

# AlamedaPDX

Summer 2021

Volume 35 Number 2



POPINA OWNER PAMELA "LULU" LEVENSON SETS UP HER NEW DESIGN STUDIO.



THE NEW BOUTIQUE RETAINS THE FEEL OF THE FORMER LOCATION.

## Popina Moves to New Home in Alameda *by Blythe Knott*

Popina Swimwear has moved to Alameda! On June 1, the popular Portland store opened in its new location on NE 24th and Fremont, next to Guilder and across the street from Lucca.

Popina is the brainchild of Alameda resident Pamela "Lulu" Levenson. For 15 years she has been designing bathing suits and selling them – along with 30 other brands of women's and men's swimwear and accessories - from her comfortable, vacation-themed boutique on NE 42nd and Tillamook.

Having made it through the travails of this Covid year, Levenson is going back to basics for the business, centering more on her own designs (which are made in Portland) and on having a more focused space. The move to Alameda decreased Popina's square footage by about half.

Popina has a strong online and wholesale operation, which

would be enough to sustain the business on its own. But Levenson wants to continue to have a retail presence in Portland, and this new space is only a few blocks from her home.

"We're going to miss being in the Hollywood District, but are so excited to both live and work in Alameda!" says Levenson.

The plan is to have retail operations open from Wednesday or Thursday through Sunday, depending on the time of year. The store will be open for online order pickup an additional day each week. Also, regular customers will be happy to know that Kona beer will still be on tap at the new location!

According to Levenson, "Although the new boutique is a bit smaller, it's still all the things our customers have come to love about Popina."

## Grant Awarded to Friends of Wilshire Park

*by Peter Mogielnicki*

In December 2020, the Portland Garden Club announced a grant competition. Submissions were to be judged on the degree to which proposals were aligned with the club's mission, which is: "To stimulate the love of gardening, to aid the protection of the native trees, plants and birds, to encourage civic beauty, and to improve and protect the quality of the environment through programs and action in the fields of conservation and education."

With the endorsement and support of Portland Parks and Recreation, Friends of Wilshire Park got to work, submitted a proposal and waited. In late April the good news arrived that the park had been awarded \$3,000 to further enhance the plantings at either end of the paved north-south path.

Since new plants do poorly during the dry summer months, a community planting party will be scheduled in the fall and volunteers are welcome to help out.

## ANA/SOLVE Cleanup Set for July 10

Join the Alameda Neighborhood Association and SOLVE for a NE Hollywood District Cleanup!

**WHEN:** Saturday, July 10

**TIME:** 8:45 a.m.- 11:45 a.m.

**LOCATION:** NE Hollywood District, exact address TBD

**CONTACT:** Taryn Lange tarynhowe@gmail.com or text 503-348-3299 for location and signup info.

Portland is a strong, resilient city, but it needs our help! Join the ANA and SOLVE for a morning of litter cleanup to beautify our city, help keep our waterways clean, and protect local wildlife from the harmful effects of trash.

Enjoy the sights of Portland's historic Hollywood neighborhood and know that the work you are engaging in has many benefits for our community, our local businesses, and our environment.

Be sure to check out the SOLVE website at solveoregon.org for volunteer safety guidelines and the latest Covid-related updates. Also, please note that this event is a litter cleanup and will not include graffiti removal.



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## Editor's Message



There's a lot to talk about in this issue! As we move into the (hopefully) final stages of the pandemic, Alameda residents are getting vaccinated, our schools have reopened, and our local businesses have discovered new ways to adapt and survive.

There are also some major milestones to observe: Alameda School is turning 100, and its first remote-learning class of fifth graders is graduating. Also, we mourn the recent passing of legendary local author Beverly Cleary, and we celebrate the 70th wedding anniversary of our neighborhood's oldest residents!

Because we have so many good stories to fit in, I'm stepping back this time to let the writers do the talking! I hope you all have a wonderful, safe summer, and I'll see you again in the fall!

— Annette

## Talbotts Celebrate 70th Anniversary

On March 25, 2021, Alameda residents Jack and Ruth Talbott celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary - a milestone very few couples achieve.

Jack and Ruth are both 95, and according to their daughter, Rebecca, they're the oldest couple in Alameda and have lived in the neighborhood, in the same house, longer than anyone.

The two met on a blind date set up by mutual friends. Ruth reported that she had a miserable cold on their first date, and she saw Jack as something of a "diamond in the rough." However, after they saw a little more of each other she realized there was "a significant spark" between them.

According to Ruth, "after a whirlwind romance, on a fall day in a picturesque spot in the West Hills of Portland," Jack popped the question. Setting their wedding date was a little challenging, however, as Jack was recalled to military service in the Korean conflict.

When Jack found out he was going to be stationed in England and could bring a wife if he was married, they planned their wedding in just two weeks. They were married on Easter Sunday (with special dispensation) in 1951, and spent their



JACK AND RUTH TALBOTT, 1951 AND 2021

first year of marriage in England. Their first child, John, was born there.

After the war, they moved back to Portland and lived in a couple of other locations before settling into their home on NE Dunckley Street in 1965, where they've lived ever since.

The Talbotts have five children including John Talbott, Ann DiLoreto, Sarah Braxton, Mary DiLoreto, and Rebecca Talbott, plus eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren. The family celebrated the anniversary with a gathering at their home in March.

## The Road to School Reopening by Dan LaGrande

Other than older people, who accounted for most of the deaths from Covid-19, young people of school age have had a very rough time so far during the pandemic.

Shut out of their schools, separated from their friends, and struggling to continue their education online at home – the pandemic has been a difficult experience for children as well as their parents.

Oregon Governor Kate Brown's order on March 12, 2020 closing all public schools, and her announcement less than a month later that schools would not reopen again in the current school year, was a shock for many parents and their children. The state told school districts to implement distance learning plans for the balance of the school year.

The plans introduced a new lexicon of terms like Comprehensive Distance Learning, hybrid instruction model, student cohorts, and asynchronous learning.

In the fall of 2020, Portland schools began the new year with Comprehensive Distance Learning, which meant students remained at home and attended classes and did school work online. In March of 2021, Governor Brown

ordered all public schools to reopen by April, starting with elementary schools.

On the first day of classes at Alameda School, a truck pulled up early to deliver lunches. Kindergarten and first grade students returned to Alameda April 1, and the bulk of the students - 2nd through 5th graders - started back to school on April 5.

As children arrived for their first day of school, accompanied by their parents, they were checked in at tables set up on the playground. Parents were not allowed to enter the school. The hybrid model at Alameda put students in small learning groups for two hours and 15 minutes a day, four days a week, with all students remaining at home on Wednesdays for a full day of distance learning.

Parents arriving with their children that first day of school had differing views of the new schedule.

"So far, so good," said John Shapland, who has a child in first grade. "It's been a long year, difficult for many families, and especially hard for younger children to be at home in isolation from other youngsters."

He continued, "It would be nice if the students could spend more time in the classroom, but it is still an improvement over remote learning. Portland Public Schools still requires six-foot spacing, which restricts the number of students they can accommodate. Although the CDC has reduced spacing to three feet, Portland and Oregon are still very cautious about reopening schools."

Jocelyn Krebs, who has a 3rd grader at Alameda, voiced strong frustration with Portland Public Schools' cautious reopening plan.

"Less than half a day, just two and a quarter hours four days a week is too little," she noted. "It would be better to have two full days a week in the classroom for each child. And for a special education child with a lot of learning challenges, much more support is needed. We need to return to a full school schedule, as allowed by the CDC. Portland and Oregon are behind most other states."

Another parent, Danielle Martin, said she has children in primary, middle and high school and added, "I'd like to see them have more time in the classroom, but I

(continued on page 8)

### ALAMEDA NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION STATEMENT OF INCLUSION AND SUPPORT

Our community declared the Alameda neighborhood a hate-free zone in 1995. Today, we reaffirm Alameda's commitment to be a loving, caring, supportive and inclusive community for all who reside, work, do business, or visit our neighborhood. We stand against hatred, racism, xenophobia, discrimination and/or marginalization of any kind. We are committed to growing, nurturing and sustaining a community where all feel welcomed, safe and included.

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The ANA meets on the 2nd Monday of every month at 7pm at Fremont United Methodist Church.

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Prices are per issue. To place an ad, contact Charles Rice at charlesricepdx@gmail.com

<b>Publication dates:</b>	<b>Deadlines:</b>
December 10	November 10
March 10	February 10
June 10	May 10
September 10	August 10

Please submit pdf, jpg, or Adobe Distiller X-1A compliant artwork at 300dpi or greater.



# Beaumont Village Adapts to Pandemic by David Spencer

Over 30 restaurants, personal services, and specialty stores occupy the half mile of Northeast Fremont Street called Beaumont Village, and all were impacted by the statewide Covid-19 that began on March 17, 2020. Since then, they've coped with on-again, off-again restrictions on reopening.

We recently checked in with two restauranteurs, two hair stylists, and a fitness coach to see how they've coped with the year-long pandemic, and how they see their future as we start the recovery.

## Getting brunch

Little Griddle has been serving breakfast, brunch, and lunch for three and a half years in its cozy spot around the corner from Pizzicato.

Owner Judd Harris saw a big decrease from the pandemic at first, when he had to close the restaurant and cut staff. After the initial shutdown, he set up tables in the parking lot on weekends and served a few tables along his sidewalk during the week. He also offered takeout, and used Door Dash's online platform to deliver customers' orders.

Little Griddle had no website, so Harris created one and a new logo to go on it, and the restaurant became a regular presence on social media. To compensate for the lower volume of sit-down meals, Harris has started two new side businesses, selling hanging plants and bottling the restaurant's signature salad dressings.

Harris wants to be optimistic, but he expects to see another year of "making do" before business returns to pre-pandemic conditions. He plans to continue serving meals outside on weekends this summer (weather permitting), offering takeout, and using Door Dash for deliveries.



THE REFINERY'S 900 SQ. FOOT OUTDOOR SPACE.

## Getting a haircut

Alex Jeffrey manages Beaumont Barbers, which opened in 2018. After a temporary closure due to a building fire in 2019, the shop closed in March, 2020 for the statewide shutdown but reopened on a restricted basis three months later.

Before the pandemic, you could wait for your haircut comfortably with your choice of coffee, beer, or whiskey. Now, the shop takes no walk-ins. All customers must book appointments, then wait on the sidewalk for their time in the chair.

Jeffrey is optimistic about summer, when business usually picks up. The shop has a presence on Instagram. Customers appreciate Jeffrey's sanitary measures, and the appointment system helps her to plan ahead. She'll be keeping those measures in place for awhile.

## Getting fit

For nine years, Ashleigh Kayser has operated The Refinery, a boutique gym where neighborhood residents can pursue

individual fitness goals with a dedicated trainer. Before the Covid closure, she employed eight full-time trainers who each spent 25-28 hours a week with clients. In the months after the closure, she and her staff had to learn how to train clients using Zoom meetings and ad hoc equipment in parks and parking lots.

To adapt, Kayser built a 900 square foot, semi-permanent outdoor space behind the building.

"It's a godsend," she says, "and a PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) loan paid for it."

In the tented, lighted, and heated space, trainers hold classes of four to six people with State-required physical distancing. Kayser will continue using the outdoor space when restrictions relax for classes like cycling, where mask-wearing is difficult.

For the future, she hopes her clients get vaccinated and grow comfortable with the rules for indoor spaces. The gym now has a newsletter and a social media presence on Instagram. Kayser says, "When we started, our motto was 'small batch fitness' then class sizes climbed to 18-20. Now we'll



THE BOSS WALL AT THE BLIND OX.

just find the healthiest way to start again with small batch fitness."

## Having an ice cream

In September 2020, Eric and Genevieve West, with business partner John McInroy, opened Mix 'n' Match Creamery and Blind Ox Taphouse in the former Alameda Brewhouse space. According to Eric, offerings include made-to-order liquid nitrogen ice cream – some of which will be infused with booze – plus craft beer and a limited food menu.

They immediately faced pandemic restrictions, and in order to adapt, the owners had to try to align the restaurant's goals with the state's guidelines.

The Wests envisioned a space to hear live music, dance, and see work by local artists, while enjoying pub fare and unique ice cream. To preserve the community experience, they started a monthly \$20 subscription program for regulars. Blind Ox Society members get a \$25 e-Gift card with no expiration date, 20-ounce pours for 16-ounce prices, and their photo on the BOSS Wall. Subscribers can help support the business and become "Blind Ox Famous."

Eric's outlook for the middle-to-end of summer is optimistic, even if there's another lockdown. "We're in the final stretch and things are getting closer to normal," he feels. He invites those struggling with confinement to take advantage of his "to go" food and gift card services.

## Styling seven days a week

Nichole Mustoe has managed the Defining Image Salon since 2007, and she and her husband bought the salon in 2013. Business slowed following the 2020 state-mandated closure, but lately it has bounced back with lots of new customers.

According to Mustoe, people who live in the neighborhood but work farther away find the local shop more convenient now that they're working from home. Mustoe spent her closure time researching Covid safety and hunting down special cleaning supplies she needed for reopening.

"Many new customers like the way we keep to the rules, so they've come to us from other shops that seemed less careful," she says.

She created waiting area signs about required distancing and the number of people allowed. The shop is now open seven days a week, and extended hours of operation allow the shop to see fewer people at one time. It also gives customers a wider choice of days to schedule services, and the five stylists can opt for days off that fit their preferences.

Mustoe isn't sure what the future will bring, since Coronavirus guidelines change frequently. She'd rather "adapt on the fly" than plan too far ahead and be disappointed when unforeseen problems crop up.



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## Book Review - *Old Stories, Some Not True* by Tim Gillespie by Peter Mogielnicki

A retired English teacher once told me if you don't connect with a poem on your first reading, you should just skip it. Nothing like that came close to happening when I came across Tim Gillespie's collection, *Old Stories, Some Not True* at Broadway Books.

The poems dig deep, yet are eminently readable. Some start off with a mundane event - like attending a play, a phone call from an old friend, getting a garden ready for spring - then, near the end, they sidle up to the reader to deliver a powerful shift of mood and meaning.

Others give common stuff - a spider plant, a walk down a city street, a high school English class - sparkles of new significance. And there are plenty of special treats for local residents - the appearance of familiar landmarks like Lan Su Chinese Garden, a bar in Newport, and Sandy Boulevard cut literally and figuratively across a poem

Until recently, I knew Tim Gillespie only as the organized, agenda-conscious President of the Beaumont Wilshire Neighborhood Association. But I was knocked off balance to discover him as the author of this beautiful book of poems.

In "A Hesitant Love Poem," a young child encounters his teacher not where she is supposed to be - in the orderly environment of her elementary school classroom - but "... pushing her cart at the grocery store/ past the oranges, mounded high, and her saying hello/ and chatting calmly with my mother/as I stared dumbfounded/at my first grade teacher/out in the world." This captured perfectly the amazement I felt as a young boy during a similar encounter. Like so many of Gillespie's poems, it begins with an ordinary event and ends up exploring complex but familiar emotions and ideas.

Describing hard-to-describe feelings is one thing, but provoking them in a reader is another. In "The Bike on

the Porch" Gillespie sets up the story by recounting how a group of his childhood friends knew that a bike left on a neighborhood family's front porch belonged to a son they lost to leukemia. But near the poem's end, what was mainly an abstraction for the reader suddenly hits home when the poet reveals that his own little brother "...swooping down the steepest hill/in our hometown, lost control/ and we lost him in a tangle of bike and bus." I felt a chill when I read that line.

In the collection's central section, Gillespie's years as a high school literature teacher come through loud and clear as he highlights the relevance of classical old stories to the here and now.

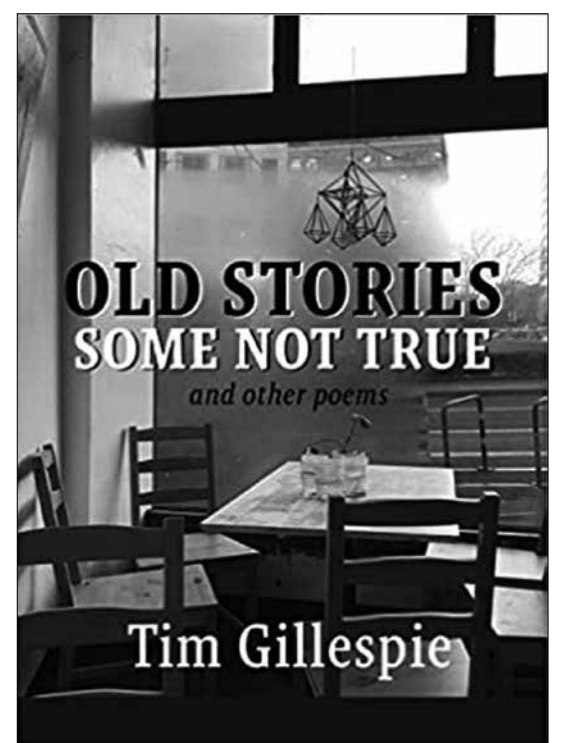
In the first two stanzas of "Cassandra in Three Acts" we relearn the role of Cassandra, "the dark-skinned daughter of the slaughtered Trojan tribe," in a classic Greek tragedy by Aeschylus. In the third stanza of the poem, Gillespie brings it home, courageously putting his own vulnerability on display with thoughts about his 16-year-old granddaughter taking the part of Cassandra in a school play:

"...she gets/the sting at being dismissed for being a girl; for being/too young, too smart; for having darker skin; for holding fiercely to her trust that there are truths that can be known/... be forewarned that here's a girl who won't be grabbed except by truths/she won't stop telling, that here's a girl who won't be lured by hollow golden things, that this girl's/no one's trophy..."

There are dozens of similarly rewarding surprises in *Old Stories, Some Not True*. It's a collection well worth reading and rereading. And you may even bump into our neighborhood poet at Beaumont Hardware, or tapping away on his laptop at Grand Central Bakery or Guilder Cafe.



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# Alameda School History: The Early Years by Doug Decker

*It's been 100 years since construction of Alameda School, and 107 years since school facilities were first set up here in the neighborhood. To observe this century mark, this second in a two-part series looks at development of the building we know today.*

In Part 1 of this series, we followed along with Alameda's activist parents who petitioned, lobbied, cajoled and protested before the Portland school board for facilities that would keep up with population growth in this brand-new neighborhood.

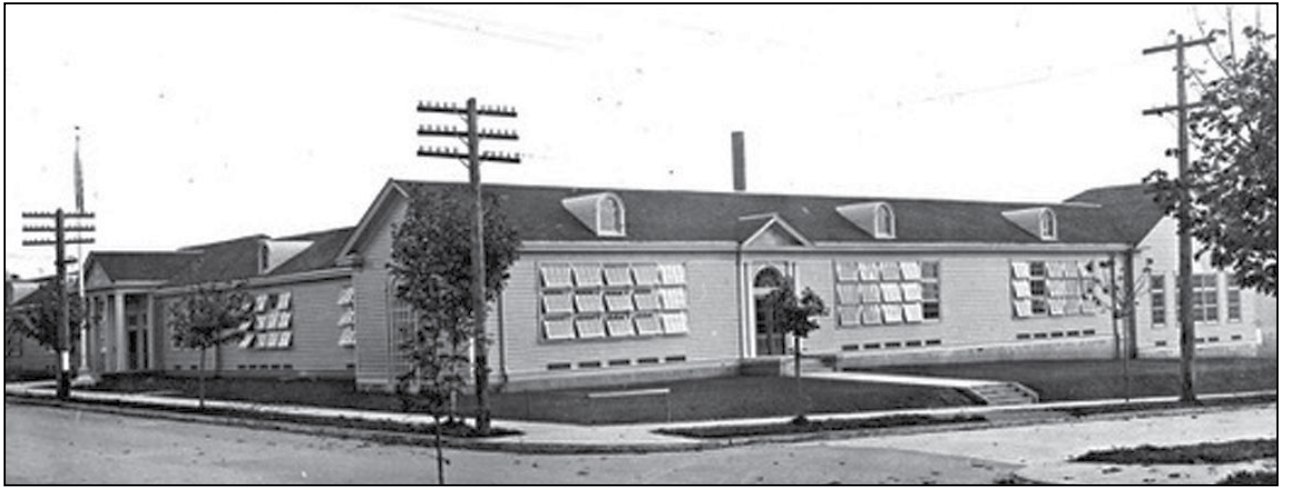
We'll remember that our neighborhood was first platted in 1909 and home construction followed soon after. By 1914 about 80 homes had been built on these former orchards and open fields, and many of them had children in them. The old Vernon School at NE 23rd and Going or the new Kennedy School at 33rd and Jarrett were the nearest, but most parents believed Alameda should have its own school closer to home.

In 1914, parents successfully lobbied the school board to bring in six temporary portable classrooms to the intersection of NE 25th and Fremont, forming a small ad hoc campus of well-used small buildings connected by plank sidewalks. This arrangement stayed in place until 1921, when a school levy finally passed and a contract was let for construction of the school we know today. Interestingly, two of the six original portable buildings from the early campus at NE 25th and Fremont are still in use today on the south side of the school...time travelers of a sort.

Plans for the school were drawn by long-time school district architect George Jones, who designed many Portland schools between 1908 and 1932. School design in the early 1920s was informed by several well-publicized fires at multi-story wooden-frame school buildings across the country. Even though the new Alameda School was wood and steel construction, it was all on one floor with "rapid egress" from virtually every room in the building. It's U shape also provided opportunities for future expansion should that be necessary.

The construction contract was awarded in October 1921 to low bidder Robert Paysee Construction, with an overall budget of \$80,000. When construction began in late 1921, 168 students attended the six Alameda portables, up from 127 students the year before. A heavy winter storm in 1922 slowed construction progress and by March, a weekly drumbeat of stories in *The Oregonian* related what was happening in the new building as the April 2, 1922 deadline approached. The hope was to occupy the building immediately, but it just wasn't ready.

A story on March 9, 1922 promised in all caps: "SCHOOL NEARLY FINISHED," but related that the plaster needed a few more days to dry before the contractor could place the interior wood trims and moldings. On March 27, 1922 the newspaper reported the school board had granted the contractor extra time to finish the project due to bad



ALAMEDA SCHOOL AS IT LOOKED IN 1923.

weather. There was still plenty to do: "The building is now practically completed so far as the construction is concerned. There still remains to be done, however, the installation of the heating system and some inside finishing. It will also require several weeks for the plaster to dry thoroughly."

One construction complication led to another and soon it was June and school was out. The 1921-22 year finished in the six portable units with the knowledge that September classes would begin in the new building, which would be fully ready to go.

When school finally did start on September 5, 1922, enrollment had jumped to 262 students. The early 1920s were the busiest years of new home construction Alameda has ever seen, and new families were arriving to populate the recently completed building.

On a Friday night that fall, the Alameda PTA held a large gathering of more than 200 guests to dedicate the school. Activities included singing, and speeches from the principal and the Portland school superintendent - who had borne the brunt of parent protests about the inadequate portables - and a social hour of conversation and refreshments. Everyone was happy.

An architectural history assessment report prepared by Portland Public Schools in 2009 recounts structural changes to the building that eventually followed:

"Within four years of the construction of the primary building, an auditorium and classroom wings located off the south end of the east and west sides of the building were added to the school. Also in 1925, the sheltered play courts, located along the interior elevations of east and west wings, were enclosed to form a gym and additional classroom space. Other additions include the construction of a kitchen in 1951, classroom addition (230B) off the south end of the west wing in 1954, and more classrooms (230C) off the south end of the east elevation in 1992. Interior alterations include the replacement of floor tiles (1955, 1984 and 1985) and tiles by carpeting (1973), some of the interior doors, and lighting fixtures. Other alterations include the remodeling of the auditorium (1951), bathrooms (1955), and classroom 114, and the faculty lunch room into a library (2002)."

The report concluded that today's Alameda School retains a high level of historic integrity, and would be a good candidate for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Do You have an Alameda History Question?

Are you interested in learning more about the history of our amazing neighborhood, your street, or the surrounding area?


If so, AlamedaPDX and Doug Decker invite you to send your question to [doug@alamedahistory.org](mailto:doug@alamedahistory.org), and Doug will respond in our next issue.

Submissions must be 75 words or less.

Here's your chance to learn more about Alameda's fascinating past!



*Neighborhood historian Doug Decker prepares history studies of homes, leads history walks, and makes presentations to groups interested in learning about local history. To learn more about the early Alameda School and see photos of the portables, visit Doug's website [www.alamedahistory.org](http://www.alamedahistory.org) and search "Alameda School."*



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ALAMEDA ELEMENTARY

---

“There is always light.  
Only if we are brave enough  
to see it.

There is always light.  
Only if we are brave enough  
to be it.”

— Amanda Gorman



Emmett Anderson	Graham Gerritz	Taavi Hoehn Nachbar
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Thijs Gerritsen	Henry Musser	Aleksandr Zavertnik



(School Reopening, continued from page 2)



SCHOOL LUNCHES ARE DELIVERED AT ALAMEDA ELEMENTARY

assume the school system is doing the best they can.”

Prior to the reopening of public middle and high schools later in April, on a lovely spring day, I walked over to Grant Park and discovered it was teeming with activity. Young kids were in the play area, the tennis courts were full, and the track was busy with two teams of girls practicing.

Several groups were on the soccer field, and over at the baseball diamond, several dozen people were watching a game. As I got closer I discovered the Grant Generals were playing the West Linn Lions. And everywhere, players, spectators and kids were wearing masks.

I walked on to the south side of the high school and saw a table and sign reading Footlocker Volunteers. Nearby, three college-age people were supervising about 40 elementary-age children, all wearing masks and doing wind sprints.

I was puzzled, and thought maybe high school had started much earlier than the April 19 date I had read about. I asked a couple of spectators at the ball field and they said school would not open until the 19th, however sports programs had already started.

When I returned to Grant High the week of April 19, it was a quieter scene. Students were gathering outside waiting



STUDENTS BEGIN THEIR RETURN TO GRANT HIGH SCHOOL

for the doors to open for their two half days of in-school classes, and several of them agreed to talk to me.

Quinn Nakada, a junior, thinks returning to school is a start, and it helps.

“I’d like to see more than two half-days a week,” he said. “These in-school sessions are more like a study hall, where you can get some help from teachers with your online work. So, this is mostly socialization, and that’s important.”

Max Powers, a junior, agreed. “I’m ready to go back to school on a full schedule,” he said, “and think it could work with social distancing and the other basic precautions. At home with distance learning there are a lot of distractions.”

Max said that with more time in school, students would get more done as well as see friends and socialize, which he felt was much needed.

Another junior, Mary Ashworth, who recently moved here from Colorado, also favored more in-class time at Grant. She said, “More time in school would be so much better for making friends, and helpful for our academic studies.”

For freshman Oscar DiBerardinis, starting high school evoked mixed emotions.

“It’s kind of weird to go back to school after all this time, but I’m happy and excited to be back, even though I’ve never been to high school before,” he said.

My nextdoor neighbor’s son is a junior at Grant. Thoughtful and articulate, Zack Olson told me he joined his fellow students in returning to school on April 19, but after the first week he chose to return to full online study.

“With only two days in class for a total of just five hours,” Zack explained, “and just six more weeks until summer break, it just wasn’t worth the risk of contracting Covid to attend in-school sessions that were more like study hall than academic classes. Also, I have a circle of friends that get together occasionally so attending in-school classes is not as essential for socialization.”

Zack’s parents support his decision. His mother, Cheryl Olson, sympathized with the challenges teachers face in adapting their methods and courses to online classes, with far less in-school class time and all with limited resources.

“Because of those challenges, I don’t think students are receiving the same quality of education as they did before the pandemic,” Cheryl said. “I do think the schools are doing the best they can under the circumstances. I realize, though, that some parents may have different views.”

Zack expressed optimism that his senior year at Grant will be more rewarding. “By fall, more people will be vaccinated, including younger people, so there will be less risk of infection,” Zack said. “Also, there will probably be more in-school class time and more time with our teachers.”

While the pandemic has disrupted the lives and livelihoods of adults, it has been especially hard on school age children and their parents. Hopefully, our schools will again become a beacon of normalcy this fall.

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# A Tale of Frustration, Hope and Gratitude: Getting Vaccinated by Dan La Grande

It seems so long ago. Yet it's barely been a year and a half since we heard about a strange illness in a province of China, which spread to become the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic.

And how my life has changed, as I'm sure yours has, too. In a way, it's been a blur. In another way, it's been at times a painfully slow, tedious constriction of nearly every activity, every freedom of movement and association I so enjoyed — and took for granted.

This is my personal story, and as you read it, I'm guessing you'll recognize some similarities to your experiences in dealing with the pandemic. Covid-19 is the villain in this tale, yet it's also given me new insights and taught me some important lessons.

I'll start with the drama of my wife and I trying to get our first shot. The first surprise was that after vaccinating healthcare workers, first responders, nursing home residents and others at high risk, Governor Brown's schedule did not put seniors next. After all, the vast majority of deaths from Covid-19 were people 65 and older. But Oregon was one of only two states that didn't put old folks next.

Instead, the governor prioritized teachers and school staff. I didn't mind that, but thought Oregon could walk and chew gum at the same time. I wrote Governor Brown and suggested vaccinating educators and seniors at the same time. I did not hear a peep from her, or anyone in her office.

So we waited. We had learned we could not even schedule a future shot until the governor's appointed time for seniors arrived. Then, our second surprise: When that time arrived, the online scheduling system was a nightmare. For me, certainly not a computer wiz, it was illogical, unworkable and very frustrating. No matter the hour of day or middle of the night, I had no success.

Then a third surprise (and a very welcome one): We received an email from Madeleine Parish telling us they could help us schedule a vaccine appointment. Kristen LaBarca, a parishioner and member of the newly created vaccine ministry, contacted us, set up on-line accounts for us and then she went to work.

Within a day, she found and scheduled an appointment for my wife two days later at the Oregon Convention Center. The following day she secured an appointment for me three days after my wife's appointment, also at the convention center. We were overjoyed, and so grateful for Kristen's cheerful and speedy work in getting us scheduled for our first shots.



AT PRESS TIME, THE OHSU CONVENTION CENTER VACCINATION SITE WAS SCHEDULED TO BE OPEN UNTIL JUNE 19. CALL 833-647-8222 FOR MORE INFO.

The fourth surprise was what awaited us at the convention center. My wife has some mobility issues, so I drove her to the center and we found ourselves in a long line of cars slowly creeping past the south parking entrance, which surprisingly was closed. We drove on to the west entrance, where cars were simultaneously arriving as well as leaving. Inside the parking lot, traffic was nearly gridlocked. We finally found a parking spot, went inside and upstairs, only to see what appeared to be an endless line snaking around to the other side of the building.

We slowly made our way to the end of the line and after about 50 minutes got up to the check-in station, where my wife waited to fill out some forms. Then we moved forward to emerge in a huge room where I counted nearly 50 people giving shots. Things moved efficiently from that point, and after her shot, we waited for the required 15 minutes. Then we went downstairs to a table staffed by National Guard members to make an appointment for the second shot. From arrival to departure, getting my wife's first shot took a little over two hours.

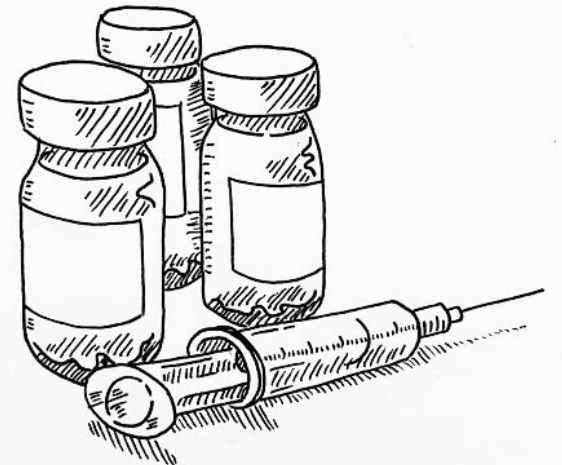
Three days later when I returned to the convention center for my first shot, parking chaos still reigned and I waited in a long line inside. However, when we returned three weeks later for our second shot, the fifth surprise: All had changed — for the better! Both parking access points were open, there was no congestion, cars were entering the south entrance and leaving through the west entrance easily, and inside the convention center there was a very short line. The whole process took less than 45 minutes.

The thing that impressed me most, both at our first and second shots, was the kind, courteous, friendly and helpful manner of every single person we encountered — many of whom, I was told, were volunteers.

It also reinforced my observation that while government has great power and huge resources, it is generous, good-hearted citizens like Kristen LaBarca who make these huge undertakings successful.

Despite its challenges and shortcomings, the success of Oregon's mass vaccination program was due primarily to the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people — both volunteers and professionals — who gave hope to us all that with the shots, we may begin to return to a normal life in the foreseeable future.

To every one of those volunteers and professionals — thank you!



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# The Charms and Challenges of the Unruly Garden by Barbara Strunk

Unruly is a “style” for gardeners who have a plan for their garden, but enjoy the whimsical nature of plants doing their own thing in their chosen place.

Whether a garden is unruly or just full of messy weeds is in the eye of the beholder, and determined by what plants are allowed to flourish. If there is one rule for managing an unruly garden style, it is to keep control of volunteer plants that have the potential to spread and take over. Unruly is not a synonym for untended.

A pleasing garden requires observation and selecting which plants to keep or remove. Some plants are easy to manage. Others are “thugs,” plants that spread quickly, widely and are difficult to get rid of. They may be beautiful blooming plants, but should be avoided.

A gardener must be aware of the growth habits of plants before planting, and take action regarding volunteers by either removing or relocating them early in the growth cycle. In my experience, plants that reproduce by seed are generally, but not always, easier to control than those that spread by underground runners or stolons.

Wind, birds, insects and humans spread many plants’ seeds. Foxgloves, columbines, cyclamen and larkspurs seed around, producing beautiful spring or fall flowers. They have light root systems and are easy to weed out. The small perennial geraniums, such as *G. sanguineum* or *G. subcaulescens*, also seed about but stay low and are easy to control. Some volunteer plants I move to pots to grow in until they’re mature enough to share with friends.

Bulbs can slowly multiply in a polite manner, or take over. Daffodils and tulips are generally well-mannered and increase gradually around the original bulb. Some tulips, however, are stoloniferous with spreading root systems. An example of a very pretty spreader is *Tulipa bakerii* “Lilac Wonder”, which I try to keep under strict control.

Grape Hyacinths spread easily and everywhere. Bluebells (*Hyacinthoides hispanica* and *H. non-scripta*) create lovely blue swathes, but have very deep bulbs and spread quickly. Even with a good shovel they are difficult to control, something I have been working on in my garden for several decades.

We feed the birds black oil sunflower seeds, which they and the squirrels plant around the garden. I leave the plants that

are growing in the right place undisturbed to mature and feed the birds in late summer. Other plants I leave for the birds to harvest and spread are Heleniums (Sneezeweed) and Rudbeckia (Black-Eyed Susan). It is a joy to see flocks of goldfinches harvest the seed, especially in this time of pandemic and isolation. Birds and squirrels also like to bury acorns and walnuts, which grow surprisingly well. These I remove, though I did put a sprouted acorn in a pot to see how it will grow.

Some vegetables can volunteer the next season. The tastiest tomatoes in my garden last year were volunteers growing in a big pot with a rhododendron. Parsley is a biennial that casts seeds from the umbel (umbrella-shaped groups of small flowers) flowers of a mature plant. Allowing a few parsley plants to grow in the right place keeps us supplied yearly. I have seen tomatillos grow from last season’s fruit left on the ground.

There are some weedy plants I remove as fast as I can, even though they can be very pretty. Morning Glory is a good example, with beautiful white flowers, a large deep root system and an aggressive vining habit. The small yellow flowered, clover-like Oxalis is attractive but a terrible spreader by seed thrown from spring-loaded capsules, and runners that are difficult to weed out. Beware of *Geranium robertianum*, known as “Herb Robert” or “Stinking Bob”, because it is a wide spreader and establishes easily.

Other spreading plants are beautiful and rewarding if carefully managed. *Verbascum* (Mullein) species are some of the birds’, bees’ and my favorite plants. Unfortunately, they are very difficult to remove if they establish in the wrong site because of very heavy, deep root systems. If *Verbascum* is allowed to mature, you will need a good shovel and some persistence to remove it. Hellebores, treasured for their early spring flowers, also spread easily by seed. They, too, have substantial root systems so need to be removed as seedlings if they’re in the wrong location.

How you grow a garden depends on your preferences of style and plant choice. Any style can be lovely if you are aware of the growth and habits of the plants you choose, and tend your unruly garden.

*Note: This article was originally published in the Nov/Dec 2020 Beaumont-Wilshire Neighborhood Association newsletter.*



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# Picture Windows: Beverly Cleary *by Gail Jeidy*

Beverly Cleary, the Fernwood School and Grant High Alum who made our neighborhood famous with her tales of Ramona Quimby and Henry Huggins on Klickitat Street, died on March 25, a few weeks shy of her 105th birthday. We said goodbye to a neighborhood legend, but the gift of her words lives on.

In the days following her passing, readers and writers around the area made the pilgrimage to the Beverly Cleary Sculpture Garden at Grant Park that most of us here in Alameda know so well. It's only fitting I captured the photo (at right) of Ramona wearing a crown of fresh flowers at what she would call "dawnzerlee light."

Cleary entered the world of children's publishing in the 1950s, producing groundbreaking work in realist fiction. As a librarian, she made the choice to write books that depicted with remarkable emotional honesty the kinds of conflicts kids experience. Her books, aimed at 8 to 12-year-olds, are evocative for all ages and are especially relevant right now.

In "Ramona and her Father," published in 1975, Ramona's Dad loses his job and assumes the role of stay-at-home parent. The family stretches their food dollars, even resorting to buying an off-brand cat food (that the cat hates). Ramona's mother steps up and increases her part-time work to full-time. To complicate matters, Dad stresses and smokes, which causes spunky Ramona and her big sister Beezus to worry about his health and "black lungs."

Then one day Ramona comes home from school, the doors are locked, and no one is home.

"Ramona's insides tightened with fear. Maybe her father was angry with her. Maybe he had gone away because she tried to make him stop smoking. She thought she was saving his life, but maybe she was being mean to him. Her mother said she must not annoy her father, because he was worried about being out of work. Maybe she had made him so angry he did not love her anymore. Maybe he had gone away because he did not love her. She thought of all the scary things she had seen on television – houses that had fallen down in earthquakes, people shooting people... and knew she needed her father to keep her safe."

It turns out Dad was in line collecting his unemployment check.

For adults wanting to better understand a child's head space, read Cleary's work again and read it to your kids. Cleary walks the reader through progressions of stressors to the emotional outburst and the processing that comes afterward. The reader hops on for the journey and, by the end, is perhaps better equipped to handle their own obstacles. Plus, they are entertained along the way.

Cleary understood the stressors on children because she lived them herself. She didn't endure a pandemic and its requisite sheltering-in or soldier through the particular social and political turmoil that has affected many Portland families this year. Instead, she survived Smallpox and grew up in the Depression, an era which left many with a similar sense of feeling trapped.

Cleary's father moved the family from their Yamhill farm to Portland when she was 6, eventually settling on NE 37th Avenue, a couple blocks south of Klickitat Street. Her dad got a job as a night guard in a bank, and her mother worked remotely for a time, selling magazine subscriptions over the phone -- a droning in the background of their home that pre-teen Cleary found annoying. When her dad lost his job, times grew dark.

Cleary's love of literature directed her path. Early on, she was drawn to gruesome fairy tales and by middle school, the heroic Jean Valjean bird-dogged by Inspector Javet in Les Miserables captured her heart. Cleary's beloved 7th grade teacher at Fernwood (now Beverly Cleary School) identified her as someone who should write children's books, a validation that proved to speak volumes.

Still, the thought of college during the Great Depression seemed an impossible dream.

In Cleary's memoir, "A Girl from Yamhill," she recalled her first day entering as a freshman at Grant High School, a descriptor eerily reminiscent of last fall in Portland: "...the day after Labor Day when smoke from forest fires dimmed the atmosphere, the sun was a sullen orange ball and ash drifted over the city."

Her mother assured her not to worry. Things would get better, and in four years college would be a possibility. Fortunately, Cleary was as proactive as her lead character Ramona. She made things happen.



AUTHOR BEVERLY CLEARY



CLEARY'S KLICKITAT STREET HERO, RAMONA QUIMBY



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