

MOUNT-TABOR

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Serving the only neighborhood on the slopes of an extinct volcano

Volume 11, Issue 2

Winter 2009

Plans afoot for the Mt. Tabor Centennial celebration

By Gordon Magill

Plans for the Mt. Tabor Park Centennial celebration, the weekend of August 1 and 2, are shaping up rapidly. So far, we've planned 20 events, and there will be more.

The art exhibition and sale will be a major focal point, with a theme of "The Four Seasons of the Park." A call to area artists is going out, with a deadline for submissions by June 1. There will also be a plein aire painting event during the weekend, coordinated by local artist Shawn Demarest. Artists will set up their easels in the park, and the public may watch art being created on site.

Dave Raphael is heading up the organization of an "Old Steel Car and Truck Show" with invitations to the public to exhibit "daily drivers, trailer queens, restored jalopies and hot rods, customs, or just works in progress" culminating in a parade on Sunday afternoon. There will also be vintage motorcycles, as well as a decorated bicycle and costume parade, with a soapbox derby, too! Dog fanciers will have their day with a dog parade on Sunday, and watch a demonstration of dog training techniques by the Portland Police Bureau's K-9 Corps.

The Centennial weekend will take on the flavor of an old fashioned ice cream social with cold confections provided by the Hawthorne Boulevard Ben and Jerry's store. Kids and adults alike can work off the creamy calories on the Park and Recreation Department's climbing



Volunteers from the Mt. Tabor, Montavilla, and North Tabor neighborhoods joined forces with Friends of Trees to plant 180 trees on March 21. Two crews rode bikes from site to site carrying trees, tools, and mulch. Imagine a tree floating down the street, strapped to a trailer pulled by a bike! The next tree planting event will be March 2010, so start thinking about your trees today. —Amy Chomowicz

wall. To work up an appetite for the food that will be offered for sale in the park or their own picnic, the public can enjoy the trails and views of Mt. Tabor Park by going on a Volkswalk, bird-watching walks, heritage tree walks, or walks to learn about the historic reservoirs of the park.

To cap off each day of celebration, free concerts in the park's amphitheater are planned by the Pacific Crest Wind Symphony on Saturday eve, and by the Get a Life Marching Band on Sunday.

Volunteers are still urgently needed to coordinate events and to lend a hand with events during the weekend. To volunteer, or for more information, email Dave Hillman at davehillman@comcast.net, or log on to the Mt. Tabor Centennial Celebration website at <http://mttabor100.org>. ■

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**MT. TABOR NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**

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Portland City Walks: A Review

By Gayle Marechal



In 2005, Laura Foster's book *Portland Hill Walks* was published and almost instantly became an essential walking guide to Portland's many hilly neighborhoods, including our own. Laura Foster has a new walking guide, *Portland City Walks*, which takes the reader and walker on 20 journeys through Portland and surrounding communities such as Lake Oswego and Forest Grove. As with *Portland Hill Walks*, *City Walks* gives a detailed history of what the walker sees as he makes his way through diverse and interesting areas of Portland and beyond.

These walking guides are wonderful ways for newcomers to the city to learn more about their new environment, and those who are longtime residents can gain additional insight into the familiar. Foster has a knack for making the mundane interesting and for pushing the urban adventurer to look carefully at what she might otherwise pass by and not notice.

So whether you are new to the city or an old timer, check out *Portland City Walks*, and take a walk in what is one of the best walking cities in the United States. You might be surprised with what you find right in your own backyard. ■

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Upcoming meetings

**MT. TABOR NEIGHBORHOOD
ASSOCIATION (MTNA)**

Third Wednesdays, 7–8:30 p.m.

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#ML-776

Reservoir update: lots going on right now

By John McLaren

The MTNA has joined forces with two other neighborhood associations in seeking Congressional action to overturn a federal rule that opponents say could lead to Portland water users paying hundreds of millions of dollars for unneeded projects to replace the city's five open reservoirs for storing drinking water.

If the federal rule, known as LT2, is allowed to stand, the reservoirs would be deactivated and water from the Bull Run watershed kept instead in storage tanks at Powell Butte. It is not clear what the reservoirs would look like under those circumstances. The city Water Bureau says they "could be maintained in their present condition," but advocates note they could also be covered or "buried" under the regulation.

Meanwhile MTNA board members Jim Blackwood and Paul Leistner set up a public meeting with city commissioner Randy Leonard and local Congressional representatives to plan a course of action for preserving the reservoirs. Leistner and others question whether the Portland Water Bureau is pushing hard enough for a Congressional waiver from the federal rule. The meeting is scheduled for April 11 at the Glencoe Elementary School.

Repeated tests have shown the drinking water in the reservoirs is pure and in no need of treatment, advocates say. Three of the reservoirs are in Mt. Tabor Park and the other two in Washington Park. Infrastructure, including a water treatment plant needed to comply with the proposed federal filtration requirements, would initially cost taxpayers nearly \$800 million—\$385 million for a filtration plant plus \$403 million for developing storage facilities to replace the reservoirs.

In a letter to Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, both D-Ore., Jonah Paisner, president of the South Tabor neighborhood association, asked for the senators' help in seeking relief from the "onerous and misdirected requirements" of the federal LT2 rule. The MTNA made a similar mailing, and the Arlington Heights neighborhood association has joined the coalition pushing for Congressional action.

LT2, shorthand for the Long Term 2 Enhanced Surface Treatment Rule, was promulgated three years ago by the Environmental Protection Agency but was 13 years in the making. It would require that open reservoirs be covered, buried, or treated. The EPA says these controls are needed to banish *Cryptosporidium* from drinking water. *Crypto*, as the parasite is known, can cause gastrointestinal illness. But champions of the open reservoirs are quick to point out that *crypto* has never been detected in any significant amount in Portland's water.

The key player in this struggle may be Commissioner Leonard, who oversees the Water Bureau, which operates the reservoirs. He has taken a somewhat more nuanced position than the neighborhood associations. While

pressing for congressional action or an agency "variance" to get Portland off the LT2 hook, he has also been moving to comply with the rule if attempts to soften or overturn it are unavailing.

"I indicated that I would instruct the Water Bureau to pursue a variance to the rule and that I would convene meetings with our (Congressional) delegation and the stakeholders to explore any possible legislative options with the understanding that the Water Bureau would also begin planning for conventional compliance with the LT2 as written so that the city would not find itself in violation of federal drinking water law should our efforts at a variance or a legislative fix fail," Leonard wrote in a February letter to interested parties.

The public meeting arranged by MTNA board members Blackwood and Leistner would bring Leonard together with legislators who could push legislation to exempt the reservoirs from the onerous requirements of LT2. The objectives, according to a prospectus prepared by Blackwood, Leistner, and representatives of the Resolutions Northwest mediation service, are to inform community members, increase public engagement in the issue, and identify action steps for legislators, commissioners, and community members.

The Water Bureau says on its website that the Mt. Tabor reservoirs could be "maintained in their current condition" even if they are "disconnected from the public water system." The key is developing additional drinking water storage at Powell Butte, as required by "a long approved Conditional Use Master Plan." Leistner and other critics allege, however, that the Water Bureau has been less than candid in the past, and he called for more transparency in the bureau's planning process.

For more information check the Friends of the Reservoirs Web site (friendsofreservoirs.org). ■



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Bertha Guptill, champion of Mt. Tabor Park

By John McLaren

Although almost 90, Bertha Guptill remains an active champion of Mt. Tabor Park, best known for promoting development of a network of trails over which she regularly treks. All that activity “keeps her young,” says Don McTaggart, who knows Guptill well after spending four years as the Parks and Recreation Department’s maintenance supervisor at Mt. Tabor. She may be the only living person to have a tree planted in her honor in the park, a robust Western red cedar that she calls her “memorial tree.”

Guptill was first attracted to the park more than 70 years ago, when she was a student at Jefferson High School. She and a friend wandered around the reservoirs, relishing the views and the peace and tranquility then offered by the park. In the late 1940s, she enjoyed taking her toddler son to a wading pool on the east side of the park. “Those were simpler times,” she recalled. Later she was involved in a campaign to reclaim the park from rowdy elements, hard drinkers and drug users, who were taking over.

“One goal was to make the park more family friendly,” she says. Initial efforts about 20 years ago focused on improving the pathways for the neighborhood and for organizations such as the Columbia River Volkssport Walking Club. Neighborhood residents pitched in to install or improve plumbing and electrical connections. In time, the 196-acre park was again a welcoming place for children, dogs, and just about anybody seeking peace and quiet in a bucolic setting.

But something more was needed. Guptill saw the need for marked trails in the park, with distances and route markers for people to use to make their way through the park.

She took the lead in designing and developing a system of three pathways—known as the Red, Blue, and Green trails—together extending more than eight miles through and around the park. Money to support the project has been raised through donations and by Friends of Mt. Tabor Park foot patrols collecting park litter cans and bottles that Guptill redeems for cash. She deflects credit, saying she had plenty of help from other Friends members. In addition, she says that Portland City employees such as McTaggart “were very cooperative and helpful.” About 30 color-coded post markers are now in place on the Red and Blue trails, and another 11 will soon be planted on the Green Trail. In addition, arrows showing the way have been painted on existing metal surfaces such as fence posts.

Guptill drew an inspiration for the Mt. Tabor trail-blazing on a 1989 visit to a famous Mexican park, Tangamanga, in San Luis Potosi. She noted that Tangamanga trails were marked by flat stones with distance readings in kilometers. Visitors to Mt. Tabor also would be well served by trail markers, she thought. A native of Montana who moved with her family to Oregon at the age of two, Guptill is well traveled but has a special affinity for Mexico. She has been visiting the country

almost annually for the past 40 years, and is going again this year. She also has lived in São Paulo and London.

With the end in sight for completing the trail network, Guptill would like to get rid of the “bastard trails” that have been cut through the park by free spirits without regard to environmental or ecological consequences. She hopes to work with other Friends of Mt. Tabor Park members and Parks Department personnel to banish these harmful trails.

“It was my distinct pleasure to work with Bertha on her trail-marking project and to help her in any way I could,” McTaggart said. “Bertha is such a delight to be around, so full of energy and always with such a positive spirit. It has been a pleasure to have known her and to have worked with her. I can only imagine what project she would like to undertake over the next 10 years.”

Guptill, who has lived in a house about a block from the park’s east side for 32 years, looks at least 20 years younger than her actual age. She moves briskly through the park, often pausing to check the new markers on one of the three trails. What’s the secret of her youthful persona and outlook? “I’m just lucky I have good genes. I do try to take care of myself, and I’ve always been active,” she says. She doesn’t like to dwell on her longevity because many people expect anyone that old to be limited in some way—which is definitely not a concern for her. ■



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Come check out the foot patrol

By Dave Hillman

You love the fact that the Mt Tabor Park is in your neighborhood. You walk, run and play in the park. You take your dog there, and attend concerts, races, and other events in the park. You say thanks to those wearing the bright yellow vests who are picking up litter. So—why don't you come and join us as a volunteer?

These first few sentences were essentially the same as what I wrote in the last MTNA newsletter, and guess what? We have gained eight new members as a result of that story! That's fantastic, since we usually have only a few new members a year. So my question to all of you who are right now reading this article and really do use the park: where are you? Why don't you take us for a test walk and check us out? Come to one of our very short meetings to see who we are: your neighbors volunteering to keep the park clean, safe, and the true gem of our neighborhood. It really takes so little time and effort, yet pays off in huge dividends. Visit the Friends of Mt. Tabor Park website for meeting information: <http://www.taborfriends.com>. ■

Can't make it to the monthly MTNA meetings?

Read minutes and more at our web site:

www.mttaborpdx.org

One Block Off the Grid

By Tim O'Neal

The Mt. Tabor neighborhood association is working with SE Uplift on a bulk-purchasing program for residential solar power. This is a very exciting opportunity brought to us by One Block Off the Grid, a community-based program from San Francisco. IBOG works to remove some of the common barriers to installing solar power on a home, such as the expense, and the difficulties in making decisions throughout the process.

Here's how it works. IBOG uses volunteers to organize residents locally into a buying club and negotiates group discounts. When we have 100 households registered (at no cost or obligation), they guide the group through the process. They find the contractor, arrange for everyone to have a site study, get the bids, and then negotiate with the contractor and the suppliers to get the best deal for the group. Then group members can decide to participate or not.

The MTNA and SE Uplift are asking you to look over the website, www.lbog.org, and to help us get people signed up. All it takes is for us to spread the word about the program to people we know who might be interested in powering their home with a renewable resource and encouraging them to sign up online. It can be as simple as sending emails to people you know. This isn't only for Mt. Tabor residents either. Anyone in Portland can participate.

If you have any questions please email Stephanie at stephanie.stewart@mttaborpdx.org, or call or email Tim at 503-232-0010, tim@southeastuplift.org. ■

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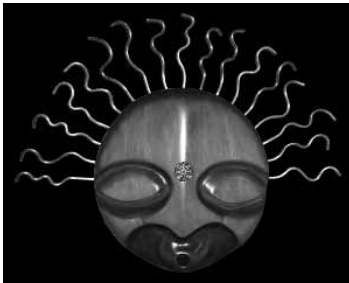
Mt. Tabor Art Walk, May 16 & 17

By Adrian Stacy

On the weekend of May 16 and 17, 40 artists in the Mt. Tabor neighborhood will welcome the public to their homes and studios for their fourth annual juried Art Walk. Saturday and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. you can view quality paintings, photography, jewelry, sculpture, pottery, and more at 30 marked sites within convenient walking distances of each other. This annual event has become a new tradition for many Portland art lovers, so don't miss out on the fun. You'll be able to chat with the artists, purchase artwork, and enjoy a late-spring stroll through the lovely Mt. Tabor neighborhood. Maps will be available at each site and can also be downloaded from the Mt. Tabor Art Walk website or found at the following local businesses: Bipartisan Café (7901 SE Stark), Common Grounds Coffeehouse (4321 SE Hawthorne), Cooper's Coffee (6049 SE Stark), and Muse Art/Design (4224 SE Hawthorne). Preview the art and find the area map at www.mttaborartwalk.com. No admission fee. ■



Mt. Tabor park, courtesy of Larry N. Olson.



Some of the art that will be on display during the Mt. Tabor Art Walk.

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Native Plant Society roots in Mt. Tabor

By Don Jacobson



The Portland chapter of the Native Plant Society of Oregon (NPSO) now meets in the Mt. Tabor neighborhood. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of the month, 7 to 9 p.m., every month except July and August. Meetings are at the Mt. Tabor Presbyterian Church, SE 54th & Belmont, entrance on 54th (the same place as the monthly Mt. Tabor neighborhood association meetings). The meetings comprise a usually very short business meeting followed by a slide presentation about our local, regional, or sometimes exotic flora. All are welcome to attend. Please note that there will not be an April meeting because of a conflict in scheduling with the church.

At its January meeting, the Portland chapter of NPSO elected Mt. Tabor resident Don Jacobson as president. For more information on the NPSO, visit <http://www.npsoregon.org> or call Don at 503-235-6234. To receive an email newsletter, send a request to donjphoto@gmail.com. ■

*Help deliver newsletters!
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bob.eckland@mttaborpdx.org
to volunteer.*

Trellis Earth Products to the rescue

Plastic bag dilemma solved



By Dave Hillman

You may recall that in a recent newsletter that included an update on our Friends of Mt. Tabor Park foot patrol, I wrote that we were searching for an alternative bag that we could use for litter pick-up while on our park foot patrols. We were using donated and recycled bags from local grocery or department stores, but were looking for some alternative that would be less invasive in our landfills. Over the course of a year, we pick up and dispose of nearly 1,000 plastic bags, and that is a lot of plastic!

A hero has come to our rescue. A reader of the MTNA newsletter knew about a local company named Trellis Earth Products, and they got in touch to see what we needed. As a result, Trellis Earth has donated an entire case of biodegradable bags to the foot patrol for our use. These bags are derived from renewable raw materials including corn, potato, and other plants and vegetables, combined with biodegradable polymers to create products that reduce the impact on the environment. To learn more about Trellis Earth and their other products, call them at 503-789-3557 or email LHawk@TrellisEarth.com. Again, our gratitude to Larry Hawk and Trellis Earth. ■

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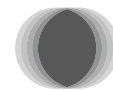


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Mark your calendars! MTNA neighborhood cleanup

By Deb Scott

- Saturday, May 9
- Mt. Tabor Middle School parking lot (SE 57th just north of SE Stark)
- 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
- Cost: \$10 to \$35, depending on size of load

It's time to start thinking about spring cleaning and gathering up your household junk. Your opportunity is coming to clean up your home, garage, or yard at a bargain price and in the process support your neighborhood. The MTNA will hold its annual neighborhood cleanup and fundraiser on Saturday, May 9. We will happily take your household junk, yard debris, old appliances, tires, etc. The cleanup will also feature our ever-popular reusable item exchange area.

No household hazardous waste (such as paint or pesticides) please. Metro accepts hazardous household waste items at its transfer stations. Last year Metro also scheduled special hazardous household waste pickups in neighborhoods around the city. For more information call Metro at 503-234-3000.

The neighborhood cleanup is the MTNA's annual fundraising event. The MTNA uses the funds to support MTNA activities and projects. The MTNA contributes to community and local school projects, publishes and delivers the neighborhood newsletter, and assists Mt. Tabor residents on a wide range of issues such as land use, nuisance, crime, transportation concerns, and MUCH MORE.

For more information about the cleanup, or to volunteer to help, call or email Deb Scott, 503-956-2466 or scottde@comcast.net. ■



Gardening on a volcano

By Linda Eggiman



I have noticed that the gardening centers are carrying a lot more small conifers. They are the greatest accents for the garden, needing little maintenance and available in yellow, gold, blue, reddish, and lots of green hues. I mention this because you have probably assessed the bare spots in your winter garden, and this is the perfect fix.

Many of you have contacted me about this group of plants, and I have a warning for you. What is considered dwarf is the size of the mature plant compared to its mom, dad, or big brother. A dwarf Alberta Spruce can grow to 10 feet, but its dad to 80 feet. Therefore it is considered a dwarf. Read the tags. A dwarf grows 1-6 inches a year. That can add up. But a good nursery has tags that give the height in 10 years. That is a good hint.

You might also look for miniature conifers that grow less than 1 inch per year. They are great for nooks and crannies, rockeries and containers. Check their tags also. Some might be too small for your needs.

The best conifer dwarfs that actually stay small are Blue Star Juniper, Mops, Golden Mops (dwarf green and green/gold thread-branches), Sungold Mops (fully yellow), Daub's Frosted Juniper for a groundcover, Fern Spray, Balsam Fir (shade), dwarf and miniature Hinokis, Blue Surprise, Blue Gem and Snow White for columnar blues, and Elwoods Pigmy for a columnar green. Many more. Go shopping!! Yeah!!

Also, it is not too late to spray roses for diseases. Be sure to spray the bottom of leaves for black spot especially. And for those of you who might have a runoff problem or a small capacity downspout, think about running your downspout into a rain garden. Google rain gardens Portland. Good gardening! Linda Eggiman, 503-254-1814, or new email rleggiman@comcast.net. ■

Music fills the halls of Franklin High School

By Lauren Ettlin

Tap your toes to the sounds of music at two upcoming concerts at Franklin High School. The Rising Sounds and Cadet Choirs will perform on Tuesday, May 19, at 7 p.m. in a Broadway revue. The symphonic band, strings, and orchestra will perform on Thursday, May 21, at 7 p.m. Both performances will take place in the historic auditorium at Franklin High School, 5405 SE Woodward St., just south of Division. Ticket prices are nominal. Questions? Call the school office, 503-916-5140. ■

Be the rain you want to see

By Chena Weitzer

Got a rain barrel? No? Now's a good time to get one or set up that one in the garage.

Living on Mt. Tabor gives us an opportunity to help replenish the water table in this low-rain year. Being on a hill means there is usually good drainage. Rather than let the barrel continuously overflow into the storm water system all winter, empty it onto open ground where it can soak in. I imagine it sinking down into the water table where it can feed trees during the summer and even slowly make its way to the river.

Tired of hauling buckets of water? Ask a kid or friend that likes water projects to make a siphon. (Works on bathtubs too!) Fill a hose with water and cap the ends with your palms. More than two hands are essential here! Hold one end onto the bottom. Put the bulk of the hose out to lower ground. When you uncap the end that's out of the water it will start to flow and draw the water out of the barrel as soon as the outside end is lower than the inside end. The siphon will stop if the end in the water gets out in the air. ■

