



AlamedaPDX

Fall 2019

Volume 33 Number 3

In Loving Memory of George Ivan Smith

December 19, 1935 – July 27, 2019

One of Alameda’s most treasured citizens, George Ivan Smith, passed away on July 27. Nicknamed “The Mayor of Hamblet Street,” George spent countless hours volunteering with the Alameda Neighborhood Association, and was also editor of this newsletter for a number of years. In his professional life, he worked in communication services and graphic design, and also held positions at several non-profits. Here in Alameda, he was a familiar figure, riding his bicycle around the neighborhood and often delivering his home-baked treats to lucky recipients. He was definitely one of a kind, and several of our newsletter writers who knew and worked with George have shared their memories of him below.

Doug Decker:

George Ivan Smith was a great friend of Alameda. He believed in the neighborhood, and in his neighbors, and always went out of his way to connect us to each other. He stepped in as editor of this newsletter in his late retirement because he wanted to ensure this institution continued. And he helped pioneer the alamedapdx website and Facebook page for the same reason: to give us a place to share local ideas and to meet each other.

Every message, phone call or neighborly wave I ever received from George (and fortunately for me there were many) also carried something of interest: a story idea, something beautiful to look at, a reflection on why we should care about the neighborhood.

George was a good and decent person who really cared about people and ideas and places. I’ll miss his frequent messages and suggestions, and his civic-mindedness. To the Smith family and his friends and neighbors, thank you for sharing George with us over the years. I join you in missing him. And thank you, George, for your many contributions and your fellowship over the years.



GEORGE IVAN SMITH

Gail Jeidy:

I first met George about a decade ago, when I contacted him after reading a Beverly-Cleary themed edition of the Alameda newsletter. The issue was so well done, I wanted to get involved.

We met at Starbucks. George arrived via bike. We talked about writing, photography and community. He welcomed my involvement, and during his tenure as editor—and beyond—supported my work. We parted ways after that first meeting and George rode off on his bike, wearing a helmet. A beautiful role model and an ageless soul.

George had a few edits for me over the years, but the one I most remember was when he suggested I strike the modifier “elderly” in one column. He didn’t like that word. I haven’t used it since.

George gave of his energy freely and reached out in many ways to show he cared. When I was mid-cancer journey, he made me a bread sculpture to see me through. A dragon almost too beautiful to eat, but sooo good. When I crossed the finish line, he was at my door with an angel bread to mark the milestone. His delivery truck: a bicycle.



I am thankful to have had and known such a thoughtful and giving friend. George Ivan Smith was synonymous for good neighbor, and he lived and led by example. He taught me much, and I will never forget him.

Blythe Knott:

I can’t even remember how I first became involved with writing for the AlamedaPDX newsletter. But, I can guess how it probably went: I would have reached out to the editor - which was George for many years - and he would have responded with great enthusiasm and kindness. I would have then written an article, which he would have accepted with great enthusiasm and kindness. His edits were always easy to receive, because they were so gently offered. And - I know other newsletter writers will have had the same experience - he would give feedback on the article by offering a fairly long missive on why he thought it was a great submission. His detailed musings on what I’d written were so delightful that I kept them all. It felt like we were involved in the project of producing good work for our neighbors together - as partners.

When George was ready to pass newsletter-editing duties on to a new person, he asked me to take his place. I have

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Editor's Message by Annette Bendinelli



The neighborhood lost a good friend in July with the passing of George Ivan Smith. Although I never had the pleasure of meeting George in person, I spoke to him on the phone and we emailed back and forth a number of times. He seemed like a really great guy, and in reading the tributes in this issue by some of our writers who knew him well, I learned even more about the kind of person he was.

Writer Gail Jeidy referred to George as “an ageless soul,” and Blythe Knott remembered his “enthusiasm and kindness.” Doug Decker described him as “a good and decent person.” When my own dad passed away last month, I couldn’t help but notice some similarities between the two of them. They were both hard-working family men who took pride in their communities, and were always ready to lend a hand. But perhaps the main characteristic they shared is that

they were both perennially young at heart. My father was by far the older of the two – he would’ve been 100 this month – but he never lost his youthful enthusiasm for life.

Like George, as he aged he thrived on keeping busy and having a sense of purpose. Retirement just meant that he found different, non-8 to 5 jobs to do: Volunteering as a SMART reading tutor, managing the bar at his golf club, working as a U.S. Census canvasser, and cashiering at the resale shop at his retirement community were just a few of his pursuits after age 65.

When he finally moved to Calaroga Terrace at 88, he referred to the other people there as “those old people,” and always resisted being lumped into a group with them -- even though he ended up being one of the oldest people there by the time he moved out. He preferred the company of young people with fresh ideas, and he always stayed up to date on things that were happening in the world. He would definitely have approved of George’s objection to the word “elderly” that Gail Jeidy mentions in her tribute.

Although he didn’t ride a bicycle like George, Dad kept driving until he was 97, and never really forgave us for taking away his car keys. He’d renewed his license at 90, and since the State renews them for 10 years, his license said he could drive until he was 100. As a result, one of his main arguments for keeping his keys was “If the State of Oregon still thinks I can drive, why don’t you?”

In the last several years, Dad struggled with dementia. Even so, he never lost his positive, youthful attitude. Whenever I asked him how old he was, he’d say “79.” I don’t know how he came up with that number, but if I reminded him he was almost 100, he’d say, “Nooo, I can’t be that old!” And honestly, I think he was right. In his heart he was still young – maybe not as young as the rest of us, but certainly not a day over 79!

Rest in peace, Dad and George. I think the two of you would’ve gotten along quite well.

— Annette

TO OUR VALUED ADVERTISERS:

It’s been several years since we have raised our advertising rates, but increasing costs now require that we do so.

Each edition of the AlamedaPDX Newsletter is mailed to approximately 2,500 homes and businesses in the Alameda neighborhood, and 100% of the ad revenue after expenses is used to fund events and initiatives in and near Alameda.

We sincerely appreciate your business, and hope to continue to provide the opportunity to reach Alameda residents via our newsletter for years to come. Prices will be effective with the Fall 2019 issue.

Contact: Charles Rice
Alameda Neighborhood Association
charlesricepdx@gmail.com

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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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Neighborhood Associations Provide a Voice in Government *by Mariah Dula*



From cranes across our skyline to reopening schools to green bike lanes, it's apparent the city is moving and growing. Portland is changing in more subtle ways too: As a population we are increasingly diverse and younger on average, and

more of us live east of the river. How much we have changed in the past ten years - and in what directions - will be more apparent after the 2020 census, but we don't need to wait for statistical confirmation to adapt our city government. With a changing population, we need a city engagement bureau and processes that are responsive, which is why a 2018 City Auditor's report recommended strengthening the neighborhood system and expanding access to additional organizations.

Alameda Neighborhood Association strongly supports the goal of including diverse groups and engaging all Portlanders in determining how our city evolves. At the neighborhood level, we do this by providing a forum for discussion of issues (with open meetings and published minutes); sharing information from city bureaus, hosting events, offering trainings, advocating on policy issues, and giving neighbors the tools to have their voices heard by policy makers. We are an all-volunteer board. Our meetings are public and all neighbors residing or working in Alameda are welcome. Under current city code, as a neighborhood association we have standing with the City to receive notification and comment on a range of development and livability issues, as well as support from the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods.

These are privileges that would change under a new proposal from the Office of Community and Civic

Life. Over the past seven months, Civic Life, working with a hand-picked advisory council, has developed a proposal with sweeping changes to the City Code 3.96 (which establishes and funds the neighborhood system). Neighborhood associations have largely been excluded from this process.

The new code proposal effectively dismantles the neighborhood system in favor of allowing the City to partner with any self-identifying community or organization. The Director of Civic Life, Suk Rhee, and Commissioner Chloe Eudaly, who is in charge of the Bureau, have insisted neighborhoods would continue to be a part of the process—but without any guarantees of standing with the City or funding. The proposal would also make the selection of City-funded engagement partners discretionary—simultaneously dangling the promise of expanded access while consolidating decision-making power. This power would rest in the hands of the Director of Civic Life, who by the nature of that position is subject to political pressure from the Commissioner in charge of the bureau under Portland's system of commissioner governance.

Our at-large commissioner system is an oddity—Portland is the last major city to cling to this type of commissioner governance—and thus the neighborhood system provides our only form of representation in city government by geographic area. If anything, the code change process has highlighted the reality that Portlanders lack geographic representation with the City except through the volunteer efforts of neighborhood associations. That basic right to elect representatives from our geographic districts, which we consider so fundamental at the state and federal level, is absent in Portland.

The Portland City Club has been a vocal advocate for reforming the commissioner system, publishing a report in February that calls for both electing councilors by geographic district and expanding the number of council seats. Portlanders are also grossly underrepresented on City Council. In a city of nearly 650,000 we have just one council seat per 150,000 people, far less representation than the one-seat-to-63,000 people in our state legislature. Our 94 neighborhood associations on average serve just under 7,000 residents.

For residents, the at-large system can make it confusing to know who to contact to resolve a problem. This type of confusion is precisely where neighborhood associations bridge the gap and help provide access to government. Which City Commissioner is accountable to the interests and concerns of our neighborhood or district? None of them and all of them.

For those concerned with equity, and we all should be, increasing the number seats at the table in Civic Life and strengthening the neighborhood system to better support connections between neighborhood and organizational partners is a good start. To truly address the need for accountability and representation in the city government, it is time to consider expanding City Council and electing Portland city councilors by district.

The Alameda Neighborhood Association has published our position letter on Code Change sent to the Mayor and Commissioners on our website www.alamedaportland.com. We encourage you to call or email city commissioners with your comments on the proposed City Code draft 3.96, also shared on our website



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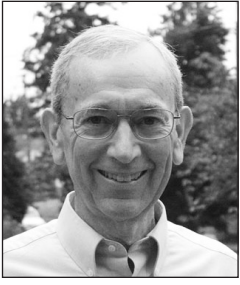


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A Stitch In Time by Dan LaGrande



You probably recall that as a kid, your parents admonished you that “A stitch in time saves nine,” meaning it’s better to deal with a small problem now, rather than a big problem later on.

Now, as adults - and most likely homeowners - this is the season to take that idiom to heart. Make your home safe and secure, and begin right away. But what’s the rush, and why now, you might ask.

Well, consider this: You may feel cozy and secure in your home, safe from the ills and unsettling events of the outside world. But the unpleasant fact is that your home can also be a dangerous place. Every year, about 18,000 people in the U.S. die in home accidents. About a third of those deaths are caused by falls in the home, with older people at the greatest risk. Poisoning is the second major cause of home deaths, and children are the most affected. The third cause of deaths in the home is fire, along with carbon monoxide, which you can’t see or smell.

The good news is that by taking action now, you can make your home much safer for you and your family. Start by changing the batteries in your smoke alarms, and if you don’t already have them, install a couple of carbon monoxide alarms. Then check around your house for places where one could slip or fall. Do you have strong handrails on the stairs, and proper lighting for good visibility? You get the idea.

If you have small children, make a systematic inspection of cupboards, drawers, medicine cabinets, and workshop areas to identify liquids, cleaning fluids or harmful substances. Put them in a secure place where

you know a child can’t get them, and always keep the number for the Poison Control Center handy. If you have firearms, be sure they are safely secured as well.

Also, consider what could happen in case of a major disaster. It could be devastating, not only to your home and family, but to our entire city. A major earthquake like the one scientists say rocked this area several hundred years ago could do so again.

Scary thought, but tempting to think, why worry – it won’t happen in my lifetime. However, increasing numbers of our neighbors here in Alameda and elsewhere in the city are hedging their bets and making some preparations, just in case.

A simple first step is to stock some emergency supplies – food, water, extra clothing, and a first-aid kit. Tuck them in your garage or an accessible area of your house, and put an extra emergency kit in your car, as well.

Because none of the older houses in our neighborhood were anchored to their foundations, some residents have hired seismic retrofit companies to remedy that problem, usually at a cost of several thousand dollars.

Again, here is a modest first step. For a cost of around \$500 you can have a special valve installed on your gas meter that will cut off gas service in case of an earthquake. While your house may be damaged in an earthquake, it will be destroyed by fire if you don’t have a shutoff valve and the gas ignites.

Finally, there is one more fairly simple project to consider. Surprisingly, your clothes dryer can be a fire hazard in two ways. According to Consumer Reports, more fires are caused by lint buildup than by electrical problems in the dryer.



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While you may clean out the lint trap with every use, the real fire danger is lurking in the lint that accumulates in the metal or plastic duct that exhausts the hot dryer air from your house. It’s a fairly simple matter to unhook the duct from the dryer and clean it out or replace it, if necessary – or get a handyman to do the job for you.

Remember – A stitch in time saves nine, so resist the urge to procrastinate. There are plenty of simple, inexpensive things you can do to reduce household risk, so start today to make your home a safer place!

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“New” old photo sparks memory of Alameda’s old streetcar *by Doug Decker*

Recently while poring through old photos at Portland City Archives (which holds a well-organized treasure of insights about Portland’s past), I came across a photo from 1940 of Alameda’s streetcar that triggered some musings. Here it is, take a good look:

In this shot we see the corner of a Standard Oil gas station on the far left; a new building in the lot on the northeast corner—partially hidden by the streetcar—where ChildRoots Daycare stands today (which was a Hancock Gasoline station up until the mid 1970s); across the street a brand new Safeway building that today houses Alameda Dental and Union Bank; and the sign mounted to corner of Alameda Drugs and soda fountain, which is today’s Lucca.

Don’t you wish you could hop on a streetcar here in the neighborhood and be downtown in about 20 minutes? That’s the way it was when our Broadway Streetcar connected Alameda with a wide network of tracks across Portland and to nearby communities in the Willamette Valley and beyond.

Two generations of our neighbors grew up relying on the Broadway Streetcar to take them where they needed to go. Ever-present, often noisy, sometimes too cold (or too hot), but always dependable, the Broadway car served Alameda loyally from 1910 to 1948.

Sensitive to the transport needs of its prospective customers, the Alameda Land Company that built our neighborhood also financed construction of the rails and overhead electric lines that brought the car up Regents Hill to NE 29th and Mason. Developers all over the city knew access was one key to selling lots, particularly in the muddy and wild environs that Alameda represented in 1909.

In 1923, a trip downtown cost an adult 8 cents. Kids could buy a special packet of school tickets allowing 25 rides for \$1. In 1932, a monthly pass for unlimited rides cost \$1.25. Alamedans used the streetcar as a vital link to shopping, churchgoing, commuting to the office, trips to the doctor. Some even rode the line for entertainment.



Portland Archives, A2011-007.65

Broadway line car 809 rounds the corner at 24th and Fremont, looking east, 1940. Courtesy of Portland City Archives A2011-007.65.

During the day, cars ran every 10 minutes, and Alamedans referred to them as “regular cars” or “trains.” During the morning and evening rush hours, additional cars called “trippers” were put into the circuit to handle additional riders. Trippers did not climb the hill to 29th and Mason, traveling only on the Fremont Loop to save time. At night, our line was one of the handful in Portland that featured an “owl car,” a single train that made the circuit once an hour between midnight and 5 a.m. Owl service was a special distinction. The downtown end of the line was at SW Broadway and Jefferson.

The Broadway streetcar was replaced by bus on August 1, 1948. By 1950, all of Portland’s once ubiquitous streetcar lines were gone. In the early days of neighborhood life, our streetcar was indispensable. It was one catalyst that made development of Alameda possible. It linked us to downtown and to other neighborhoods near and far. To hear the stories of those who rode it frequently, it linked us to each other in a way, too.



For more about the Broadway Streetcar, a great walking loop along its former route, and some favorite views of the busy intersection at NE 24th and Fremont, visit Doug’s website www.alamedahistory.org then search for “Broadway Streetcar” or “Commercial Corner.”

Neighborhood historian Doug Decker prepares history studies of homes, leads history walks, and makes presentations to groups interested in learning about local history. Write him at doug@alamedahistory.org.

NE Portland Artists to be Featured in Open Studios

This year, out of the 118 citywide artists selected for Portland Open Studios, the juried group will include 22 participants from Northeast Portland. Their studios will be open to the public for the event, which takes place the weekends of October 12-13 and October 19-20. Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each of the four days.

The artwork will include painting, ceramics, sculpture, photography, mixed media and jewelry. The NE Open Studios community has also invited artists who participate in the Portland Art and Learning Center to take part in the event.

According to Open Studios’ NE Community Leader Joanie Krug, Portland Open Studios creates a unique educational opportunity for the public to witness art in the making, and learn about media, materials and the business of creative endeavor. Through this interaction, the program creates a platform for local artists to thrive, engage and foster a community that values the arts.

Free, official Open Studio map guides will be available soon in the Portland metro area, and there will also be a NE Community card with a group map available throughout the neighborhood.






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Grant High School Remodel Is Complete! *by Blythe Knott*

At long last, the moment we've been waiting for has arrived: The student citizens of Grant High School will no longer be traveling across town to the Marshall campus. They will instead be staying right in our neighborhood, and going to school at the actual Grant campus.

For those of us with kids who have spent the last two academic years making the trip to Marshall, this is a happy moment indeed. The idea of my son walking four blocks to Grant, rather than driving 25 minutes each way, is highly appealing. I'd almost forgotten that his school is actually so close.

Recently, I was lucky enough to have an advance preview of the new campus, and it's abundantly clear that the "new" Grant bears very little resemblance to the "old" Grant. I toured the school with a group of about a dozen parents and students, and all of us on the tour had spent significant time at the school. But none of us, once we were past the front doors, could make sense of where we were on campus in terms of the old layout. When we were in the new gym, or library, or music room, we'd ask each other what this was previously. And no one - not even the students - could figure out where we were. That's how different it looks now.

Previously, the U-shape of Grant created all sorts of dead ends and opportunities to retrace one's steps many times in the course of an average day (or teacher / parent conference); now the new layout is more square. The wings of the building are now the gym - which is now attached to the

main building and is amazing - and the arts center, which is where the old gym was and is not attached to the building. There is a courtyard inside the U, and sports fields leading over to the Grant Bowl and tennis courts.

The classrooms are attractive, with big windows and nice chairs, and the lighting is surprisingly beautiful (something you don't often say about public school lights). The science classrooms



have fully equipped labs. The auditorium, music space, and arts complex are state of the art (no pun intended). I really can't say enough about how impressive the new design is. I was prepared to be pleasantly surprised, but this was definitely beyond my expectations.

The bathrooms were controversial when they were proposed. Instead of men's and women's restrooms, there is an open entrance to the sink area, and a row of bathrooms, each in its own self-contained

stall (with the doors and walls going from the floor to the ceiling). They're now gender-neutral. It looked great to me. I've heard that at Franklin, which has a similar design, they've found that there aren't enough bathrooms to go around during busy times. We'll see if Grant has that problem. I know the same firm worked on both schools but I haven't been to Franklin to see if the style is similar enough that Franklin's issues will be experienced at Grant. There are always unexpected situations with any major remodel - time will tell what they are for Grant.

But, just visually, Grant looks amazing. It's nicer than any public high school I've ever seen. To my eyes, the remodel has been done to an extremely high standard.

Based on conversations I had with students and staff at the school last spring as they were getting ready to leave Marshall, I know they're very excited to be back in the neighborhood (alas, now without QFC nearby, but that's a sad story for another day...).

There will definitely be a learning curve in navigating the new school, and past knowledge of the layout will be of little help. Lots of maps were handed out along with school schedules when students arrived back on campus August 28.

An open house for the public was held September 7. If you missed it, take a moment to walk around the Grant campus and see how great it looks from the outside! You'll be impressed, I'm certain of that. After two years, it's great to have our student community back in our neighborhood, where they belong.



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Adventures in Advocacy –The Birth of a Beach (Part 2 of 3) *by Willie Levenson*

Alameda resident Willie Levenson loves rivers. He first became infatuated with the New River in Virginia, which flowed behind his Radford University campus. After graduation, he moved to Boise, Idaho, where, in Levenson's words, "People have a tremendous relationship to the Boise River. They use it to fish, swim, kayak, and have recently added a whitewater park."

But when he arrived in Portland 23 years ago, he found our city's relationship with the Willamette was less than idyllic. He decided to do something about it, and in 2011 organized the first Big Float. He's currently the self-described Ringleader of the Human Access Project, whose mission is to "Transform Portland's relationship with the Willamette River." His wife, Pamela "Lulu" Levenson, is the owner of Popina Swimwear.

On July 5, Audrey McCall Beach (named after the wife of the late Gov. Tom McCall) opened on Portland's east side. In Part Two of a three-part series that will conclude in our next issue, Levenson describes how the beach was born, and his quest to rekindle Portlanders' love affair with the Willamette.

In Part 1 of this story about the forming of Audrey McCall Beach, the Human Access Project (HAP) worked with inmates from the Inverness Inmate Work Crew to haul out concrete from the beach. With their help and the muscle power of other friends/volunteers, we removed 19 tons of concrete over four summers –all without bringing in heavy, mechanized equipment (as required in our permit).

The more concrete we got rid of, the more I felt the need to ramp up removal operations. We had to get permission from eight separate agencies to remove the concrete chunks. At the time it felt very unpredictable as to how long this fragile consensus would last. All of these relationships were new, and HAP was an unknown quantity.

With each passing year, the beach started to look different. I didn't like the potential attention, and wanted this project to be as under the radar as possible. I was concerned our progress would make one of the parties edgy and they would jump ship, and we would

have to stop our work. So to get it done faster, we ramped up operations.

The Inmate Work Crew had an ATV with a bed on the back. The process was that we'd drive the ATV down the steep bank from the Esplanade, then load up the 4'x 4' ATV bed with just the right amount of concrete chunks and weight distribution so it would make it back up the bank (we learned the hard way you could overload the ATV). Then we'd unload the concrete into an empty dumpster. Problem was, time was wasted waiting for the ATV to complete its trip, so we rented a second ATV to be more efficient. There was always an ATV going up and one coming down!

As we were removing concrete chunks, we uncovered a 150-foot steel cable that led into the river. Try as we might - even using the ATV - we couldn't pull it out. The ends were frayed like a thick rope made out of steel. When you touch a rusty steel cable, it feels like 1,000 little rusty pin pricks. At that point, we knew the cable had to be removed, since it was completely unsafe. I imagined it must have been tied to a deep sunken pier we couldn't see.

We had no money, and no idea how to get rid of the cable. I did a bit of research and wound up on the phone with Marvin from Fred Devine Diving and Salvage. Fred Devine has been doing work on the Willamette River since 1913 out of Swan Island. I told Marvin about our predicament, the work we had done, and what we were trying to do. He said he had a team of guys in Sellwood and they would swing by to see if they could do anything with the cable, pro-bono.

A team of three came out, two divers and a pilot. Amazingly, they found the thick cable was not connected to anything they could see – it just seemed to go down into the deep sediment of the river. So we tried to winch it out. The workers tugged and pulled and cajoled for two hours. No go. The cable would not budge. They said they were sorry, that it was all



PILING REMOVAL

they could do, but I literally asked them to try one last time. They agreed, bore down, and the cable budged just a bit. Then it moved more, and then it was all removed - a golden moment I will never forget.

It turned out the cable had not been connected to anything, it was just deeply buried in the river. The lesson? Ask the right people for the right things in the right way. Day in and day out, these folks do utilitarian work keeping boats moving and getting them out of trouble. That day on the riverbank, the Fred Devine crew used their expertise to be heroes.

At one point, we removed so much concrete the ATV couldn't reach the southern sections of the beach where more concrete remained. So we linked up with businesses like Columbia Sportswear to bring out employees to form human conveyor belts and move concrete hand over hand out to where the ATV could reach it. Travel Oregon came out several times to pick up rip-rap rock from the river's edge, moving it back up the bank where it can provide bank protection. This also made the beach "beachier" by getting the big ugly rocks off the shore.

Finally, we pulled a permit with the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to remove 30 pilings at the beach. Pilings don't belong in a human swimming area and they degrade shallow water habitat for salmon. We fundraised to remove the pilings, and Fred Devine came back and did the work for a song.

We couldn't have done all this without the help of Fred Devine, the Inverness Inmate Work Crew, the employees of Columbia Sportswear and Travel Oregon, committed City staff, and many good friends and volunteers.

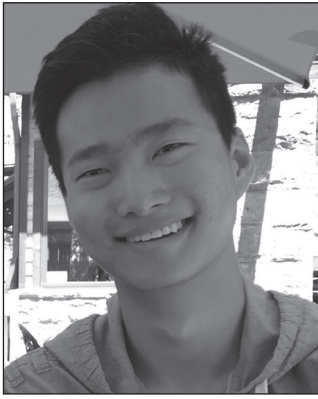
Outside of my mom being a science teacher and author, I have had no formal environmental education. I am not a biologist, scientist, or engineer. In college I studied accounting, not activism. I'm just a dude who loves rivers and wants our community to embrace the Willamette and perhaps fall in love with it as I have.

Stay tuned for Part 3 in the birth of Audrey McCall Beach – when things get political!



My Summer In Alameda *by David Ai*

Standing beside a giant cactus with huge flowers fully blooming, I wonder to myself if I am somewhere in Europe or (I have to ask myself twice) if I am still in Portland? With a beautiful city view and elegant European-style houses, NE Gile Terrace is one of my favorite spots in the neighborhood. Especially on a hot summer night, there's nothing better to do than take a walk or go for a run there. It feels like I'm part of a summer fairy tale, and I've gotten lost in another country.



DAVID AI

My name is David Ai, I am a Chinese international student studying at UO, and this is my second summer here in the neighborhood. I've enjoyed exploring Alameda with my American host parents, Annette and Mark Bendinelli, and I thought I'd tell you some of my favorite things to do here.

I often run and work out a little, and with the speed limit at 20 mph, I can say that you are very safe to run in the neighborhood. Also, I have found that the two

staircases between Alameda Terrace and NE Fremont St. are great for leg workouts.

Guilder, a small coffee shop on NE 24th and Fremont, is a great spot to meet friends and to hang out. This is my go-to place whenever I have papers due and want to drink coffee while I work. The shop is busy but not too crowded, and the service there is definitely a thumbs-up.

My American family and I often walk to Alberta Street for dinner. Bollywood Theater and Cruz Room are two of my favorite dining places. At Bollywood Theater, I highly recommend you try their chicken curry Thali meal and, perhaps, try their homemade peppers first before eating a whole one. The peppers are hot, very hot, and I learned this the hard way.

After dinner, if you are a dessert lover like me and don't want to wait on line for Salt & Straw, Angel's Donuts and Ice Cream on NE 28th and Alberta is a great place to go. They are locally owned, and have various kinds of donuts and ice cream. It is just wonderful to walk around Alberta with friends and family and check out some small, but very interesting, shops together.

These are just a few of my favorite things to do in the neighborhood, and I'm hoping to explore even more in the future!

Who Maintains Alameda's Traffic Circles? *by David Spencer*

The Alameda Neighborhood has relatively few islands or in-street landscaping areas - the largest is the triangular garden at the junction of NE Alameda Street and NE 29th Avenue. You might not even have noticed the thinly planted area where Bryce Street crosses busy NE 33rd. If you've ever wondered who's responsible for taking care of these areas, and how to improve them, here's some information that might be helpful.

You can adopt and maintain a traffic circle or divider in our neighborhood through the Stewardship/Adopt a Landscape program at the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT). All it takes is a phone call or e-mail to Program Coordinator Dana Dister. If the island already has a volunteer caretaker, she'll make them aware of your interest so the caretaker can contact you. If it's available for adoption, Dana will take you through the application process.

Within this program, you partner with PBOT. You'll have to inform the program coordinator of

intended improvements before you make them. The city provides free compost and other assistance including drought-resistant plant suggestions, but residents are responsible for handling - and paying for - watering. You might also need help with traffic if you want to work on the small plot in the middle of NE 33rd Avenue, and part of your application agreement is a waiver that protects the city from injury claims.

If you'd like to begin a traffic circle improvement project or want general information about traffic circle maintenance, contact PBOT at <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/77768>.



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First Sign of Fall: Migratory Vaux's swifts swirl into the chimney at Fremont United Methodist Church. The swifts nest in various Portland locations during September, and usually tuck in about a half hour before sunset. Photo by Michele Bernstein.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Alameda Newsletter Editor:

Sadly, Willie Levenson failed to mention in his piece on swimming in the Willamette River (AlamedaPDX, Summer 2019) the key role played by the \$1.5 billion (yes, billion!) Big Pipe project!

Started in the 1990's and completed in 2011, the Big Pipe helped Portland's citizens reduce combined sewer overflows in the Willamette River and Columbia Slough by over 90%. Local funding (no state or federal funds) paid for this cleanup, which combines massive tunnels along the east and west sides of the river that meet at the Swan Island Pump Station. The west side tunnel goes under the river!

Force mains take the overflow north, then gravity takes over to get it to the sewage treatment plant in North Portland. Portland's Bureau of Environmental Services brought this project in on time, and on budget!

Now if we can get the "responsible parties" to get going on the Harbor Superfund cleanup! But note that the river water is fine even there for swimming - just be sure to restrict consumption of resident fish. The problem is contaminated sediment from WWII and before. Migrating fish are fine to eat as well. Also, be sure to venture down to Swan Island for coffee or lunch at the new Daimler headquarters (open to the public on workdays) and enjoy a beautiful, mile-long Willamette Greenway Trail there (with beaches!).

— Lenny Anderson

Retired Executive Director, Swan Island Bus. Assoc.
Board member, Friends of N. Portland Greenway

Editor's Note: Willie Levenson has written about The Big Pipe in prior stories for this newsletter.

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Cats, Dogs, and Babies, Oh MY! by Renata Ackermann

When we first moved into our house in the Alameda neighborhood we brought Eli with us, who had spent his first couple of years as an indoor cat in one of the old apartment buildings in NW Portland. It was hard not to let him roam in the backyard, and heartbreaking to watch him sit by the screen door looking at the squirrels run across the top of the fence. I would get upset at the neighbor's cat, who seemed to enjoy being extra slow when meandering through our back yard (which was supposed to be our cat's territory). We finally gave in and put up a line across the back yard so Eli could roam attached to a long rope. That still didn't seem quite right, and we graduated him to being an outdoor cat with a little bell on his collar. He never went very far, as cats stay within close range of their house if they started out as indoor cats.

While Eli was around, I knew which cats belonged in the neighborhood. I knew the regulars who would come into our yard to aggravate Eli, especially the little black cat with the white chest who would tease him mercilessly. He got beaten up more than once by a bully cat, usually on his own territory. Eli just didn't quite have the street smarts to defend himself without getting hurt.

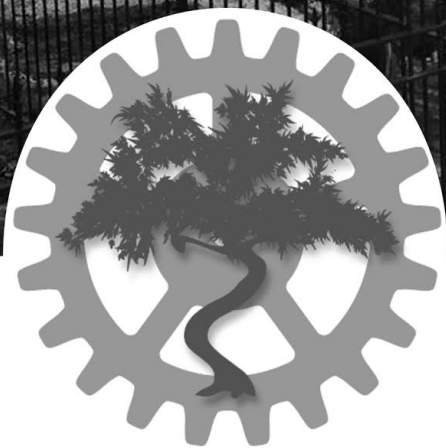
Some years ago, we adopted Kobe, a little terrier mutt from the Humane Society. He had been found on the streets of Los Angeles, was malnourished and lethargic until we nourished him back to his normal weight. One Saturday morning, I let him out the front door to do his business. It was quiet except for the usual crows cawing in the walnut tree. Then I saw what at first seemed like a larger dog up the street. My little dog must have noticed it too, as his ears were up and then he ran up the street barking, straight towards what I realized was a coyote. Brave - but not so street smart either, as he could have easily become the coyote's breakfast - he was saved by the neighbor up the street who heard my screams and helped chase the coyote away.

With Kobe by my side, I've become familiar with lots of dogs and dog owners who I hadn't really paid attention to while I was a cat owner. Now it seems that a dog lives in almost every house on my street. I notice new dogs moving into the neighborhood, older ones getting more fragile and losing weight, and puppies that disrupt my evening walk with their cuteness and their extra interest in making a new friend. I was sad when I learned that the couple up the street had moved out and that Kobe wouldn't be able to romp with their Jack Russell terrier anymore. The two terriers would wait



for each other on our evening walks, and enjoyed many a good sniff and jump together.

I am fascinated with how my awareness about the world around me changes depending on what I am interested in. When I had a cat, I could identify other cats in the neighborhood and would always encounter at least a couple on my walks that were looking for a belly rub. Now that I have a dog, I don't see cats anymore. Instead, the neighborhood seems filled with all kinds of dogs. Before I had a baby, I didn't notice children either - they weren't on my radar. Now, seeing them makes me smile and brings back precious memories.



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George Ivan Smith (cont. from page 1)

no idea if I was the first person he asked, or the seventh. It doesn't matter, because the way he buttered me up with a recitation of all of my articles and how much he'd liked them ensured that there was absolutely no way I could or would say no. George was a very thoughtful, methodical person. So, when he got on his bike to come to my house to ask me to take over as editor, I knew he had reread my past work so that he could touch on it as we talked.

I knew that it would not be possible for me to fill George's very big shoes as editor. I didn't even try. For one, he was also the layout designer. I have no skill in this arena and had to recruit one - so his one job immediately became two. For another, I'm not nearly as nice as him. Mainly, I just hoped to do George and our neighborhood proud by taking care of this great tool of local communication that had meant so much to both of us.

Once I was editing the newsletter, George would send me an email after each issue, with point-by-point feedback on the articles within. His thoughts were always so kind and so positive that it made me feel like his confidence in me was deserved - which meant a lot to me. George also continued to write articles and he also stayed involved with the Neighborhood Association. His volunteer spirit was strong to the end.

I've been absorbing the news of George's passing for two weeks now, and it still makes me really sad to think about him. He was the most lovely person. His volunteer work for our neighborhood was legendary. And his family brought him such happiness and pride - I loved hearing about their various adventures. George - by his example - made me want to be a better person. I know for a fact that George was a positive force in the world. He will be sorely missed.

Picture Windows: Narratives We Live By *by Gail Jeidy*



I like stream of consciousness stories, character-driven tales and journeys. I lose interest with chase and action sequences, and anything too graphic or violent – I once walked out of a late afternoon movie at the Hollywood Theatre because the

story was one continuous spectacle. It was such a luscious summer day, and I opted to get outside. (The movie later won six Academy awards in the visual and sound categories.)



BEE ON LAVENDER IN ALAMEDA

I'm not your mainstream audience.

I am put off by what I see as our "superlative culture". My personal unfavorite of the season was a promotion for a class taught by "the best writers on the planet." Then there are the constant click-bait features and magazine headlines: best road trip stops, most popular something, greatest this. The best, the most, the greatest, oh my. Lately, I'm even put off by all those exclamation points found in comments and congratulations on Facebook.

Can we all just be?

Stories are important to our lives. Also important is how we choose to tell them.

In our house, we used to compete on who could tell our kids the most compelling tales, but I gave up early on because my husband Ron would always win (ditto with Scrabble). There was the time Ron and his brother were playing in the haymow and his brother accidentally shot him with a BB gun, thinking he was a bird, and Ron popped the BB out of his lower eyelid and sat with his

head lowered at the dinner table so his mom wouldn't notice that one eye was blue and the other green. Of course, Grandma eventually did notice and then... Three acts right there.

Or the time his grade school classmate, Paul, was using bad words and the teacher warned him, but Paul, being a belligerent little cuss, boldly swore again. The teacher washed his mouth out with soap in front of the class. Paul said, "Yum, yum, that's so tasty, give me more." And so the teacher kindly repeated the punishment. Episodes of Paul became such legend in our house that on one family visit back to the Midwest, we had to drive by and show the kids the farm where Paul lived.

On the flip side, I related stories like this:

I was about 9 or 10 and living in the country on our dairy farm. We got a new brown couch to replace our old green couch and Mom and Dad hauled the old couch outside in the yard under the clothesline awaiting its final trip to the dump. I asked and got permission to sleep on the bristly- textured green couch that night, outside all alone, which was a thrill.

And here's where the kids would ask, "And then what, Mom?" and I'd have to admit there was no "then what." That was the story.

I realize now what I had neglected to include. I can still smell the fresh air of childhood from my night tucked deeply into the recesses of the green couch. I can picture the stars, feel my wonder at the fireflies, and hear the crickets. I can even remember how my cheek felt the next morning, embossed with a leaf print like a fancy Christmas card. And how it itched. And how I must have been grieving the loss of that old couch and the memories of our family it contained.

I'm thinking all this as we walk down Stanton Street from one edge of the neighborhood to the end and back again.

We spy a little girl in pink hiding behind a tiny tree. Hear her sandals clap-clap-clap on the sidewalk after we've passed. Up ahead in a front yard, tiny plastic dinosaurs thrive in the shadow of fragrant Jurassic roses. In another yard, mini-mirrors and metallic ribbon guard blueberries from hungry fairies. A happy doggie trots 30 feet ahead of its owner. Further on, construction toys take a breather among the plantings.

We pass doors of tangerine and celery and yellow. Count sidewalk swings, one mysteriously moving with no wind and no kid. There's a tree ladder. And a cat watching from a window. We pass a bubbling fountain. Identify smashed cherries on the sidewalk. And white paint "locates" signs on the street, petroglyphs of our time marking future utility excavations.

At the end of a block, a surprise in chalk.

Story fodder abounds in artichokes. Tomatoes. Rhubarb. Black-eyed Susans. An espaliered fruit tree against a wooden fence. A fake owl, garden gnome, safe trampoline, river rock and big boulders. There's an artful lamp post. And a curving stairway to a secret world. A Zen garden. And a big old farmhouse.

Nearer home, we step under a bamboo archway and enter a tropical jungle. My mind spins.

Here's a scattering of delicate feathers in the parking strip grass. Downy white. One, then another. What happened here 'twas likely sad. We turn to the slime of slug trails gracing the sidewalk. Maple whirligigs scattered like confetti. Shreds of bark under the London Planes.

There's a bee clinging to a lavender strand. Is he dead? Looks like he's dead. Did he die doing something he loved? We jostle the stalk, gently. He doesn't fly away, but we see a wing lift.

I'm thankful to live in a neighborhood so rich and full of stories. Or stories yet to be.



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Oregon's Biggest Used Book Sale Is Coming!

Friends of the Multnomah County Library is holding its annual Fall Used Book Sale October 4-7. This is Oregon's largest used book sale, with over 40,000 items at low prices. Hardcover and quality trade paperbacks start at \$2, mass market paperbacks and children's books at 50 cents and \$1, CDs at \$1, and DVDs at \$2. Also available are comic books, graphic novels, audio books, LPs, video games, pamphlets, sheet music, and maps – all sorted and in excellent condition. Proceeds of the sale benefit programs of the Multnomah County Library.

The event is at the Lloyd Center DoubleTree Hotel Exhibit Hall, 1000 NE Multnomah St., and is easily accessible by TriMet/MAX. Vouchers for \$3 parking in the on-site garage are available to all attendees.

The weekend's activities will once again include Literary Trivia on Saturday night from 6-9 p.m., featuring a no-host bar and prizes for the winning teams. This year's trivia night will feature questions suggested by Multnomah County librarians. Sunday will also see the return of Educators Discount Day, when educators receive 50% off all purchases with a valid school ID. Monday features a new pricing option: from open to close, shoppers can choose 50% off all items, or a flat rate of \$25 per box.

In addition to the general inventory, the Collector's Corner on Friday and Saturday offers a variety of unusual, scarce and surprising finds, including signed and gift-quality books in a variety of genres, ephemera,

quality vintage vinyl records, DVDs, and affordable non-book novelties.

The sale will also explore the mysteries of the Northwest with the theme of "Searching for the Elusive... in a Book!" with selections of Portland and Northwest fiction, children's books, fantasy and sci-fi, and fascinating people and places. Additionally, several sections on crafts, art, and hobbies will return in force.

While admission to the event is free, the sale opens Friday with a Members Only Pre-Sale from 6-9 p.m. Memberships can be purchased at the door, but those interested in attending the Members Only Pre-Sale are strongly encouraged to join or renew their membership in advance. People can join online at friends-library.org, at the Friends Library Store in Central Library (801 SW 10th Ave, Portland, OR 97205) or by mailing a check to 1020 SW Taylor, Ste. 439, Portland, OR 97205. Annual individual memberships are \$25 and family memberships are only \$35.

The sale's Book Depot will be available on Friday and Saturday. Shoppers can drop off boxes or bags of books they plan to purchase, and then continue to browse while volunteers total the purchases to expedite checkout. Volunteers are also available to help load boxes into nearby vehicles.



Please note: no electronic devices to check prices will be allowed during Friday's Members-Only event. Phones and scanners will be allowed Saturday through Monday for checking individual items. Items may not be set aside to be scanned later.

Hours for the sale are as follows:

Friday, October 4th • 6pm - 9pm

Members Only Pre-Sale + Collector's Corner.

Saturday, October 5th • 9am - 9pm

Regular Sale plus Literary Trivia and Bar from 6pm - 9pm + Collector's Corner.

Sunday, October 6th • 11am - 5pm

Educators Discount Day: 50% off with school ID.

• Monday, October 7th, 9am - 3pm

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