perpetrators. So each man

brought an insider's perspective to the discussion on how to work across the divide between church and street.

Black men have a crucial role in raising children and guiding young men, Harris said. "The reality is that the two most influential groups of Black men in Portland are pastors and gang members. We have a situation where, as men, we are caught up in those labels.

"The streets helped raise us,

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## Hip-Hop Crackdown: Part 1 of 3

Old battles between community and the City re-emerging

Bruce Poinsette  
Of The Skanner News

This is part one of a three part series on the crackdown on hip-hop in Portland. Part two will focus on the costs of security while part three will examine how the crackdown affects the growth of the industry, as well as how it factors into gentrification.

If you happen to be at a downtown Portland club on a Saturday night, you'll probably hear Drake, Rick Ross, or even E-40 pumping out of the sound system. However, if you want some local rap music, you'll have to see the artists in concert.

That is becoming more of a challenge as local venues increase the cost of putting on hip-hop shows or move away from the genre altogether. The hip-hop scene in Port-

land has been in a state of flux due to changing dress codes, security expenses and an ongoing rocky relationship with the City.

"You can't be anybody and throw a show in this city anymore," says Randal Wyatt of Speaker Minds.

The group recently performed their last show at Mt. Tabor Theater, one of the ven-

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