

MOUNT-TABOR

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Serving the only neighborhood on the slopes of an extinct volcano

Volume 7, Issue 1

Fall 2004

Neighborhood survey results will guide MTNA actions in 2005

By Diane Redd, MTNA president

Thanks to the many neighbors who completed the green survey distributed last spring, MTNA will publish the survey results on the website, and we have begun to use the information to inform our planning and activities for the coming year.

The top two ranked issues that you felt the neighborhood association should work on are preserving and maintaining existing reservoirs, and ensuring safety and security in Mt. Tabor Park. MTNA is very fortunate to work with two excellent citizen-based groups, Friends of the Reservoirs and Friends of Mt. Tabor Park. In the coming year, MTNA will continue to strengthen our partnerships with these groups. We will publicize their events in our print and electronic materials, maintain a liaison to these groups on the MTNA board, and assist them when they request help with their projects.

We will also continue to strengthen our relationships with the Portland Park Bureau and the Water Bureau.

The third most important issue for us to address is reducing speeding on residential streets. John Turner, one of our board members, has received training in helping neighbors with traffic problems. He is now available to act as a consultant with neighbors who wish to solve a traffic problem in their area. John will also be writing a column on traffic for the



Plympton Kelly (seated), his wife Elizabeth, and some of their children. Plympton was the son of Rev. Clinton Kelly. As the story goes, it was Plympton who gave Mt. Tabor its name, probably around 1853. A likely scenario is that the Methodist families in the area got together to organize a church and needed to signify its location with a name. At the church meeting the residents favored the name Mt. Zion. Plympton, who arrived late, had been reading Joel T. Headley's book Napoleon and His Marshals and was greatly impressed with the battle fought by the French against the Ottomans on the Plain of Esdraelon not far from the base of Mt. Tabor in Palestine. His excitement, coupled with the fact that Mt. Tabor has traditionally been held to be the site of Christ's transfiguration, greatly impressed the devout Methodists. They were convinced that Mt. Tabor was a better name than Mt. Zion. Text and photo courtesy of Jan Caplener.

newsletter and working with Southeast Uplift on its 2005 traffic improvement initiative.

The issue ranked fourth, reducing car prowls, is more difficult to address at the neighborhood level. MTNA will increase crime prevention education and work with the police to identify other means to reduce this problem.

Neighbors identified as their fifth most important issue the limitation of division of lots for development. MTNA is activating its land use committee and will work actively

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MT. TABOR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

The Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association newsletter is published quarterly (February, May, August, November). The deadline for submission of articles is the tenth of the month before publication. The Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association (MTNA) reserves all rights, and all copy submitted will be edited for clarity and length. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. If you are interested in advertising or have an idea for an article, call 503/257-9488.

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Send letters to 433 SE Gillham, Portland, OR 97215, or by email to diane.redd@mttaborpdx.org. Any letter submitted becomes the property of the MTNA, and the letter writer waives the rights to that piece. Letters must be signed and may be edited for clarity and space and printed as space permits. Please be brief.

Survey results

(continued from page 1)

with Southeast Uplift, which also sees this problem as a priority.

We recognize that you might have an issue that you feel strongly about that is not currently being addressed by the MTNA board or one of its committees. If you want to work on it and find others who share your concern, MTNA will help you get started. We can provide you with resources that can help you implement a solution. Please call Diane at 503/257-9488 or email diane.redd@mttaborpdx.org. It goes without saying that we invite you to join us at the monthly neighborhood association meetings. We meet at 7 p.m. (new time) at Buermann Hall at the Western Seminary on the third Wednesday of each month, although there is no meeting in December.

Again, thanks to all who participated in the survey. The rate of return on the surveys was very high, proving that most of us care deeply about this wonderful neighborhood we call home. ■

A growing website

By Nadine Fiedler

If you haven't visited already, check out www.mttaborpdx.org. Webmaster Bill Guthrie has put together a resource for everyone in the neighborhood—and MTNA welcomes suggestions about what else might be useful for Mt. Tabor people. The latest addition is an illustrated brochure on Mt. Tabor architectural styles, written by realtor Jan Caplener; you can download the pdf from the site. In addition to neighborhood statistics, association information, and news are documents that include the park master plan and supporting material for the park's National Register of Historic Places designation. You can read past MTNA newsletters and meeting minutes, and easily link to city bureaus and groups such as the Friends of Mt. Tabor Park and Friends of the Reservoirs. What this newsletter editor likes best is an online form for neighbors to submit articles for the newsletter. So visit now and help make the site, and the newsletter, reflect the beauty and diversity of our neighborhood. ■



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What an accomplishment!

By Dave Hillman

In the late calendar year 2000, the Friends of Mt. Tabor Park started a foot patrol for periodic walking patrols within the park. The patrol began with seven members but has grown, with 42 different people having participated during its nearly four-year existence. The major accomplishment, however, is that on September 30 the members conducted their thousandth foot patrol! This major milestone was recognized with many thanks from Portland Parks and Recreation, the Southeast Portland Police Precinct, the Office of Neighborhood Involvement, and the Portland Water Bureau. One of the accolades stated, "The thousands of patrol hours your group has committed has helped to ensure Mt. Tabor remains one of the city's crown jewels, both as a regional park and as a critical portion of the city's water system. The Friends of Mt. Tabor Park foot patrol remains one of the most outstanding examples of citizens identifying a community need, organizing an effective solution, and coordinating with the responsible public agencies."

Over the years, the foot patrol has not only monitored park activity, but provided first aid, answered countless questions, returned lost personal items, assisted with special events, picked up litter, and participated in parades and other community events. The foot patrol has proven to be a true community asset. For more information on participation in the foot patrol, please call Dave Hillman at 503/254-5931. ■

Special speakers coming up

By Diane Redd

Mt. Tabor neighbors are invited to hear special presentations at January and February MTNA meetings. Speakers limit their remarks to 15 minutes or less, and there is a 20–30 minute period for questions from the audience.

Wednesday, January 19: City of Portland Transportation Options will discuss its development of a SE Portland walking map, as well as guided walks and bike rides in 2005 as part of Ten Toe Express and Portland By Cycle Campaign. Mt. Tabor and its six adjacent neighborhoods will be the geographic focus of the effort.

Wednesday, February 16: Dawn Uchiyama and Jim Dixon of the Bureau of Environmental Services will speak about the city's watershed approach to improving the Willamette and how, even in an urban neighborhood, the concepts of watershed function can be applied. ■

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Mt. Tabor Park and reservoirs achieve historical status

By Cascade Anderson Geller

There's nothing like a threat to something important to spur action. The open reservoir replacement project proved to be such a threat and did indeed motivate citizen activism across the city. The city council, acting on the findings of a city-appointed review panel, passed an ordinance in July that terminated the contract for the project.

One of the culminations of the community activism was the completion of three nominations to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Two of the nominations were for the Mt. Tabor reservoirs and the Washington Park reservoirs, which were listed in January. The third one was for Mt. Tabor Park, which was listed in the NRHP on September 22. The Friends of the Reservoirs completed the nominations with support from other community members; the Mt. Tabor neighborhood association provided funding for the Mt. Tabor Park nomination.

A listing on the NRHP, according to city code, ensures a design review that requires public meetings and notice to neighborhood associations when an application is filed for certain kinds of projects. The listing gives the reservoirs and the park the best shot at fair process. It also sets standards for design to assure compatibility with historic features. The nominations include detailed descriptions of the park and the reservoirs, along with historical narratives. Many historical and current photographs, maps, architectural plans, and other archival materials are included in the nominations. The text-only version will be available on the MTNA website very soon, and the entire set of documents will be at the Multnomah County Central Library.

The Friends of the Reservoirs celebrated accomplishments in the park on sunny October 10 with root beer floats and some fun "public process" exercises. Although 2004 has marked some milestones worthy of celebration, close scrutiny of city plans will continue. Questionable contracts loom on the horizon. Activists will continue to be vigilant.

Meanwhile the water bureau will continue its presentation on the interim security measures for the reservoirs at the November 17 meeting of the MTNA. ■

Traffic and transportation

By John Turner

Mt. Tabor residents have spoken, and so have the other neighborhood associations in Southeast Uplift (SEUL), the coalition of southeast neighborhoods: traffic is among the top concerns for residents here. No one wants traffic on their street; everyone wants it controlled. But what is traffic control, and how is it achieved?

Traffic control fits into the larger concept of transportation planning. Here, in Portland, we have committed ourselves to a multi-modal shared-use concept. Automobiles, bikes, pedestrians, and public transportation vehicles (buses, MAX, and street cars) simultaneously compete for road use.

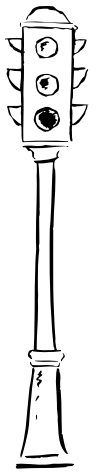
With Portland's commitment to high-density infill housing, there are now more of us on the same roads. Local and regional planners want us to shift from automobile use to other transportation modes, and many Portlanders are choosing alternatives to their car. More of us bike, and bike lanes are increasing to meet the demand. More of us use public transportation, and ease of access is increasing.

If more people are using alternative transportation, then why are more cars on our neighborhood streets? First, infilling residential areas means more of us living more densely in the same area; therefore, more traffic. Second, more traffic means more congestion, which means more commuters are cutting through our neighborhoods. Most often our traffic concerns are due to this cut-through traffic.

To achieve traffic control neighbors on several streets in Mt. Tabor have requested assistance with their transportation concerns. In response the Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association:

- is working with those neighbors and the city on their specific transportation solutions.
- has established a neighborhood transportation contact.
- is creating a transportation page with links and information at www.mttaborpdx.org.

Remember, transportation has many modes. If you have any transportation questions or concerns, please email me at john.turner@mttaborpdx.org. ■



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Kids Night Out at Franklin High School

Drop the kids off for a fun-filled night at Franklin High School on December 3, while you go holiday shopping or partying (or recovering from shopping or partying). Ages 4 to 11 (no diapers, please). Prices are \$12 for one child, \$20 for two, or \$25 for three (all in the same family), and the funds will support Franklin. Movies, snacks, crafts and other activities will keep your kids happy.

Glencoe Elementary School news

The students are back, and Glencoe Elementary School on Belmont has over 420 students this year. The Harvest Festival, held at the school on October 29, was a big success again this year. Besides dinner and the annual pumpkin and book sales, there was a country store and an awesome haunted house, as well as games and activities for children of all ages. Proceeds from the event went to support the Glencoe PTA, which is very active in helping to deliver a quality education to every child who attends Glencoe.

Block captain training set for March

Results from the recent Mt. Tabor Neighborhood Association survey indicated that many respondents are interested in establishing neighborhood watch in their areas. This activity usually involves making a map of the homes in the block in which you live with an indication of the number of people residing in each house. Name and telephone number can be useful also, particularly in the event of an emergency (earthquakes do happen here!) and to help discourage break-ins and vandalism.

Galina Boyechko, crime prevention program coordinator for SEUL, will provide training for interested neighborhood residents in early March. Tentative dates are Tuesday, March 1, or Wednesday, March 9; watch for more information in the February MTNA newsletter. Please call or email Mary Ann Seth Wish if you're interested or if you have questions about being a block captain: msethwish@comcast.net, 503/261-0435. You may also let her know which date works best for you.

Future of the deli site across from Atkinson

The federal government soon will dispose of the property it seized at 57th and Division. Community members hope to gain community ownership of the site, and we need your help! Members of the MTNA, Atkinson PTA, South Tabor N.A., and Division Vision Coalition are working with the Portland Community Land Trust and the U.S. Attorney's office on the deal. We need to raise over \$40,000. For more information, call or email Paul Leistner, 503/232-3888, paulamy@teleport.com.

Young parents support committee starting

Are you the parent of a pre-schooler who would like to link up with others in the Mt. Tabor neighborhood? Three parents are convening a committee to organize possible play groups, parent outings, or baby-sitting referral services. We hope you will join us in creating this group and also offer ideas on what Mt. Tabor families need. Please email us at mttaborfamil@comcast.net or call 503/381-7503.

Do you know about the soapbox derby track?

The Friends of Mt. Tabor Park would like to find out more about the old soapbox derby track on the west side of the park above reservoir 5. It has not been used for many years, and information about it seems to have disappeared with time. We would like to know when the track was developed and when it was used, whether any of the past derby participants still live in our neighborhood, and if any of them went on to the national races in Akron, Ohio. If we can collect enough bits and pieces of information, we might be able to create an interesting story about a great local piece of history. If you who have any information whatsoever, please call Dave Hillman at 503/254-5931.

New committee will focus on the environment

MTNA has created a new environment committee in response to the concerns of the neighborhood. Environmental issues were high priorities in the recent neighborhood association survey. Among them were pesticide use in the park and schools, and improvement of wildlife habitat in the park. Committee projects might include tree planting in coordination with Friends of Trees or combating elm disease, and we welcome any other ideas you would care to bring to the group. The emphasis will be on activities, not meetings. All interested people are invited to a get-together to share ideas and launch projects on Tuesday, December 7, at 7 p.m. Please call or email co-coordinators Don Jacobson or Sharlane Blaise at 503/235-6234, donj@dslnorthwest.net.

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Celebrating the volunteers

By Charles Heying

The Friends of the Reservoirs held a huge volunteer celebration in the park in October. The celebrants collectively consumed about 18 gallons of root beer and 15 gallons of ice cream. Dave Hilts's home made root beer was a runaway success, with nary a drop left at the end of the day. In my personal taste test comparing Dave's premium brew to the donated Widmer, I gave Dave a slight edge for being a more crisp and earthy. But there were those who did favor the Widmer for its smoothness and consistency.

Of course it was all delicious. And it was great to have all the donations. New Seasons donated Umpqua ice cream, and Widmer and Dave Hilts the root beer. Cascade Anderson Geller brought coffee and tea to warm us up. The water bureau offered to donate surplus plastic material to use in case of rain. But, as is always the case with Friends events, the weather was absolutely perfect.

Phil Busse hit just the right note by highlighting the importance of civic engagement efforts. We gave away t-shirts to those with the best suggestions about what to do with the surplus hypalon reservoir covers. As expected, there were several suggestions for E-bay auctions. We sold nearly all of the remaining t-shirts; the proceeds came close to covering the cost of the celebration.

We even delivered on the live music. By chance, Barbara Grimala ran into someone who plays with a group of musicians every Monday night at It's A Beautiful Pizza. Three of the musicians were available and showed up. That's the Portland spirit.

While lots of folks worked on this, special thanks should be given to Lois Heying and Barbara Grimala, who chaired this event. The chairs get the special privilege of doing all those last minute tasks like getting all the historic material arranged on the bulletin board.

In the end, the most important part of the day was to be able to visit with some of the folks who have shared the journey and to thank them for their help. ■

Fall gardening tips

By Linda Eggiman

The fact that your perennials and day-lilies are coming back for the second and third time and your rhodies and azaleas are blooming should not alarm you. That cold snap in August fooled them into a winter mode. Next spring should happen on schedule, but maybe a little later.

Continue to water new shrubs and trees, and don't be fooled by the rain. The ground is still dry and needs help. Up here on the hill our wind adds to the desiccation of evergreens, so if they're new, they'll need water.

Now is a good time to shop for tools. Think of a tough area or job you had this summer and see if there isn't a tool that will make it easier. Now is also the time to lime your soil, except for potato and evergreen growing areas. It will activate in four months and be ready for next spring.

I've had calls from you about new plants. Proven Winners has some beauties for next spring and has added more perennials and shrubs this time. Plant Picks for '05 will be out soon—some new and some standards have been chosen. If you did a garden just using PW and PP choices, you'd have a blue ribbon. Also, if you have any diseased plants, have them analyzed now to avoid the problem next year. Questions? Call 503/254-1814 or email eggie@teleport.com. ■



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Graffiti: a plan for eradication

By Frank Gorshe

The MTNA graffiti committee is looking to become more active in the coming year. We are proposing that we turn the Mt. Tabor neighborhood into a "graffiti free zone" using an active group of volunteers. Each volunteer would take a portion of the neighborhood and adopt it as their zone of responsibility to monitor, document, and report graffiti. The volunteer would follow through to see that the graffiti in his or her zone is removed using personal, city, or MTNA resources. Each volunteer would have contact information for all the volunteers, including a map showing each volunteer's zone of responsibility. If a volunteer spotted graffiti outside of their zone, they would report it to the appropriate volunteer. All the volunteers would also be available for special projects, such as graffiti cleanups or watches involving hard-hit areas or periods of heavy repeat activity.

I will be pursuing a map-based system to use for the volunteers' zones. If you are interested in being involved with this project please email or call me at fgorshe@comcast.net, 503/255-4804. We are looking to have our first meeting towards the end of this year. ■

Southeast Portland walking map needs ideas

By Linda Ginenthal

As part of their commitment to encourage alternative transportation for southeast area residents, the city of Portland Transportation Options is creating a southeast area walking map, and they need your help to make it user-friendly, fun, and functional.

The city plans on including schools, parks, libraries, community centers, bus and MAX stops and routes, bike routes, and many other features. Boundaries are I-84 on the north, the Willamette River on the west, I-205 on the east, and the city boundary on the south.

The Options group would appreciate your help in identifying interesting and important sites, amenities, landmarks, and community assets that could be highlighted on a southeast area map. The goal is to print the map in April 2005. If you are interested in getting involved, call Linda Ginenthal at 503/823-5266 or email linda.ginenthal@pdxtrans.org. ■



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Friends of the Reservoirs win revenue bond case

By Charles Heying

Nearly a year ago (November 5, 2003) the Friends of the Reservoirs challenged the city in court for issuing revenue bonds without proper public notification. At the heart of the case was the claim by the Friends that the city of Portland's notification of the sale of bonds was not sufficiently specific for citizens to determine what the bonds were to be used for. The city provided only a vague description stating that the bonds were for "public purposes."

The Friends argued that this prevented them from challenging the sale of the bonds through a referendum, as they are allowed to do under state law. As the Friends built their case, they discovered that the city had increasingly been using this ambiguous terminology in their public postings of bond sales. Only later, when the period for public challenge had passed, would the city provide more specificity for those who would be buying the bonds.

The case had implications for the sale of bonds statewide but especially for the city of Portland. If the Friends won, the city would be on notice that its practice of ambiguous notification must stop. Other cities in the state would also be on notice that similar practices would not pass judicial muster.

On October 23, Judge Marilyn Litzenberger issued a ruling supporting the Friend's case against the city. She found that notice was insufficient to inform the public on how money was to be spent, and that emergency designation of the ordinance denied plaintiffs and other citizens their statutory referendum rights. She ordered that the city auditor has to accept the referendum petition and that the defendants are enjoined from issuing any further revenue bonds under the authority of Portland City Ordinance #177129.

The ruling also calls into question the city's use of emergency designation. Emergency designation of ordinances allows the city to bypass some of the usual public oversight. The Friends have pointed out that this has been abused in the past, not only on this issue but others as well. The misuse of emergency designation has been addressed by several of the candidates for office who have said that the city should develop a set of criteria for determining which issues should receive emergency designation.

This victory provides important protection for all citizens who wish to challenge revenue bond spending on public projects that are unwarranted and unpopular. It is a victory for citizen activism and transparency in government. It should serve as a bulwark against any further subterfuges on the reservoir issue. If future use of revenue bond money is proposed for reservoir destruction, this case requires the city to give a specific description so that citizens can bring the issue to the public. A referendum is a direct and effective way to determine public sentiment.

The case is a special victory for Susan Stoner, who effectively argued this case pro bono. It is also a tribute to the 11 petitioners who made the extra effort to put forward their grievances and to the Friends and all of the supporters who showed up at the courthouse last November. This is a real, honest-to-goodness citizen victory. ■

Land Use 101

By Jennifer Pultz

Land use has become a priority for Mt. Tabor residents as of late. With the closing of the "cap the reservoirs" chapter (hopefully), the residents of Mt. Tabor can now focus on developing a grassroots committee on land use.

You are invited to attend a land-use information meeting on December 1 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in Bueerman Hall at the Western Seminary, 55th & Hawthorne. This will be the kick-off meeting for the land-use committee and the monthly informational meetings on this important topic.

Dave Hilts will lead the charge at this first meeting by presenting two case studies of past land use cases. Participants will have an opportunity to see how the zoning code is used in land-use cases and how best to respond effectively. At the end of this first meeting people will be able to sign up for subcommittees addressing specific tasks that Dave has outlined for us. After this initial meeting, Land Use 101 sessions will begin, with learning about such issues as the historic code re-write or working on revising the comprehensive plan. There will even be a session in assisting with communication between concerned neighbors and the city. The goal of this land-use committee is to streamline the process of keeping neighbors informed, and to address critical land-use decisions.

Many people have expressed interest in this committee to Diane Redd, but some of the contact information went missing. If you have not heard from Diane, then please call or email her again (503/257-9488, redd-wilson@comcast.net) so she can get you back into the loop. ■

Upcoming meetings

MT. TABOR NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION (MTNA)

Third Wednesdays, 7–8:30 p.m.

Note: no December meeting. January 19, February 16, March 16
Western Seminary, 55th & Hawthorne, Bueermann Hall