

AlamedaPDX

Summer 2019Volume 33 Number 2

ANA President Rider Steps Down

Alameda Neighborhood Association President Scott Rider has stepped down after a decade of service to the ANA.

In announcing his departure, Rider said, “I have spent over 10 years volunteering with the ANA and hope that I’m leaving it at least as good as I found it, and with any luck a little better.”

A 20-year Alameda resident, Rider has been deeply involved in the community. During his five-year tenure as ANA President he was instrumental in leading many significant projects including:

- Organizing neighbors around the PPS boundary changes.
- Protesting and successfully preventing a proposed cell phone tower in the neighborhood.
- Founding and supporting (with Board Treasurer Charles Rice) the annual Halloween haunted house.
- Re-launching the AlamedaPDX newsletter.

Rider’s fellow Board members expressed their gratitude for his “commitment to the neighborhood,” and his “dedication, leadership, and friendship.”

In addition to Rider, ANA Board Member at Large, Dean Sasek, has stepped down, and the Board expressed their appreciation for his service as well.

The ANA will meet at 7 p.m. Monday, June 24, at Fremont United Methodist Church to solicit nominations for new board members. For more information, go to www.alamedaportland.com



SCOTT RIDER AND HIS WIFE, KRISTA, AND SON, ARCHER

Summer Free For All Begins

Summer is here, and once again Portland Parks and Recreation is sponsoring its Summer Free For All program. The purpose of the program is to build community through free, inclusive, family-friendly activities that celebrate Portland’s diverse cultures and highlight local artists. A number of events are scheduled near Alameda, including a concert by the Portland Festival Symphony (Strings) at Grant Park on July 28, and a showing of “How to Train Your Dragon: Hidden World” at Wilshire Park on August 11. Grant Pool will also hold a free swim from 1:15-3 p.m. every Wednesday beginning June 18. For complete summer event info, go to <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/61921>.

Postcards and Coffee

by George Ivan Smith

On January 21, 2017, the day after the Presidential inauguration in Washington, DC, a rain-soaked crowd of 70,000 to 100,000 demonstrators marched through a 44-block area of downtown Portland. This Women’s March on Portland, like the Women’s March on Washington, gave expression to the diverse groups who were dismayed by the election.

Alameda resident Cara Haskey was shocked by the election, and participating in the Portland march gave her a renewed sense of hope. She began looking for the next steps to build on the momentum of the march, and turn her anger into action.

“The political activist Michael Moore suggested people could make a difference by getting up each day and making a phone call to lobby for policies, appointments and funding to support their needs,” Haskey said.

She added, “He also suggested they further amplify their messages by enlisting their family, friends and neighbors in their plan.”

Haskey took this to heart, and determined to put her skills in communication and graphic design to work to raise public awareness of issues and policy decisions. She decided to focus on one topic each week, to assure that each major concern would get its best chance to be heard. She felt that would also help her and others feel less overwhelmed.

She began by designing a postcard. Then, opening her home, she invited a few friends and neighbors to join her in calling and writing in response to the appointment of Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education. She noted, “The turnout was large, and my kitchen and dining room filled quickly. Getting phone calls through to Congress at that time was nearly impossible, so the group focused on writing the postcards.”

(continued on page 6)

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L. TO R. CARA HASKEY, MARCELLE FURROW-KIEBLER
AND ROBIN HAWLEY CRUMRINE

Editor's Message by Annette Bendinelli



Summer is almost here, and I'm starting to feel like we're the only house on our block that doesn't have a dumpster, a Porta Potty, or a fleet of trucks parked outside (and it's only because we rebuilt our garage and deck last year!). From routine maintenance to major remodeling projects, it's great to see people investing in their homes and yards. It's also a sign of a healthy and vital neighborhood. Based on the amount of activity on most streets, Alameda is thriving - new families continue to move in, and longtime occupants are keeping up their properties and making improvements.

Another sign of a healthy neighborhood is a strong neighborhood association. We've been fortunate to have one under the leadership of Scott Rider. Scott recently stepped down after serving as President of the ANA Board for the past five years. As an ANA volunteer for 10 years, Scott devoted countless hours to making our neighborhood a better place, and his

dedication and commitment to Alameda will be greatly missed! Also, a big thanks to Board Member at Large Dean Sasek, who stepped down in May.

On June 24 at 7 p.m., the ANA Board will meet at Fremont United Methodist Church to solicit nominations for new members. If you'd like to help keep our neighborhood association strong and have a voice on issues that affect Alameda, be sure to attend!

Back to the subject of remodeling, in August Grant High School will reopen at its regular campus after two years of extensive updating and renovation. Blythe Knott gives us a look back at the high school's move to the Marshall campus, and how it affected her family, on Page 4.

Speaking of Grant: Congratulations to the "We the People" Constitution Team, who took 3rd place at the national competition in Washington, D.C. last month! This is an amazing accomplishment, as anyone who has ever watched nationals would agree. A recap of the competition appears on Page 6.

Continuing on the education front, in this issue, Sonia Acharya writes about a beloved Alameda teacher

who will be leaving at the end of the school year, and Renata Ackermann writes about her son's Grant High graduation in a piece that's sure to touch your heart. So many of us have experienced that moment where we blink and realize our children have become young adults, and I think Renata captures the feeling beautifully.

And just in time for summer, we feature the first installment of a three-part story by Alameda resident Willie Levenson on his efforts to help Portlanders reclaim access to the Willamette River. Also, Doug Decker takes us back to simpler times with his "Dairies and Orchards" story, Dan LaGrande reports on how area residents are feeling about the return of e-scooters to the neighborhood, and Gail Jeidy lists some book suggestions for vacation reading.

That's it for now - hope you all have a safe, happy, sun-filled summer, and I'll see you in September!

— 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.

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STATEMENT OF INCLUSION AND SUPPORT

Our community declared 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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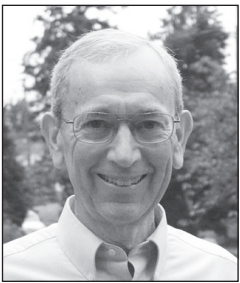
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E-Scooters Are Back, to Cheers & Boos by Dan LaGrande



If you're walking, bicycling or driving, be extra alert. E-scooters are back on Portland streets, and sometimes on sidewalks.

E-scooters were introduced in Portland through a four-month City pilot program last fall. They returned this spring when the City initiated a second pilot program — this time for a full year. Residents in Alameda and adjacent neighborhoods appear to have mixed opinions—some quite vocal—about this new type of transportation. I visited some nearby coffee shops to get a sampling of opinions. Many of the people I spoke with asked that their last names not be used.

"I love them, they're a ridiculous amount of fun," said Braden Hewitt. "It's impossible not to smile while riding a scooter, even when some motorists honk or yell at you."

Hewitt, a barista at Caffè Destino, explained further: "I understand the argument favoring helmets, but they're not convenient and there's no place to put them. So I like to ride without a helmet, which is a risk, but I'm an adult and I understand the risk I'm taking."

At another neighborhood coffee shop I visited, a customer named Eloise said "I think they're terrible. I was almost hit head-on by an e-scooter driven by a teenager who was not wearing a helmet." Eloise went on to describe the emotion she felt. "If he had hit my car, it would have changed both our lives forever. Compared to bicycle riders, e-scooter drivers have much less awareness of their surroundings and other vehicles on the streets."

Riding without a helmet and riding on sidewalks were the top complaints received by the City in its pilot program last year. Both issues have already popped up in the first weeks of the new pilot program.

Nick said he had concerns about safety for both riders and pedestrians. "The scooter companies need to do a better job, maybe with a checklist for every rider, starting with 'Do you have a helmet?'. The could prevent the scooter from starting unless the rider meets the basic requirements on the checklist."

In talking to folks at coffee shops, I was impressed with the number of constructive and creative ideas they expressed. Like this one from Cole, who is just finishing his degree in mechanical engineering. "I've not ridden one, but the fact that kids can get on them seems a little dangerous, especially when they ride without a helmet. It's good, however, that e-scooters mean we don't have to rely on cars so much." He continued, "What's needed now are hubs with re-charging facilities around town where riders can return the scooters instead of leaving them scattered on sidewalks around the neighborhoods."

At another coffee shop, Joaquin told me he has ridden e-scooters for fun, but said it's a complicated topic. "As long as people don't make a mess, it's fine, but they can be unsightly if riders leave them around on sidewalks or create hazards that people can trip over. I would suggest designated parking stations, similar to the orange bicycles. That would be a good model."

Over their Sunday morning coffee and treats, one family I talked with was well informed on e-scooter issues, and offered differing perspectives. Nathan, who lives in the neighborhood but works downtown, said, "They're a bit obnoxious. I see rows of them downtown. My impression is that when you don't own the e-scooter and you don't have a helmet, you treat them more like an amusement ride."

His partner, Shannon, replied "They're an alternative form of transportation and I'm all for that. I do observe that some riders are a little wobbly and awkward, so motorists need to be more aware of others on the road around us, just as they are for bicyclists."

Their son, Desmond, age 10, said, "Right now I like riding my bike and walking, but when I'm older maybe I'll try an e-scooter."

Having dinner at Pastini on NE Broadway while taking a break from preparing this article, I personally witnessed two e-scooters zipping down the sidewalk on the north side of the street. A few minutes later one scooter buzzed by our window on the south side of Broadway. None of the riders were wearing helmets.



E-SCOOTERS RETURN TO PORTLAND STREETS

When the City launched the four-month pilot program last year, it set four goals:

- Reduce private motor vehicle use and congestion
- Prevent fatalities and serious injuries
- Expand access for underserved Portlanders
- Reduce air pollution, including climate pollution

The City concluded that the e-scooter program reduced automobile use, but the results for the other goals either fell short or were inconclusive. With the new year-long program, the City expects better results.

It's clear that residents in Alameda and adjacent neighborhoods are very interested in the potential of e-scooters, and are hopeful the City will address safety issues as well as curtail improper behavior by riders.

For more information on the City's e-scooter pilot program, go to <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/transportation/77294>

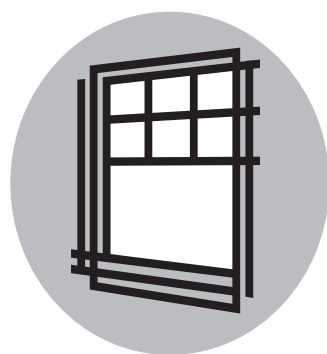


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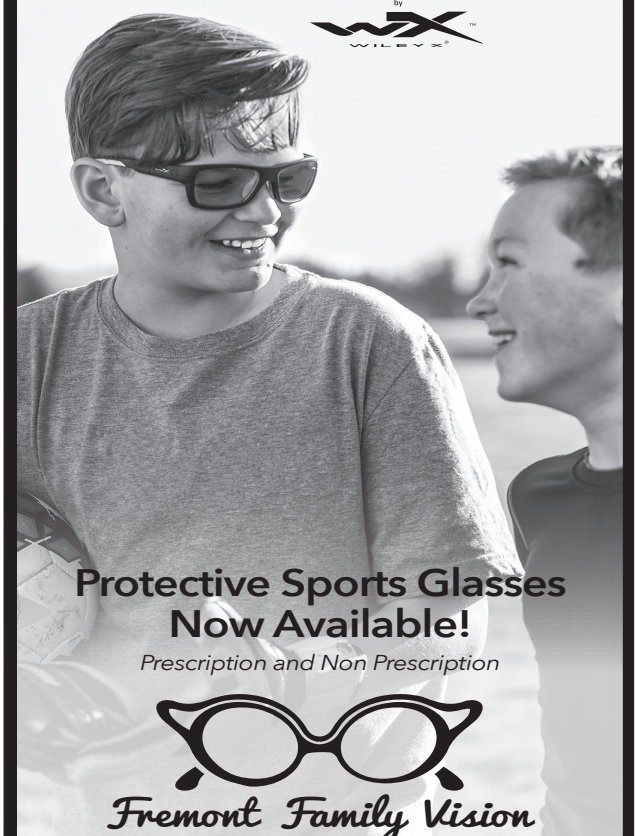
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Grant High School Set to Reopen in August *by Blythe Knott*

For the past two years, the students and staff of Grant High School have been making the not-insignificant journey to the Marshall High School campus on SE Powell Boulevard and 91st Avenue, while Grant is being renovated and modernized.

For future students, this is nothing but a good thing. Grant definitely needed updating. Built in 1923, the campus was showing many signs of age and was also growing out of its old footprint, necessitating the addition of modular classrooms behind the main building.

For current students, the two-year renovation involved a major change in their high school experience. My daughter graduated from the Marshall campus last year, which meant that not only was she commuting for her last year, but also that she had to endure a couple of years at Grant, where even basic maintenance was being deferred. I remember being in the library and it seemed that half the ceiling tiles were missing. The place was falling apart, and they were letting it, because of the impending remodel.

My son has spent the last two years at Marshall, and will be in the first graduating class from the “new” Grant.

To go back in time a bit: Marshall High School opened in 1960, drawing its student population from areas previously served by Franklin or Madison high schools. It was one of Portland’s newest high schools, but also one of its shortest-lived, closing in 2011 as part of one (of many) of Portland Public Schools’ boundary redistricting plans. The school then sat unused until the Fall of 2015, when Franklin High School relocated there for two years during its building renovation. Grant has been at Marshall from Fall 2017 to Spring 2019, and Madison High School will move there from Fall 2019 to Spring 2021.

The residents of the Grant High School boundary area who have been making the trip to Marshall have racked up some serious mileage during these two academic years. It’s 7.5 miles from my house to Marshall. Getting there by car takes about 25 minutes in the morning (as opposed to a 5-minute walk to Grant). Getting out of Marshall in the afternoon is much harder, because everyone is leaving at the same time and the school for some reason has very limited access points.

A popular method of transportation is the MAX train - which goes right to Marshall. But getting to the Hollywood MAX station from Alameda is about a mile and a half (from my house) and involves a trip by car, bike or on foot. Alternatively, some students take the bus, but early on it gained a reputation for being unreliable and lots of students who started out that way discontinued the practice eventually. Whether it’s by carpool, bus, or train...all of those modes of transport have been the way our neighborhood’s high school students have been making their way to outer southeast Portland.

All of this is to say that for everyone who has been displaced by this move, it’s been a long two years. An hour a day is a real commute when you’re in high school.

To learn more about the impact of the move from the school staff’s perspective, I spoke with Grant Principal Carol Campbell. Campbell told me that, for starters, she felt the decision to push back the school’s start time 15 minutes to 8:30 a.m. helped - so much so that they’re keeping that the same for next year.

Campbell found that while the community was definitely hesitant about this plan at first, they have

been very adaptive to the new situation. She notes that there have been a few aspects of life at Grant that have actually improved at the Marshall campus. For example, students and staff have enjoyed the wide variety of food that is available just off-campus at Marshall. She also likes the sense of community that the Marshall courtyard creates.

And, because Marshall has a stadium, and lights, the Friday night football games have been much better attended than they ever were in the Grant Bowl (which has little in the way of seating, and no lights at all). In fact, in the last two years, Grant has won the OSAA #1 Student Section award (which covers the entire state of Oregon!).

All in all, Campbell has found that while it has been a challenge to move 2,000 people across town to a new school, it’s gone smoothly, and the time has gone fast. Teachers are now starting to think about packing up their things for the move back to Grant. Administrators will move into the newly renovated buildings at the beginning of August, with teachers and students to follow later that month. Campbell posts updates on the Grant High School Facebook page, and @ccampbellGHS on Twitter.

I know my family is ready for Grant to move back to Grant. The campus will be nice and new, and I will never again take for granted the convenience of our school being located right in the neighborhood.

Blythe Knott will report on the opening of the new Grant campus in the Fall issue of this newsletter. Also, save the date for a Grant open house on September 7. Details will be posted on the Alameda PDX Facebook page when they become available.

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Dairies and Orchards Were the Heart of Alameda *by Doug Decker*

Much of Northeast Portland at the turn of the last century went like this: a sparse grid of dirt roads, brushy open fields, clumps of thick forest, a scattering of orchards planted in the 1880s and 90s, limited central services, a few established rural residences, and houses with newcomers popping up here and there as the real estate business percolated. And dairies.

Portland’s fresh milk came from a relatively small number of commercial production dairies and hundreds of smaller operations scattered across the landscape, consisting of a few cows and a small barn or garage.

Here in Alameda—in the vicinity of NE 21st and Fremont—a dairy known as the Irvington Dairy once occupied the landscape bounded by Fremont and NE Ridgewood, between NE 19th and NE 24th. Then, this area was known as the Homedale Plat. Today, it’s considered part of the Alameda neighborhood.

While the 2019 version of this place is an orderly grid of streets and homes dating from 1922, less than 100 years ago the sloping landscape just below Alameda ridge was an important part of Portland’s eastside agriculture. Here’s an interesting description of that area by local resident Rod Paulson written in January 1976 that can feed your curiosity about this landscape.

“Before 1921 and 1922 when city lots were staked out, much of this was an apple orchard, the remnants of which can still be seen in some back yards. The trees grew right down to the edge of the Fremont Street [side]walk and there were several old buildings on the place, residential and otherwise, including a large farmhouse painted light brown which was located close to Fremont in the vicinity of 21st Avenue. This house dated back to the 1890s or before and people lived there in apparent comfort in a rural setting, yet in the midst of modern houses that [were being built] in all directions.”

“There was another farmhouse set back a considerable distance from the street more or less in the eastern part of the orchard, and a barn was situated opposite the end of 23rd Avenue.”

Owners Michael G. Munley and James T. Barron had purchased the future Homedale property in 1905 for \$6,500 and kept it in agricultural use with an eye to eventual development, but market conditions didn’t make that worthwhile until the 1920s. Not coincidentally, Munley was the son-in-law of E.Z. Ferguson, president of the Alameda Land Company, which was developing land just up the hill. Barron was a Ferguson business partner.



From The Oregonian, May 3, 1923.

A dairy barn anchored the northeast corner of NE 21st and Fremont from the 1890s until 1916 when a catastrophic fire destroyed much of the herd and the barn. Between the terrible fire and an early 1920s resurgence in Portland’s real estate values, the time was nearing when Munley and Barron would be forced to execute the land use change and end the property’s agricultural past.


A nearby dairy existed just to the east as well: the Pearson Place, the cow pasture where Alameda School was eventually built. The Pearson family operated their dairy there during this same time period and it too was subdivided into residential lots about the same time. Smaller dairies existed in Concordia, Vernon and other nearby areas.

By the fall of 1922, the streets of Alameda’s Homedale Plat had been carved into the south-facing slopes and the first homes had been built. Real estate ads even mentioned that most lots had fruit trees but didn’t explain they were left over from earlier orchards.

Interesting to note that prior to 1922, Regents Drive did not go all the way through to NE 21st because the orchard,

pasture and open fields were in the way. Regents came down the hill and tee’d into NE 24th before heading south. Think of the former orchard and pasture land you’re driving through the next time you drive down Regents headed for NE 21st.

As population pressures and real estate development began to create the Alameda neighborhood, tensions between the city way of life and the country way of life began to escalate. This tension came through loud and clear in a news story from The Oregonian on May 3, 1923 that describes the presence of dairy cows just west of NE 21st Avenue. Dixon Place is the next subdivision to the west just a few blocks over, between Fremont and NE Shaver and from NE 15th to NE 19th, part of today’s Sabin neighborhood.



Read more about dairies, orchards and the tension between earlier land uses and development of the neighborhood by visiting Doug’s website: www.alamedahistory.org and search “cows” or “orchards.” Doug 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.

Choose to Lead in Your Neighborhood by Joining the ANA Board!

Do you want to have an impact on the livability of your neighborhood, and have a say in issues that affect your home, your block, and your community? Would you like to work with your neighbors to solve a problem or plan an event? If so, serving with the Alameda Neighborhood Association is a great way to gain or build leadership experience, give back to your community, and connect with your neighbors to make a difference.

The ANA Board works with residents to proactively address livability issues, track and communicate policies, and organize community-building events, and it serves as a voice for Alameda in the greater Portland area.

We are especially seeking board members with an interest in disaster preparedness, land use and transportation, livability, and building connections with schools. We need neighbors of all skill sets and experiences. As an association run by neighbors for neighbors, we value diversity of background and perspectives that can help us serve the Alameda community.

If you live or work in the Alameda neighborhood, you are eligible to join the board. Board member commitment is typically two to four hours per month, including attending our regular meeting on the fourth Monday of every month. If you’re interested, you can learn more at the Monday, June 24 ANA Board meeting at Fremont United Methodist Church, 2620 NE Fremont, from 7-8:30 p.m. Go to www.alamedaportland.com for more information.







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Free Red Cross Smoke Alarm Installation *by Michael Hall*

It was news to me. A smoke alarm can stop functioning after a decade on the wall or ceiling. Even if the battery is fresh and the test alarm sounds out loud and clear. Turns out the smoke sensor inside the unit will get old and die. Did not know that.

Luckily, an announcement posted on the Red Cross resource guide Prepare! alerted me to a free smoke alarm installation program they offer. Turns out that a working smoke alarm can cut the risk of death from a home fire in half - and the Red Cross responds to an average of two home fires every day in our region.

When I called to make an appointment, I was told about the dying smoke sensors, which made me glad to be getting

new units installed. A couple of weeks later, two very helpful installers came to the house and replaced old smoke detectors in the basement, first floor and second floor. And I'll never need to replace the batteries, because these detectors are sealed units containing 10-year lithium ion batteries.

The Red Cross installation team volunteers, Suzie and Krystina, encouraged me to spread the word about this extraordinary program. So I'm letting you know with this public service announcement. Be safe. Be prepared!

Interested? Call the Red Cross at 503-528-5783 or email them at preparedness@redcross.org. Or visit www.redcross.org/CascadesHomeFire for more information.



GRANT HIGH SCHOOL CONSTITUTION TEAM

Grant Constitution Team 3rd In Nation

At the end of April, the Grant High School Constitution Team took third place in the nation at the 32nd Annual "We the People" National Finals. Held just outside Washington, D.C., the competition included 56 teams representing nearly every state, and 1,200 high school students participated. Portland's Lincoln High School finished in fourth place.

During the Finals, all teams participated in simulated congressional hearings. The students testified as Constitutional experts before panels of judges acting as congressional committees, who then scored the groups through a performance-based assessment.

Each hearing began with an opening statement by students, and was followed by a six-minute period of questioning during which judges probed students' depth of knowledge, understanding, and ability to apply Constitutional principles to historical and current issues across six different subject areas. The final round was held in a Senate hearing room on Capitol Hill.

The Grant team members were praised by the judges for their knowledge in the first two rounds, and were thrilled to learn they had been selected as one of the top ten teams. Colorado's Denver East High School won the competition, and Amador Valley High School of California placed second.



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Postcards and Coffee (Cont. from page 1)

Haskey's friends agreed that local energy, when focused, could influence national decision makers, and they encouraged her to keep going. So they met again the next week in Haskey's dining room. Soon they shifted to meeting at 9 a.m. each Wednesday at Guilder coffee



SOME OF THE WORK OF THE POSTCARDS & COFFEE GROUP

shop on NE Fremont for "Postcards and Coffee." Guilder owners Mike and Caryn Nelson, who were trying to get Guilder established, were pleased to provide an upstairs table for the group each week.

Sometimes the focus is national, and other weeks the group addresses local concerns. Recently, the need for administrative change that would give students at Beaumont Middle School the opportunity of electives like music and visual arts was conveyed to school district leaders and members of the school board on more than 90 postcards. The group has also lobbied for the \$2 billion tax package to support education in our state.

And so it has continued for over 140 weeks. Haskey develops an action plan to address a specific purpose, with a list of leaders to be contacted and a sample message that can fit on a postcard. Neighbors who enjoy coffee with friends and lobbying by postcard gather to write messages by hand that go to people who have power to make changes happen. Postcards have an advantage because nothing is enclosed that could delay delivery, the postage is cheaper, and the form is familiar and not technical.

The group welcomes all who wish to join their political action and community-building efforts. They encourage people to drop in to one of their Wednesday postcard-writing sessions, which begin at 9 a.m. at Guilder, 2393 NE Fremont.

For more information, go to <http://eepurl.com/djx035> to receive weekly meeting notices, follow them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/pdxpostcards>, or send an email to pdxpostcards@gmail.com.



NEIGHBORS GATHER FOR POSTCARDS & COFFEE

Adventures in Advocacy –The Birth of a Beach (Part 1 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) will open on Portland’s east side. In Part One of a three-part series that will continue in our next two issues, Levenson describes how the beach was born, and his quest to rekindle Portlanders’ love affair with the Willamette.

When my wife and I moved to Portland in 1996, I just assumed that the Willamette River was where everyone swam. However, I quickly learned that: 1) It rains a lot in Portland, and 2) People believed you should never touch the Willamette or your skin would flake off, you would grow horns, etc. Everyone seemed to have their own pocket joke about the water quality of the city’s river.

At first I was disappointed. Even back then, Portland had a larger-than-life reputation for environmental leadership, and I couldn’t reconcile how people could identify as “green” citizens and yet make jokes about a river. Humans were the ones who screwed it up, and if you’re an environmentally conscious citizen, shouldn’t you dig in to fix it rather than sit back and taunt it?

Eventually, I got frustrated. So 15 years later I got off the couch and dreamed up The Big Float - a movement disguised as a party.

Around 1,000 people participated. It was a crazy lift and learning curve to get it together.

To put on The Big Float, we had to find sponsors, pull permits, plan the event, line up bands and vendors, create a website, and hope folks came. It was thrilling to pull it off and experience validation that we were on to something. Something potentially big.

We realized The Big Float had tremendous potential to impact how our community related to our river. It could be a vehicle for culture change, and out of that thought came the Human Access Project.

Once I had a chance to decompress and sort out what had happened in the whirlwind of TBF 1, it occurred to me that if I wanted to be an honest advocate (therefore a more effective advocate) I should start swimming in the Willamette River more. But where to do it?

At over 4,000 acres, the Willamette River is Portland’s second largest public space and natural area. It’s owned by the citizens of Oregon, yet we have an extreme deficit of water access points. According to Portland Parks and Recreation, less than 5% of the central city has access to the river’s edge.

I eventually found a flat and moderately accessible swimming spot under the Hawthorne Bridge, on the east side of the Willamette River near the popular wood dock used by boaters and now swimmers. Problem was, it was cluttered with concrete chunks.

So I started swimming there a few days a week. In between dips, I would make a big pile of concrete chunks hoping someone would notice. No surprise, no one seemed to notice or care, but I was determined to get rid of those concrete chunks.

The first step was getting approval to do it. This required getting permission from eight separate agencies to remove them. It wasn’t easy to get an okay from all these parties, but we got it, with the stipulation that heavy mechanized equipment could not be used. Uh, okay. This conditional approval felt like a veiled “no”. Removing tons of concrete by hand – without heavy mechanized equipment? That’s not easy to do, but it seemed worth a try. Dumbfounded at how to move forward, serendipity struck.

I heard on Oregon Public Broadcasting that Inverness Jail has a work crew program that sometimes does community service. After a few calls, I reached a sergeant and told him I had permission from eight separate agencies to remove concrete chunks from the river but couldn’t use heavy equipment. I said that seeing this concrete communicates that our city does not care about our river. The sergeant said he “got it,” and offered up his crew for the first two of what would



CONCRETE CHUNKS LINE THE WILLAMETTE

become 15 total cleanup days over four years. After the first two cleanups, the budget did not allow for any more “free” days, so we had to fundraise to bring the crew out for the remaining days.

This concrete removal work was done very discretely. Although we’d received approval from all the different entities, it would only take one changed mind to shut down our work. Our cleanup events were not publicized. It was the Inverness Inmate Work Crew, my friends, and myself. When asking for volunteer help, I said the idea was to make a beach but it wouldn’t be easy – it’s the world’s most ancient workout, lifting heavy rocks and chunks of concrete. The Inverness Inmate Work Crew had an ATV with a bed on the back, loads of heavy gauge steel picks, and rakes. All we needed was the muscle.

It was (and continues to be) an amazing experience working with the work crews. The people who participate in the crews are handpicked for good behavior. It gets them out of jail and earns them reduced time. At first, I was drawn to get their help out of pure practicality. I had no other ideas how to remove the concrete, but in all honesty, I was not entirely sure how it was going to go. I felt a little intimidated working side by side with the inmates.

But once I had a chance to work with the crew over several cleanups, it was clear these were just people who made a mistake somewhere down the line. I loved seeing how they worked together as a team. Each crew seemed to have unique expertise to contribute from prior life experience. Most inmates were in for short-term sentences, working off time on weekends. A few I would see on multiple cleanups. I felt sorry for them that they were in for longer periods but also enjoyed getting to know them a little.

Frequently, inmates expressed that they would be coming back to the beach when they got out, and would bring their families. It made me realize that unscrewing up Mother Nature makes people feel good. We can screw it up, but we can fix it, too. Doing this restoration work gave the inmates hope, pride, and something to look forward to – just as it did my friends and me. The concrete chunks never stood a chance.

Stay tuned for Part Two in the AlamedaPDX September issue!

To learn more about the Human Access Project, go to <http://www.humanaccessproject.com>



A WORK CREW FROM INVERNESS JAIL HELPS REMOVE CONCRETE BLOCKS

Alameda Cleanup A Success

Thanks to ANA Board members Scott Rider, Charles Rice, Travis Weedman and other volunteers who dropped by to give an hour or two at this year's Alameda Spring Clean-up.

Once again the event was a success, raising approximately \$750 for the ANA to put back into neighborhood projects. Over five tons of household trash filled two dumpsters, and the Clean-up provided recycling for scrap metal and lumber. Two trailer trucks full of metal went to a local recycler, while a local metals artist also picked out some pieces to use in future projects.

The "Too Good for the Dump" area was also popular this year. This is a space where neighbors can share usable

items, and others can shop for things they need. Neighbors donated everything from bookshelves to baby gear and housewares that were no longer wanted. At the end of the day, the unclaimed items were donated to Goodwill.

A special thanks goes to two particularly hard-working volunteers, Harry Weedman, a second grader at Alameda Elementary School, and Archer Rider, a third grader at Alameda. Harry and Archer worked side by side with their parents helping neighbors unload items, and demonstrated that one is never too young to make a difference volunteering.

Thanks also to our sponsors, Metro and Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods.



ANA BOARD MEMBER TRAVIS WEEDMAN AND HIS SON, HARRY



ANA BOARD MEMBERS SCOTT RIDER AND CHARLES RICE
WORK WITH NEIGHBORHOOD VOLUNTEERS

City to Compensate Homeowners for Flooding

A 30-inch water main ruptured unexpectedly at NE 23rd Avenue and Skidmore St. the morning of March 16 and flooded the neighborhood with 40,000 gallons of water a minute. It provided an unbelievable scene for spectators, who immediately flocked to the area along with emergency responders.

More than a dozen nearby homes sustained water damage. The water surged as far north as NE

Alberta St., where flooding forced a number of businesses to close for the weekend.

At first, the City denied homeowners' damage claims, and several owners threatened to file suit. However, at press time the City had reversed its course and – while still not assuming liability – had agreed to compensate the homeowners in some way for their loss. The City Council will determine the payment amount at a vote yet to be scheduled.



MARCH 16 WATER MAIN BREAK FLOODED NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS



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Local Teacher Spotlight: Christy Caton, Alameda Elementary School *by Sonia Acharya*

(Writer Sonia Acharya is an Alameda parent whose son, Mihir Litt, is currently in Ms. Caton’s fourth grade class).

There’s a test on the Internet that asks, “What sort of Hogwarts teacher are you?”

If the test could be taken by one of Alameda Elementary School’s fourth grade teachers, Ms. Christy Caton, the answer might be Hagrid. According to the test, the well-being of students is his primary concern. Christy Caton certainly does not look like Professor Hagrid, and unlike him, she is calm and sunny in nature. But



CHRISTY CATON, ALAMEDA ELEMENTARY TEACHER

like Hagrid, she is unfailingly kind and always upbeat. Her students love her and her class, and are always challenged in a meaningful and fun way.

So why, you may ask, the Hogwarts analogy? Because J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter series has been Ms. Caton’s class theme since she started teaching 14 years ago. When Ms. Caton began reading Harry Potter books aloud to her own sons, she noted that they magically became self-motivated readers in their eagerness to finish the series. That observation stayed with her. And while she was transitioning between PR jobs and volunteering at her sons’ school, she looked at teaching and thought, “What an awesome job! People get paid to do this?”

After a grueling couple of years taking night courses while raising her two boys, she became a teacher. And so began The Harry Potter classroom. The books are still a mainstay for her teaching - she finds they have so many themes that she never tires of digging into them as springboards for deep discussions. Harry Potter parties are thrown for fundraising, she has her own Sorting Hat to “sort” the students, and Hogwarts “House” banners fly from her classroom walls. The class is aglow with Harry Potter regalia.

Christy Caton is a self-described “people person” and she loves kids. She is energized after spending a day with them - not depleted – and this is part of why she is such a good teacher.

If you walk into Ms. Caton’s classroom, you will notice the yoga balls. Kids don’t just use them as seats



HARRY POTTER MEMORABILIA DECORATES CHRISTY CATON’S CLASSROOM

- they are an integral part of their fitness. She says, “A year or two after I first started at Alameda I noticed that Mrs. LeBaron (then the PE teacher) had the kids use a few yoga balls to do exercises. At that same time, our school changed to a six-day rotation schedule, which meant that on some weeks my class would only have PE once. That was unacceptable to me. Kids need movement!”

Caton adds, “I asked Mrs. LeBaron to share the exercises with me and did some of my own research on the kinds of exercises kids could do on yoga balls, then tested different moves out with my class to see which ones were doable by 10-year-olds. It became a weekly supplement to their fitness, and the kids made such progress from fall to spring that I wanted to showcase what they accomplished. So, I booked a time when other classes could come watch.”

Ms. Caton feels that mutual respect is the cornerstone of a successful classroom. The foundation for this is the sense of community that she begins to create from the first day. She also looks for signs of friction in the students’ interactions with each other, and smoothes them over so they don’t interrupt the rest of the year.

She has recently informed her students that she is leaving Alameda to teach at the school where her boys grew up, much to the class’s dismay. Students (and parents) are understandably disappointed. But her new school is closer to her home, and she can give back to the community that gave her and her boys so much. And giving is so much of what she does.

So, goodbye to someone who has lovingly taught our children with the utmost care and fairness, and made school a pleasure for them for 14 long years. Ms. Caton will be sorely missed!



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How The Neighborhood Helped Raise My Child by Renata Ackermann

My son is about to graduate from Grant High School. He was born to two proud moms on Mother's Day, a beautiful time of year in Portland. He was welcomed by the old maple trees on our street with their new bright green leaves, the old gnarly rhododendron that covers the front picture window, and the twin dogwood trees in the neighbor's yard with their pink and white blooms.

We called our son the little koala bear, as he slept best when he was on a warm body. During that first spring and summer of his life, I often put this little person in the Baby Bjorn strapped to my body and we would walk the neighborhood streets early in the morning. He would quickly fall asleep, rocked by the motion of my body. We would feel safe in the company of early runners, dog walkers, squirrels chasing each other up and down the maple trees, and the crows cawing from the electrical wires. When he got too big for the Baby Bjorn, we used the stroller or the jogger to get him to take a nap. We think it rains a lot in Portland, yet we would usually find enough of a dry spell to go for a walk and then park the stroller in the backyard for an hour or so, trying not to disturb his precious nap.

The Alameda Elementary School grounds were perfect for him to learn to ride a bike; flat with smooth pavement. It was a neighborhood buddy, a few months older, who convinced my son to give up his training wheels and then ran alongside the bike when the big moment happened.



GRANT HIGH GRAD THEO ACKERMANN

After that, the two of them must have chased each other up and down the street on their bikes a thousand times.

My son was in first grade when we got that great snow storm, and everyday life came to a halt for a few days. What fun to sled down Deadman's Hill (if you are not the scared parent watching)! As he grew older, he got interested in playing basketball. The courts at Irving Park, Sabin Elementary School and Madeleine School became his second home for awhile. I remember freezing

fingers as I was feeding him the ball and keeping track of how many shots he could make from the free throw line.

On Halloween, my son would usually have a few friends over to start the trick-or-treat journey from our house. He still believes we have the best neighborhood for Halloween fun, with enough scary houses as well as generous ones up on the ridge where you could get the full-size candy bars.

Our neighbors were not only supportive and generous on Halloween. Several of them gave my son his first opportunities to earn some money. He has mowed their lawns, watered their plants, raked their leaves. They came by and bought his toys when he set up a yard sale to try out his new cash register. Whenever he had to raise funds for "Run for the Arts," or some other special school or sports event, most neighbors contributed and didn't disappoint him. A retired neighbor on our street is a skilled woodworker. He would craft little cars and raceway systems out of spare wood and then entertain the kids during the annual block party. He mentored my son in woodworking etiquette and helped him create a pulley system for a school project.

Yesterday was senior prom night. He was dressed up all flashy: black pants, black dress shirt, red bow tie and a black jacket embroidered with red sequins. We took pictures of him, his neighbor friend, and their prom dates. It was a bit bittersweet for the proud parents - a celebration as well as a reminder that they will be leaving soon to go to college. We hope that we have raised them well, and that they can appreciate the place and the people who helped shape them. Hopefully their upbringing created fertile ground for them to add and welcome diversity of people and experiences as they move beyond their familiar neighborhood.

This morning little Andrew from across the street knocked on my front door: "Can you please move your car? I want to play basketball." Another child dribbling the ball in the street in front of our house, another chapter in my life.



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Picture Windows: A Few Good Books *by Gail Jeidy*



The Association of Writers and Writers’ Programs (AWP) held its annual conference in Portland in late March, and 15,000 lovers of the printed word swarmed the Convention Center for four days. The conference featured 2,000 presenters, 800 presses, 500 events plus an untold number of books. It was an opportunity to gain inspiration, focus on areas of interest, connect with other writers – and log 15,000 steps a day.

I attended panels on fiction and flash fiction, memoirs, comics, playwriting, and screenwriting. Here are a few takeaways to consider for your summer reading list:

Anything by Cheryl Strayed

I recommend anything by our neighborhood’s own Cheryl Strayed. Cheryl spoke multiple times, and on the panel I caught she was as engaging as ever. She discussed life’s synchronicity and read an excerpt from her latest book-in-progress, a memoir. While we await that title, I am reminded to reread “Tiny Beautiful Things,” her collection of Dear Sugar advice columns, which recently was presented as a stage play.

Weather Woman *by Cai Emmons*

This novel by a “climate-obsessed” former University of Oregon MFA professor is about a woman who drops out of her doctoral program at MIT, takes a job as a TV meteorologist and discovers a deep, fantastical connection to the natural world.

St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves *by Karen Russell*

Karen Russell has a quick wit and humble charm. Her writing has been called radiant. I have heard her read from “Swamplandia,” a novel, but am following a peer’s suggestion to pick up this book of short stories first. St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves features 10 stories set in a world of ghostly magic and wolf-like girls in the Florida Everglades.

History of Wolves *by Emily Fridlund*

I was blown away by Emily Fridlund’s kinesthetic style as she spoke of the importance of landscape and read an excerpt from this book. It was my first read after the conference. Note: it is not about wolves. It’s a coming of age story of an outcast teenager growing up on a northern Minnesota lake, who befriends a boy with health issues.

The House of Broken Angels *by Luis Alberto Urrea*

Luis Alberto Urrea memorized the excerpt he presented – or rather performed – at AWP from this deeply felt Mexican-American immigrant story, the tale of a family facing the loss of its patriarch. What could be more timely?

Caucasia *by Danzy Senna*

Danzy Senna teaches English at USC and is funny and relevant. Caucasia is her first novel (she’s written others since) about Birdie and Cole, two daughters of a black father and a white mother who are active in the Civil Rights Movement in 1970s Boston. The sisters are close, but to the outside world they can’t be sisters because one appears white and the other black.

The Rules Do Not Apply *by Ariel Levy*

You can hear the agency Ariel Levy takes in her life through her voice and disarming style. This is the New Yorker writer’s tale of heading off on an assignment to Mongolia, pregnant, married, financially secure and successful, and how a month later, everything changed.

Nothing is Truer than Truth

A film written and directed by Cheryl Donovan

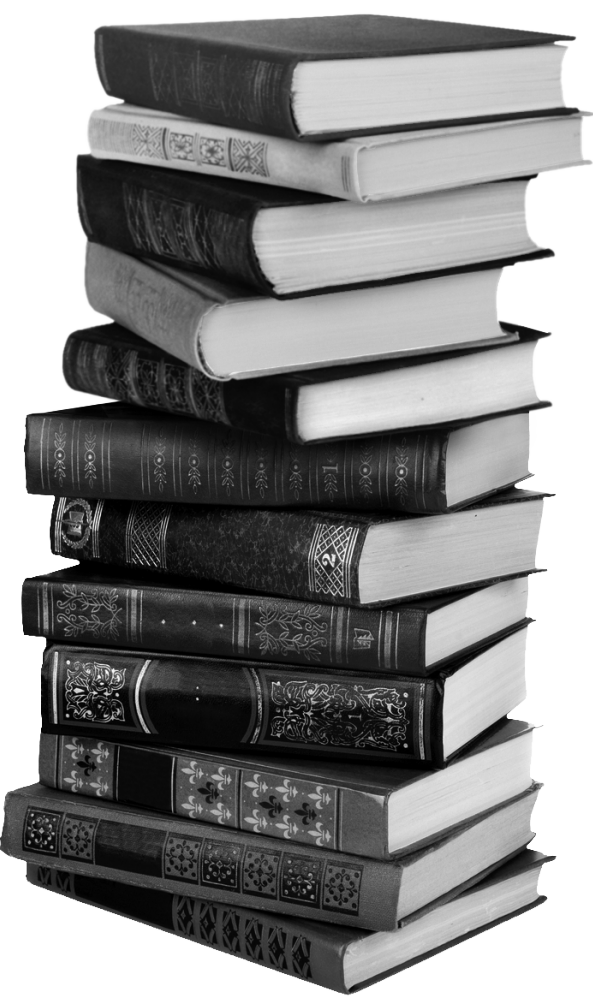
Cheryl Donovan, one of my MFA peers from Boston, spent over a decade making this film, which seeks to prove that the real Shakespeare is Edward De Vere. De Vere was the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford and A-list party boy on the continental circuit, who spent a year and a half in Europe learning about commedia dell’arte and collecting the experiences that would become the Shakespeare plays.

Asterios Polyp *by David Mazzucchelli*

If you haven’t read a graphic novel yet, try this one, published in 2009 -- the story of one man’s search for love and meaning and perfect architectural proportions. Current wisdom suggests we pay attention to what’s happening with comics, graphic novels and video games.

The Gun Show *by Oregon Playwright E.M. Lewis*

I enjoyed hearing E.M. Lewis on a panel talking about northwest influences in playwriting, and was interested to learn she lives in a rural farming community an hour outside Portland. She’s part of the Linestorm Playwrights, the Artist Rep’s company in residence, and has an upcoming production of her play “The Gun Show” in the Fall at Coho theatre. The play explores her relationship with firearms.



The Madeleine Haitian Project Garage Sale

July 19–21, 2019 • The Madeleine Parish Hall • 3123 NE 24th Ave.

The Haitian Project supports Louverture Cleary School, a free, Catholic, co-educational secondary boarding school in Haiti. The project provides for the education of academically talented and motivated students from Haitian families who cannot afford the cost of their children’s schooling.

Each year, the Madeleine Parish contributes time, talent, and merchandise to raise funds for these Haitian students. If you have merchandise to donate or would like to volunteer, visit: themadeleine.edu/haitian

Drop off donations at the Madeleine Parish Hall from 9 am - 3 pm Monday, July 8 – Tuesday, July 16.

The Haitian Project Garage Sale will be open:

- Friday, July 19, 9 am–3 pm
- Saturday, July 20, 9 am–3 pm
- Sunday, July 21, 9 am–1 pm (half-price day)

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Upcoming Events

COLUMBIA SLOUGH WATERSHED COUNCIL

17TH ANNUAL ¡EXPLORANDO! EL COLUMBIA SLOUGH FESTIVAL

- Saturday, June 22, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
- Whitaker Ponds Nature Park

Explorando is a free, bilingual event for the Latino community, with many activities for the entire family including live music, folkloric dances, free guided canoe trips, hands-on environmental activities, a plant give-away, food carts, and live birds and turtles.

Also, attendees have the opportunity to connect with other members of the growing Latino community.

For more information about the event or directions, contact: susanne.raymond@columbiaslough.org or (503) 281 1132.

MOONLIGHT PADDLE

- Saturday, July 13, at 8:30 p.m.
- <https://www.columbiaslough.org/events/event/136/>

24th ANNUAL COLUMBIA SLOUGH REGATTA

- Sunday, August 11, at 10 a.m.
- <https://www.columbiaslough.org/events/event/248/>

NORTHEAST COMMUNITY CENTER

PARENT'S NIGHT OUT

- Tuesday, June 21 from 6-8:45 p.m.

Drop off your kids at the NECC to play gym games, and enjoy a movie & snacks while the parents have some time to themselves! Ages 3-12, Children must be potty trained to participate.

\$15 Members | \$25 Non-Members

STRONGER AFTER BABY

- Monday, July 15 from 1-2 p.m.

Postpartum core and pelvic floor recovery for new moms taught by Liya Leng, MD, MPH. She covers:

1. The musculoskeletal changes of pregnancy and how to return to balance
2. How to check for abdominal separation on yourself
3. The 3 most important moves to keep your back healthy

Babies and all caregivers are welcome to attend. Free and open to all!

SUMMER FITNESS SERIES

This summer the NECC will be holding a Summer Fitness Series consisting of 90-minute classes taught by a group of NECC instructors. Not a member? Not a problem! Bring your family, friends & neighbors. Ages 13 and over. All events are free.

Summer Joy for Active Older Adults

- Saturday, June 8 from 10-11:30 a.m.

Regenerate

- Saturday, July 6 from 10-11:30 a.m.

Power + Strength

- Saturday, August 3 from 10-11:30 a.m.

YOU'RE EVOLVING ... YOUR GARDEN CAN, TOO

In this two-class series, Alissa Hartman of Seed Garden Designs will share how to adjust your garden space and methods so you and your garden evolve together. This exciting and encouraging class series focuses on what parts of the body benefit from gardening, proper postures and movements, ergonomic tools and safe work practices, and practical design modifications to best fit your individual needs.

- Saturday, July 6 from 1-2:30 p.m.
- Saturday, July 13 from 1-2:30 p.m.
- \$30 Members | \$40 Non-Members

OUR BUDDING FOREST - A PERMACULTURE TEASER

Permaculture is the exciting design theory bringing together both the head and the heart. Through building our natural urban ecologies, designing edible landscapes, utilizing natural building techniques, and connecting more deeply with our neighbors, permaculture empowers us to be more engaged and active citizens! You'll leave this class with a basic understanding of how to apply permaculture principles in your home, garden, apartment or farm.

- Sunday, June 23 from 1-3:30 p.m.
- \$15 Members | \$20 Non-Members

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