SPECIAL
NEW YEAR'S EDITION

OVERLOOK VIEWS

VOL. 2 JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2006 NO. 5

WEATHER
It's always a beautiful day
in our Overlook neighborhood

OVERLOOK VIEWS: (a just-this-once) NEW LOOK

By Warren and Melisa Cassell

How's our (temporary) new look? As you can see, the current issue of Overlook Views is unlike any that you have received in the past, and is certain to become a collector's item. This bonus issue features a super large aerial map of our neighborhood minus Swan Island, whose population generally leaves at the end of the workday. Yes, we are trying to appeal to full-time residents. We have been able to achieve this new look by virtue of satellite photography, digital imaging and the phenomenal help of Don Atwell, our sales rep at Community Newspapers which prints Overlook Views.

In planning this special edition, we had several objectives in mind. First, we thought it would be interesting to honor the diversity of our neighborhood by presenting New Year's greetings in the various languages spoken in the homes of Beach School students. Incidentally, this is not a complete list of languages spoken in Overlook homes, but it does show some of the ethnic and nationality range of our residents. We also thought that many of you would have fun identifying your home or apartment building on the map. This may be a document suitable for framing or if not, perhaps stuck to the refrigerator door?

And finally, on behalf of the Overlook Neighborhood Association, this is our way of wishing all of our neighbors a happy, healthy and productive new year.

A NEW COMMUNITY DIALOGUE IN THE NEW YEAR

By Shane Endicott

Hello Overlook neighbors. We are Our United Villages (OUV), a local, independent non-profit organization. You may better know us through our project, The ReBuilding Center. If so, you know about our commitment to reuse, sustainability and resource conservation through the reclaiming of discarded house parts. What you may not have known is that our primary goal is to encourage neighbors to get to know one another better.

You may remember a time when things moved a bit slower (and if you cannot you have no doubt had an elder tell you of such times). People were more grounded and spent more time in their community, having conversations on their front porches and within the small shops that dotted their neighborhood. With the increased pace of life and the seemingly countless demands on our time, many of us have lost that sense of belonging. We feel disconnected from the one place we should be most connected. As we become more aware of this, many of us are yearning to recreate that more traditional sense of neighborhood. OUV is all about helping and nurturing that process of restoring community.

OUV will be hosting gatherings for everyone in Overlook. Like any friendly gathering, there is no cost to attend – in fact, since we are a non-profit, there is never a cost for any of our events. In addition, like any good neighbor, we will be sure to have some refreshments and snacks. We here at OUV are excited by the opportunity to meet with residents, businesses, schools and churches of the Overlook neighborhood. If you have any questions or would like to be involved, feel free to call OUV at 503-546-7499 or email to: info@ourunitedvillages.org.

See you around the neighborhood! *Our United Villages*

PGE AND THE BIG, UGLY POLES—An Editorial

By Warren Cassell

In what appears to have been a major stealth operation, Portland General Electric recently erected two rather unattractive and oversized utility poles on the corner of N. Willamette Boulevard and N. Killingsworth—much to the chagrin of neighborhood residents. One of the affected residents, Kent Hoddick, characterized the operation as, "The three no's—no permit before construction, no notification to the community and no community input." This is definitely not the Portland way. There has been a tradition in this city of consulting with communities prior to any development or project that impacts the neighborhood. Not only did PGE blatantly disregard that tradition, but they also seemed to have cavalierly dismissed their legal obligations. It seems that their attitude was one of, "Let's do it now and we'll straighten out the ethical and legal technicalities later."

Evidently expecting neighborhood residents not to react at all, or perhaps to act more like sheep than concerned citizens, PGE found itself the target of a cease and desist request made by an attorney for Kent and several of the affected neighbors. A copy of this request also went to City authorities and it asked that no more work be conducted on site until all necessary permits are applied for and received. The poles are intended to supply power to the city's new pump station on Swan Island. The above mentioned letters effectively brought to a halt (at least temporarily) the installation of heavy duty electric cable on these aesthetically unappealing poles. Since practically all power lines going into Swan Island are buried underground, one wonders why PGE had to change course with a monstrosity that not only has a major impact on the heretofore lovely views, but also will eventually affect the real estate values of the homes affected.

The neighborhood doesn't take these consequences lightly. The Overlook Neighborhood Association Board voted at its November meeting to send a letter to Mayor Potter protesting PGE's actions. In addition, more grass roots activism was apparent amongst the homeowners in the immediate vicinity of the poles. One large sign erected in front of Pat Collins house highlighted the possible health hazards connected with living in close proximity to high power electric lines. Another sign related to PGE's stealth attack also had fliers for interested neighbors to read as well as a plea to get in touch with the politicians to lodge the appropriate protest. All this goes to shows that PGE not only stands for Portland General Electric, but also **People Getting Enraged**. These are not flagpoles and nobody is saluting them.

SKIDMORE RACEWAY (NOT)

By Warren Cassell

Those of you who live in the southern part of Overlook may have noticed several large bold black on yellow signs prominently placed on a resident's garden fence. The signs emphatically ask drivers on this street to SLOW DOWN. And indeed they should. April Jackson Clark, a ten-year resident of Overlook, first became aware of not only an increase in volume but an increase in the speed of traffic on her street since the advent of MAX. As recently as a few months ago, the city put up a 25 mile per hour speed limit sign for Skidmore Street but this seemed to have had little effect. Noting that there is a multitude of kids in the neighborhood and being aware of "their need to be safe," April decided to take matters into her own hands.

She contacted Carl Teves, owner of D C Custom Silk Screening on Interstate, and asked for his help with this neighborhood safety project. Carl responded with true Overlook community spirit and offered to make the two signs for the cost of his labor and materials. Despite the considerable savings, this was not an insignificant amount, but April, in altruistic fashion, wrote a check to pay for these custom created signs.

April sleeps a little sounder knowing that the neighborhood kids are perhaps a bit safer than before…even though she has no children of her own! We often use the words, 'community spirit.' Here is a concrete example of what they really mean. Bravo, April!

DREAMTIME IN OVERLOOK #1

By W.C. Mitty

UNION PACIFIC TO MOVE ALBINA FREIGHT YARDS TO WEST SIDE

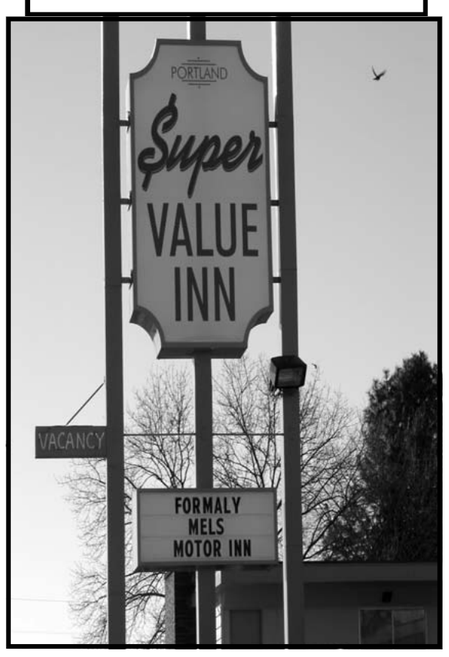
In an unprecedented act of corporate consideration for its community neighbors, Union Pacific announced today they will move their Albina freight yard facility to the west side by the end of the year. After decades of complaints by Overlook residents about noise pollution, (elephant size train couplings 24/7 as well as middle of the night train tooting tag games), UP decided it was the better part of wisdom to move the yards. They believe, a spokesperson said, "This will minimize any future noise impact on the Overlook neighborhood." In a moment of candor, rare in corporate communications, the spokesperson added, "Relief from the noise will be a good thing for the neighborhood. As for their air pollution concerns, we really don't want to get into that, but suffice it to say, everyone can expect to see a quantum leap in the air quality over the next five years."

Reaction was mixed in different parts of Portland. One west sider noted that, "Freight yards are just not our thing." Overlook residents, however did take a different though not always consistent view. Most thought they wouldn't miss the noise and air pollution but others pointed out, "There is a calming affect in that white noise emitted by the traveling boxcars' rumbles" and "How will I ever get to sleep without those coupling orgies?"

Plans for a new use of the space currently occupied by UP are already in motion. It is reported they turned down a developer's billion dollar bid to put up a Mall of America type shopping center anchored by a 200,000 square foot Wal-Mart. Instead, UP in an act of corporate generosity unequalled within this writer's memory, has made major plans to turn the freight yards into a public park exclusively for the Overlook neighborhood. Two of its outstanding features will be: a landing area for hang gliders soaring off the bluff and a bungee cord drop area underneath the Fremont Bridge. UP expects to have more detailed plans available in the near future. In the meanwhile, the Overlook neighborhood appears to have quite a bit to be thankful for in the new year.

Editors' note: W.C. Mitty is the most recent arrival to the ever burgeoning Overlook Views' staff. He has been brought on board because of his well-known incisive, trenchant and keen observations of all things Overlook. The above piece will be the first of a long-planned series.

SEEN ON INTERSTATE AVE



Spell check, where were you when we needed you?

WORDS FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

By Ethan Edwards and Tom Kilbane

The holiday season is traditionally a time when neighbors get together to share some holiday cheer. OKNA supported this tradition with several activities this year: the holiday craft bazaar, a visit from Santa and the annual Overlook potluck. We hope you had an opportunity to partake in one or all of the events and that you had a chance to say hello and reconnect with friends and neighbors.

This was a busy year for our neighborhood: the first season of the Interstate Farmers Market and the takeover and successful management of the Overlook House were two of the bigger stories for 2005. Annual events like the tree planting, the ice cream social and the neighborhood clean-up were all successful because of dedicated volunteer effort by your neighbors.

The year 2006 is shaping up to be just as busy. Here are the things that we're excited about: a fresh start for the Killingsworth Station project, engaging neighborhood conversations hosted by Our United Villages (see story on this page), more neighborhood-based groups and projects meeting at the Overlook House and a neighborhood vision for the zoning and redevelopment along the Intestate Corridor.

We'd like to know what you're excited about. Join us for our General Meetings on the third Tuesday of each month and share ideas and thoughts with your neighbors.

Happy Holidays.

FROM KAISER PERMANENTE: A GRACIOUS INVITATION

Kaiser Permanente is Growing...

Help us celebrate the opening of the Kaiser Permanente Interstate Radiation Oncology facility. (See picture below.) An open house will be held on Thursday, January 19, 2006 from 4 to 6 p.m. Refreshments will be served. Parking is available off Interstate at Overlook Blvd south of Town Hall or in the new parking garage next to I-5. The Yellow Line's Overlook Park MAX Station also runs near the facility. We look forward to seeing you.

New radiation oncology facility in the last stages of completion

WAIF

By Melisa Cassell

There is a tentative knock
and a muted moan.
We open the door and she is there,
shivering, yet fevered.
Throbbing with innocence, still,
she reeks
So young, yet redolent of myriad
sources of decay.
Her limbs, in a dance of the supplicant,
are twisted and knobbed, as though ancient.
She is in tatters—some burned,
some shredded, caked with blood,
glistening with the salt of dried tears.
Her hair, pulsing, gleaming with the
lice of neglect—curls improbably at her sweet
shell-like ears.
Her face, contorted with sorrow, hunger,
and the pallor of the reluctant witness,
somehow manages to glow.
It must be her eyes—alight with the almost
impossible thrust of hope.
"What is your name?" we ask.
"Earth, twenty -0-six," she answers.
" Please, may I come in?"

TO OUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS IN THE OVERLOOK NEIGHBORHOOD:

These maps show the world community and our local community. The world map shows how "Happy New Year" looks in ten of the languages spoken at home by different Beach School students. There are many more linguistic variations in the Overlook neighborhood and we would love to be able to express our sentiments in all of them. For now though, we would simply like to wish all of you

A HAPPY, HEALTHY AND PRODUCTIVE NEW YEAR.

From the editors.

THE REAL ESTATE MARKET PORTLAND/OVERLOOK OUTLOOK

By Bob La Du

The last five years and more have seen Portland real estate prices set record levels year after year, leading some commentators to talk of the housing "bubble" and speculate when it is going to burst.

As a work-a-day real estate practitioner, I see prices higher than ever before, but I have yet to discern a bubble. The market is quite competitive and its prices are the result of supply and demand, aided by the historically low interest rates of recent years. The local demand for housing seems to me to be fueled by immigration from out of state (estimated at over 46,000 persons coming to Oregon last year) in addition to the normal population growth. Each week I work with highly qualified individuals and families coming to Portland to work in the computer, electronics and healthcare professions. These are not speculators seeking to "flip" properties, but newcomers who are enriching Portland's life with their talents and expertise. Rather than a bubble, I see area prices finally beginning to catch up to our neighbors. Portland's median housing price is $253,700; Seattle's is $325,000; San Francisco's $721,900.

Interest rates have now begun to rise, from about 5.5% for a 30 year fixed rate mortgage last summer to about 6.3% today. If this continues, it will inevitably cause a slowing of real estate purchases with a concomitant easing of the appreciation rate (which, for the Metro area, was about 15% for this past year.) This will, I believe, amount to a soft landing for property owners' values rather than a dot com type of bubble-bursting disaster.

Prices in Overlook have long been on the rise. The Real Estate Report has tracked one Overlook property year by year since 1954 when its market value was given as $21,200. Built in 1949, this three-bedroom ranch is currently valued at $366.230 by the County.

Overlook sales for the past six months (See box below.) show the properties selling very readily and selling for considerably more than County valuation. Overlook property owners have the best of both worlds: a lovely neighborhood in which to reside and, in case a move is in order, a waiting list of buyers eager to take their place.

Bob is a long-time Overlook resident, a close neighbor and friend of the editors. He is a past President of the Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors and was named Portland's Realtor of the Yea r in 1999. Appointed by the Governor to Oregon's Real Estate Board, he continues to serve in that capacity. Bob can be reached at RE/MAX Equity Group Inc., telephone 503-495-5431. He provided the recent price data in the box above.

RECENT PRICES PAID FOR OVERLOOK RESIDENCES

ADDRESS	BED/BATH	APX SQ FT	PRICE	DAYS ON MKT
1825 N. Alberta St.	2/1	988	132,279	9
1521 N. Jessup St.	3/2	1380	150,000	47
5525 N. Campbell Ave.	2/1	842	157,000	7
2206 N. Willamette Blvd.	2/1	1946	223,000	14
1636 N. Humboldt St.	3/1	2160	170,000	0
2124 N. Humboldt	2/1	1184	195,000	4
5523 N. Burrage Ave	2/1	1468	209,900	5
1606 N. Church St.	2/1	1777	214,000	22
2304 N. Sumner St.	2/1	1902	232,000	1
4928 N. Maryland	3/1.1	2448	240,000	0
1552 N. Alberta St.	2/1	2048	243,500	38
5215 N. Maryland Ave.	3/1	2052	245,000	15
5631 N. Boston Ave.	3/1	2334	264,000	3
5736 N. Maryland Ave.	4/1	2904	270,000	2
1616 N. Alberta St.	3/1	2469	279,000	9
1518 N. Webster Ave	4/2	2132	287,500	86
5123 N. Gay Ave.	4/1	2691	291,000	52
5254 N. Emerson Dr.	3/2	1732	305,000	54
2871 N. Emerson Ct,	3/1.1	2274	325,000	7
5322 N. Denver Ave,	4/2	2300	340,000	7
1705 N. Willamette Blvd.	3/2	2631	345,000	62
1732 N. Alberta St.	3/2	2798	382,000	8
2919 Willamette Blvd.	3/1.1	2650	425,000	2
2438 N. Alberta St.	4/4	3360	519,000	25
1722 N. Blandena St.	2/1	1478	199,900	52
2127 N. Wygant St.	3/1	1056	207,500	54
4114 N. Massachusetts Ave.	4/2	2603	331,500	9
3764 N. Colonial Ave.	3/2	2054	371,000	3
4046 N. Concord Ave.	4/2.1	2615	573,000	14
3804 N. Melrose Dr.	5/1.2	3456	594,000	55

OVERLOOK TOWNHOMES: A WORK IN PROGRESS

By Scott Coe

Overlook Development L.L.C., owned by brothers Bill and Scott Coe who are long-time Overlook residents, is proposing an ambitious new project for the neighborhood. They envision 6 new row houses to be built on property they own located on North Prescott just west of Interstate Avenue.

The six units are being styled to be as compatible with the Overlook Neighborhood as possible. The units are being designed in pairs with the center pair sitting back roughly 12 feet further from the sidewalk than the pairs on either side. Each end pair is being designed to look like a single classic Old Portland style home like those found throughout the Overlook Neighborhood. The intention is to have a streetscape that is consistent with the area while adding additional housing units, and to show that "infill" can be built to be compatible with older neighborhoods. As the Coe brothers say, "This is our neighborhood also."

Although floor plans and finish levels are still under development, many specifications are available. The Overlook Development L.L.C. is looking with enthusiasm towards a completion date of Fall 2006.

JOY OF TREES

By Cynthia Sulaski

Looking for something fun and productive to do on Saturday, February 18th? Then come and help us plant trees in Overlook for the 7th Annual Neighborhood Tree Planting.

We'll start the morning at Kaiser Town Hall (3704 N. Interstate) at 8:30. You'll sign in at the registration table and be placed with one of the crews that will plant the trees throughout the neighborhood. We'll have coffee and pastries available plus a yummy lunch after the planting. Although we always wish for a sunny, dry day, the odds are good that it will rain--if only slightly! So please come prepared with boots, warm clothes and gloves. We'll provide the equipment and trees! For questions, call Cynthia at 503.249.7728.

BELATED THANKS TO MICHAEL REARDON

By Warren Cassell

Friends of Overlook House and OH director Carol Padden would like to express their sincere appreciation to neighbor Michael Reardon for his creative efforts on behalf of this venerable institution. Michael completely re-designed the official Overlook House brochure and stationary. These communications "on paper" are often the first visual representation of OH prospective clients see, and are therefore important and need to be excellent. Not only has Michael provided the excellence, but he offers it pro bono for the community.

Michael is owner of Fieldtrip (www.fieldtripinc.com), a communication design firm specializing in building websites and identity systems for businesses. Besides designing and managing projects all day, Michael is an illustrator, an adjunct professor at PSU and an avid photographer. Use of this latter talent afforded us the example shown below. A handsome photograph of a splendid building, it is used in the Overlook House brochure and has been duplicated in several different issues of Overlook Views.

KILLINGSWORTH STATION PROJECT ABANDONED

By Warren Cassell

A neighborhood project plagued by a long, cumbersome selection process, innumerable bureaucratic roadblocks, and a highly controversial Section 8 (low-cost housing) provision has finally bit the dust. The Portland Development Commission recently announced that "…Tom Kemper, lead developer for Killingsworth Station has withdrawn from the project." Tom indicated that, "…as costs continue to escalate, he is concerned that to build the project with the quality the neighborhood deserves, will require even more public dollars than reported earlier this summer."

From this writer's perspective, the Killingsworth Station project almost seemed doomed to failure from the beginning. After nearly five years of design, redesign and endless public meetings, it appeared that there were far too few answers for the vociferous objections engendered through public input. The parking problems, the aesthetic problems, the Section 8 provisions, along with the density issue, all appeared to have had a major negative impact on the community.

PDC, putting its best foot forward, notes that, "This will provide all of us with an opportunity to work together to reassess the key priorities for the project and tackle some of the issues that could not be fully resolved…" Let's hope their optimism is justified and that this strategically located piece of real estate doesn't lie dormant for another five years.

How long should it take ?

Yoga and You at Overlook House

By Warren Cassell

Carol Padden, Overlook House program director, announces a great and welcome addition to OH's activity list. Yoga is coming to Overlook. Starting on Monday, January 8 and continuing weekly on Mondays and Wednesdays from 5:30 to 6:30 P.M. this ancient form of physical meditation will be taught by North Portland resident and yoga instructor, **Heidi Jo Timm**. She believes that yoga is for everyone and offers a no-risk complimentary first class session for neophytes and experienced yoga enthusiasts alike. She has been a student of yoga for nearly a decade and has attended the yoga teacher training program at the Yoga Shala in Portland. Heidi teaches an alignment focused style that encourages balance in the body and mind. Her gentle, yet challenging approach emphasizes building inner awareness, strength and flexibility.

The very nominal monthly fee is $20.00 for two weekly classes. "Drop-ins" are welcome at $4.00 per session. Winter classes will be held in the recently refurbished basement of OH, and during the drier spring/summer days yoga will move outdoors to the lovely back lawn. A mat is necessary for class and it is suggested that students wear loose fitting clothes.

To sign up, notify Heidi Jo Timm by email at heidijotimm@gmail.com. If you do not have internet access, call Carol Padden at 503-823-3188 and she will forward your information to Heidi. The registration process itself will be taken care of on the first day of class on January 8. **PLEASE NOTE** there is a maximum capacity of twenty-five for the class on a first come,

MAJOR BIG-TIME, VERY IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meeting: The next OKNA general meeting will be held at Kaiser Town Hall on January 17 at 7:00 P.M. The agenda will include the following:

1. Kate Deane from ODOT will give us the latest update on I-5 widening.
2. Susan Kuhn, a traffic/pedestrian project coordinator from PDC, will discuss a new venture on Killingsworth.
3. Presenter, name to be announced, will discuss the Eden Gardens Urban Estates Development Plans.
4. Presenter, name to be announced, from PGE will discuss the big, ugly poles located on N. Killingsworth and N. Greeley. This assumes PGE will respond to our invitation.

Other items to be announced

Writer Wanted: Golden opportunity for aspiring writer to acquire hands-on experience and by-line credits with neighborhood newsletter. A self-starter with a modicum of interest in neighborhood issues are desirable traits needed in this salary-free, part time job with very flexible hours. Email your passionate interest to w.cassell@comcast.net.

Deliverers Wanted: Golden opportunity for an exercise challenged couch potato to have a meaningful, physically invigorating experience once every two months. Walk a route of about one hundred homes delivering the Overlook Views newsletter as you stroll. This will take about an hour and a half to do; its benefits include great socializing interaction opportunities with your neighbors. Only serious applicants need apply to w.cassell@comcast.net.

IMPORTANT NITTY-GRITTY

Want to join us and receive witty e-mail reminders about our meetings, events, etc.? Just go to www.overlookneighborhood.org and subscribe by entering your e-mail address as directed on the home page. Mailing lists are never sold or distributed.

Or via snail mail:
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Adrian and Kevin Campbell, Scott Coe, Ethan Edwards, Shane Endicott, Brad Halverson, Tom Kilbane, Bob La Du, Carol Padden and Cynthia Sulaski.

Extra special thanks to **Sarah Friedel** for her invaluable help pasting up (assembling) this unique issue of the newsletter.

TRANSPORTATION IN THE NEWS

You may have noticed that TriMet's contractor is working at the Overlook Park MAX Station next to Kaiser Permanente's Interstate Campus. They are building a connection so you will be able to cross between the platform going to downtown and the crosswalk on the east side of Interstate Avenue! Work will be done only during the daytime, and the project should be finished by the end of January. The only significant traffic issue should be the temporary elimination of the bike lanes in that area. The sidewalks should be available most of the time, and the auto traffic lanes should remain open. If you run into more than just a minor delay, please call TriMet at 503-238-RIDE to file a complaint ASAP. Please drive extra carefully in this area until the project is done.

Pictures don't always tell the whole story.
There really is something going on here.