

MOUNT TABOR

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Serving the only neighborhood on the slopes of an extinct volcano

Volume 4, Issue 1

Fall 2001

Imagining Mt. Tabor 300 years ago

By Ken Ames

Looking west toward downtown from atop Mt. Tabor, it is difficult to imagine how our neighborhood appeared 200 or 300 years ago. The Portland metro area was the home of Chinookan peoples, people related to the modern Chinook at the mouth of the Columbia River (who last year were formally recognized as a tribe by the federal government). What is now Portland and Vancouver had one of the densest populations in western North America. Most people lived in villages and towns down along the rivers, particularly the Columbia. Mt. Tabor was not a place where people lived year-round. It was part of their hinterland where they came to acquire resources in season.

Today we must squint our eyes and use our imaginations to peel away the roads, the bungalows, the shops along Hawthorne, the cars, the fenced yards, and summer gardens. But what was here? Although no archaeology has been done around Mt. Tabor, it is still possible to paint a picture based on research elsewhere and our knowledge of Chinookan lifeways.

Looking out from Mt. Tabor, we would probably see a rolling, grassy, park-like landscape with oak trees standing alone and in groves. We might also see low grass fires flickering through the trees and smoke drifting down toward the rivers. The west hills could be obscured through the smoky haze on some days. The Kalapuya people who lived in the Willamette Valley south of



Mt. Tabor Methodist Episcopal Church. Oregon Historical Society, OrHi CN009009.

Willamette Falls regularly burned the valley's vegetation, producing the lush pastoral environment that so attracted the first Euroamerican settlers. It seems likely the Chinook also set fires to burn their landscape here.

These fires would have made the environment more productive, more useful, for the Chinookans. With fire, oaks produce more and larger acorns. These nuts were a very important food resource. The oaks themselves were larger and healthier. Regular burning also created an environment in which deer and elk flourished. These animals were important for

What's inside

Mt. Tabor Middle School.....	2
Warner Pacific College events.....	3
MTNA meetings.....	3
Hawthorne history.....	4
Dutch Elm disease.....	5
Crater chat.....	5
Reservoir fencing.....	6
Emergency preparedness.....	6
Park caretakers.....	7
Methodist Church events.....	8


continued on page 2

300 years ago (continued from page 1)

food, hides, and bone and antler for tools. We know from archaeological research in the area that deer and elk here were exceptionally large, which also may be an indirect result of the burning. Elk were so numerous the Chinook exported elk hides to be used as armor by peoples living farther north along the coast. We would not be seeing a "wild" environment, but one that people had been managing for perhaps several thousand years.

As you are out on your daily walk or sitting, looking out the coffee shop window as you drink your morning latte, imagine a Chinook man running quickly through a grove of oaks across the street with a lit torch, firing the grass; or a party of Chinook women heading down toward the Columbia, baskets of acorns slung on their backs with tump lines, laughing over a story just told; or a small group of enormous elk feeding quietly where the white line in the road is now. ■

Neighbor Ken Ames is a professor of archaeology at PSU.



CHOCOLATIER LTD.

*Something very special
for every
holiday celebration!*

503-234-8115
4733 S.E. Hawthorne
Portland, Oregon 97215

Mt. Tabor Middle School news

By Janet Range

Students come through for the Red Cross

Responding with compassion to the September 11 tragedies, Mt. Tabor students began collecting money for the Red Cross relief fund. QSP, the company doing our magazine sale fundraiser, pledged to match the donations dollar for dollar. On October 5 the students presented a check to the Red Cross for over \$7,000! Way to go, Mt. Tabor students: you do our community proud.

Moonlight in the garden

The Mt. Tabor Middle School PTSA (Parents, Teachers, Students Association) auction and garden party at Portland Nursery was a grand success. Not only was it completely sold out before it even started, but attendees enjoyed perfect weather under a shining moon. Delicious food, wonderful music, and great auction items made for an ideal evening. The fundraiser brought in nearly \$20,000, which will go towards enriching the experience of all our students. Past auctions have funded new science equipment, a library assistant and books, a computer support person, tutors, and artists in residence. Thank you to all the generous businesses and people in the community who donated goods, services, and volunteer time to make the event such a wonderful success. It's great to have a community that supports and nurtures our youth.

Keeping our neighborhood school neat & beautiful

As you may know, due to budget shortfalls the grounds maintenance staff at Portland Public Schools (PPS) has been greatly reduced: only two people cover all schools in the district. To keep Mt. Tabor Middle School looking sharp in these lean times, parents, students, and community members have already held two yard work parties to spruce up the school. PPS is able to keep up with the mowing, but trimming hedges, edging, weeding, and planting are some of the tasks that need some extra help. We continue to need adults who can bring power trimming tools and trucks or trailers to haul the debris to the recycling center. Call the school, or email jenk2@transport.com if you'd like to be notified of our next yard work party date. Let's keep our neighborhood schools looking good! ■

ACUPUNCTURE WORKS!

Pain • Allergies • Women's Health
Headaches • Arthritis • Stop Smoking

Natalie Arndt, LAc • Kathy West, LAc
State Licensed Acupuncturists

2216 SE 50TH • 503-230-1340



The Nation's Leading Retail Mortgage Lender

Refinance • Renovation • Remodel • Relocation
Financing Solutions Tailored to Your Specific Needs

Call: Eric Bosler
503-225-2741



© 2001 Wells Fargo Home Mortgage, Inc.