



CONCORDIA NEWS

A free publication of the Concordia Neighborhood Association | ConcordiaPDX.org

August 2023

Puzzle mania in Concordia!



Local puzzle enthusiast hosts porch puzzle swap - page 4

Sunday Parkways bike ride



See photos of neighborhood fun - page 8

CNA Mission Statement

To connect Concordia residents and businesses—inform, educate and report on activities, issues and opportunities of the neighborhood

Concordia News

is a free monthly publication of the Concordia Neighborhood Association. Newspapers are delivered to all residences and many community locations in the Concordia neighborhood.

Concordia News is printed on 40% post-consumer or better paper, manufactured at a local mill.

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Vernon School Student Leads Bike Shelter Building Project

By Dina Sage
CNews Managing Editor

In August last year, Vernon School 10th grader Will Hambuchen approached his principal, Ben Keefer, with the desire to complete an Eagle Scout project that would help the school. A few ideas were discussed and eventually they agreed on building a bike shelter. Vernon already had one bike shelter on site, but Hambuchen felt it wasn't enough, and so they decided on adding one next to it.

"There is never enough room for all the bikes at school, especially when it rains," says Hambuchen, 15. Hambuchen regularly bikes to school and will be attending Vernon with his two siblings in the fall.

Hambuchen is a Life Scout and member of local Scouts Boy Scouts of America (BSA) troop #117. Through BSA, he and other boys and girls earn merit badges to advance through the scout system. The culmination of this advancement is becoming an Eagle Scout which requires a service project.

And completing an Eagle Scout project is no small feat. Projects must be driven by the scouts themselves and require formal cost estimates and plans, board approval, coordination with other non-profits involved, donated funds and materials and the use of volunteers. The bike shelter at Vernon School is one such project.



Community volunteers helped build a new bike shelter at Vernon School this summer, photo by Colleen Casey

The bike shelter was built over a 3-day weekend in early June. About half a dozen Vernon school students and alumni came out to help with drilling holes in concrete, heavy lifting, leveling and squaring everything.

The Vernon School PTA approved the project provided that the new bike shelter be identical to the one that was already there. Hambuchen did not have the original blueprints, but the other shelter was there so, in fall 2022, Hambuchen and his dad Steve went out to take pictures, get measurements, and create a materials list for the new bike shelter.

"Almost all of the materials for the bike shelter were donated" says Hambuchen, who succeeded in securing donations from local companies Parr Lumber and Mr. Plywood. The Vernon PTA encouraged Hambuchen to reach out to PBOT, who offered to donate and install the metal bike racks.

"People were very willing to help out" says Hambuchen, who says it was not hard to secure donations. The bike shelter was built over a 3-day weekend in early June. About half a dozen Vernon school students and alumni came out to help with drilling holes

in concrete, heavy lifting, leveling and squaring everything.

The bike shelter is an 8 X 10-foot room made with pressure treated wood. The last step, which will be completed this month, is installing the 15 or so metal bike racks.

When asked what his biggest learning experience was, Steve Hambuchen says that with all the communication and coordinating, his son's skills in writing and reading email communications "improved dramatically." The new bike shelter will be completed and ready to use by the start of the 2023-2024 school year.



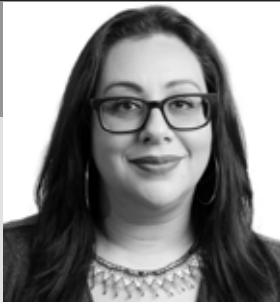
Boy Scout and project leader Will Hambuchen in front of Vernon's new bike shelter, photo by Steve Hambuchen



Dina Sage is the Managing Editor for CNews and enjoys engaging in the arts and outdoor activities.

From the Board

By Astrid Furstner, CNA Board Chair



Concordia Neighborhood Association Calls for Volunteers

Summer is here and so is the hot weather. When Portland wants to be like other cities, it is HOT, and then when it wants to be Portland, it becomes a light-sweater weather day. Wow. Say that a few times!

The board and its committees are made up of volunteers and we can always use extra helpers.

I'm happy to report that we are moving along and are getting ready for the Concerts at the Park event which will be held on Saturday July 29th at 6:30 pm at Alberta Park. The concert will showcase the band Pa'lante, a Latin jazz band.

The social team is working on a few other events to help bring our neighbors together. Be on the lookout for those announcements soon. If you have ideas for a neighborhood event, let us know. Together, our social team will do what it can to make it happen.

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank Matt Roberts and the University of Oregon for hosting our July board meeting at the Oregon House. It was a bit of a change, and sometimes change can be good. We appreciate the assistance and warm welcome.

As we continue on with our various projects, I'd like to ask our Concordia neighbors for some assistance. The board and its committees are made up of volunteers and we can always use extra helpers. Do

you have an interesting hobby you'd like to share? Are you knowledgeable in a specific topic that may be of use to our neighbors? Do you have a bit of extra time to help distribute CNews newspapers to a few local businesses—maybe during your walk? These are small asks but make a big difference for us. You don't have to commit to anything long-term, but if you can help, please let me know.

I'm pleased to report that the Land Use and Transportation Committee is busy busy busy! Rich Burton is leading the team and is striving to provide us with updates. The team meets monthly on Wednesdays and you can attend and provide your voice or lend a hand. The meetings are posted on our monthly calendar online.

My final announcement is that we are reviving the Safety and Livability Committee. With the board's approval, I appointed Ike Harris as the chair. He will work closely with other members to work on a safety plan for our neighborhood. I'm excited to see what they come up with. If you're interested in helping the team, please reach out to Ike. I'm sure they would appreciate the assistance.

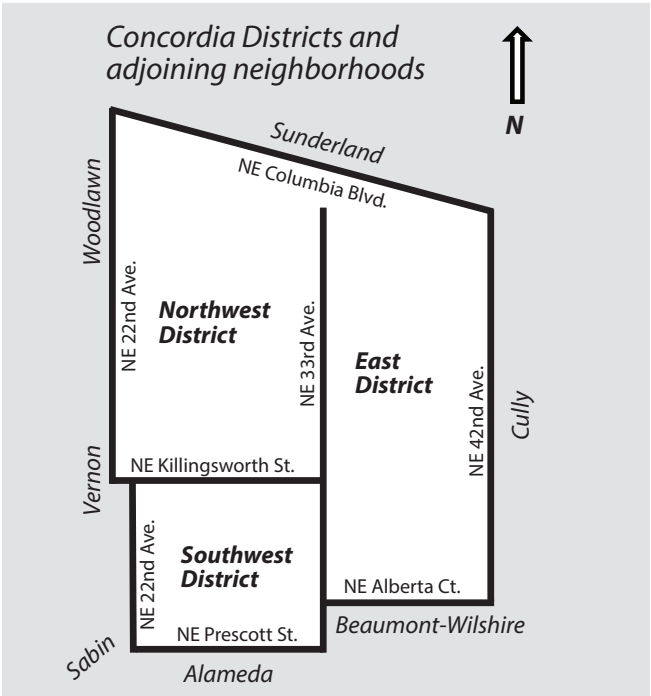
Many thanks to all of you for being a part of Concordia. I hope each of you make connections, find new friends, meet new neighbors and generally be cordial and understanding. Blessings to you all.

Astrid Furstner
Board Chair

Astrid Furstner is a mother, a wife, an immigrant, a local artist and a woodworker. She lives with her luthier husband, Brent, and her artist-in-the-making daughter, Luciana. Together, they call Concordia their home.

Concordia Neighborhood Association


- Board Meeting**
1st Tuesday of the month, Tuesday, August 1, 6 p.m., McMenamins Kennedy School Community Room with call in option, see box below, contact Astrid Furstner, Chair@ConcordiaPDX.org
- General Membership Meeting**
Tuesday, September 5, 7 p.m., McMenamins Kennedy School Community Room with call in option, see box below, contact Astrid Furstner, Chair@ConcordiaPDX.org
- Social Committee**
For information about upcoming events contact the social committee team at Social@ConcordiaPDX.org
- Media Team Meeting**
Last Tuesday of the month, Tuesday, August 29, 6 p.m., McMenamins Kennedy School Community Room with call in option, see box below, contact Dina Sage, MediaTeamLead@ConcordiaPDX.org
- Land Use & Transportation Committee Meeting**
3rd Wednesday of the month, Wednesday, August 16, 7 p.m., McMenamins Kennedy School Community Room with call in option, see box below, contact Rich Burton, LandUse@ConcordiaPDX.org
- Finance Committee Meeting**
Last Wednesday of the month, Wednesday, August 30, 7 p.m., venue: contact Heather Pashley, Treasurer@ConcordiaPDX.org
- Community Room Rental**
For info and scheduling, visit ConcordiaPDX.org/community-room-rental or contact Megan Gobble at CNARoomKennedy@gmail.com
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Heather Pashley, Treasurer@ConcordiaPDX.org
- North Community Safety Team**
Jacob Brostoff & Daniel Franco-Nunez, north.pdxteam@PortlandOregon.gov, 503.823.4064
- SUBMISSIONS & ADVERTISING**
Submissions to Concordia News: Deadline is the 10th of the month preceding the upcoming monthly publication. Contact CNewsEditor@ConcordiaPDX.org
Submissions to CNA website: Submit nonprofit news & events to MediaTeamLead@ConcordiaPDX.org
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Northwest 2 | NW2@ConcordiaPDX.org Matt Roberts
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At Large 4 | AL4@ConcordiaPDX.org Rich Burton
At Large 5 | AL5@ConcordiaPDX.org Michelle Fitzgerald
At Large 6 | AL6@ConcordiaPDX.org Brittany van der Salm

CNA meeting venues, how to attend
To learn how to attend CNA meetings in-person (when available) or remotely, visit:

- ConcordiaPDX.org/CNAMeetings
- Facebook.com/groups/ConcordiaPDX



We're open 12-6 every day.

Please call or use the website to schedule an appointment to sell.

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Concordia held its very first pride party on July 15th at Bonne Chance Wine Bar.

Thanks to our coordinators and hosts for such a special event.



Concordia Resident Publishes Book that Sheds Light on Homophobia

By Jon Dickman
Contributing Writer

Concordia resident Joseph “Joefer” Ferguson, 60, published his first book, *35 Letters: Letters from a Mother to her Son* earlier this year. The novella is an imagined collection of 35 unanswered letters, spanning from 1972 to 1980, from a mother, Mildred, to her gay grown son, Gordon.

In addition to writing, Ferguson is a former health care employee, artist and former senior coordinator at a movie animation studio. He has lived in the Concordia neighborhood since 1992. Ferguson says that although he has never experienced any gay-related prejudice himself, he has over the years been told about challenging family situations by other people who identify as LGBTQ+.

“I’ve met numerous people who were not accepted by their families after coming out or being discovered. They

lost their family, their church, friends and community” says Ferguson. These stories became the inspiration for his book.

The mother’s letters, says Ferguson, “are highly influenced by her strict religious beliefs and relay her love for [her

“I think stories like this need to be told.”

– Joseph Ferguson.

son], small town gossip, and an ever-persistent guilt trip.”

“God might just strike down all of San Francisco, like he did Sodom and Gomorrah, destroying everything and everyone, and letting your city sink into the ocean. I’d hate to lose you like that.” writes Mildred in one letter. Through the letters, the reader learns that Gordon’s father forced him to leave home at 18 without ever telling the mother why.

Mildred is in denial of her son’s sexual orientation and would rather he be gravely wounded or sentenced to a lifetime in prison than be gay. To relate to this challenging character, Ferguson says “I put myself into ... Mildred and thought about what I’d write to my son if he was banished from my home and I didn’t



Joseph Ferguson in his Concordia home with the cover of his newly published novella, photo by Jon Dickman

want to accept– or recognize– his sexuality. I then wrote it in the folksy style my mother or her siblings would write in.”

“I think stories like this need to be told,” says Ferguson. “More people need to realize that deciding not to accept someone can eat away at them for the rest of their life” and this process is revealed in Ferguson’s book, as readers watch this

happen to Mildred. Currently, Ferguson is working on a sequel to *35 Letters* from the vantage point of the son, examining Gordon’s explorations, tribulations, triumphs and transformations. *35 Letters: Letters from a Mother to her Son* can be purchased online through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Better World Books.

Jon Dickman, 71, has lived for 26 years in the Concordia Neighborhood with his husband Bob Wilson, who grew up in the home they live in. They have participated in five Portland pride parades together.



Care about transportation or land use issues affecting our Concordia neighborhood?



Want to get involved?

It’s easy. The Concordia Land Use and Transportation Committee meets next on Wednesday, August 16 at 7 p.m. in the McMenamins Kennedy School Community Room. For a call-in option, visit ConcordiaPDX.org/CNAMEetings.



Meetings are open to the public. Just show up or contact Rich Burton at LandUse@ConcordiaPDX.org.

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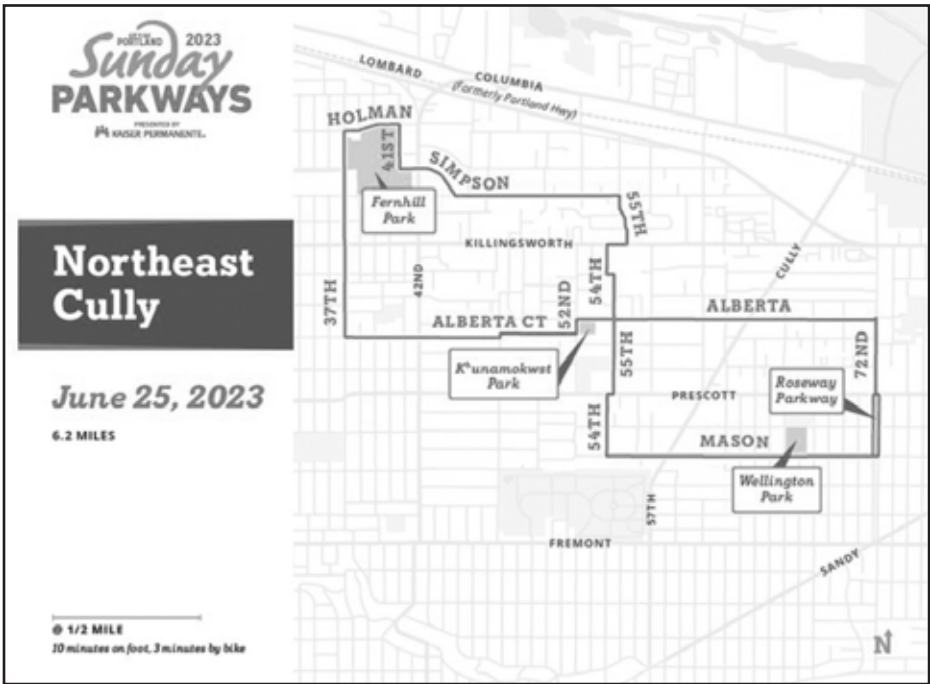
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Sotheby’s INTERNATIONAL REALTY

33,000 people attended the Northeast Cully Sunday Parkways neighborhood bike ride presented by Kaiser Permanente on June 25th!



Photos by Jordana Leeb

Law and Psych Students, KISS Coffee Coming to University of Oregon Campus This Fall

By Kathy Crabtree
Contributing Writer

After a year of anticipation, months of behind-the-scenes planning, and a recent frenzy of activity, the former Concordia University campus will be populated with University of Oregon (U of O) students

this month. U of O bought the campus over a year ago and has been preparing for all Portland programs and courses currently housed in Old Town to be moved to Concordia by the academic year 2024-25. The first students to attend the new campus will be third-year law students and in September, additional

The first students to attend the new campus will be third-year law students.

University Advancement, Government and Community Relations, Facility Management and the university vice president's office. Those offices will provide support for both campuses. The Library and Learning Center has landscaping, new paint and carpet, and new University of Oregon banners have sprung up throughout the neighborhood. The Library and Learning Center will be open to both students and the public later this month and may include evening and weekend hours.


The University is hosting a Community Connection Event on August 9th from 4:30-6 pm. It will be held at the Library and Learning Center at 2900 NE Liberty St. Community members are invited to come and learn more about recent building renovation schedules, academic programs and other details related to the move. The April Meeting had more than 100 people in attendance.

programs will begin on the new campus. According to Heidi Hiaasen, Assistant Director of Communication for U of O; the College of Education's Masters School of Psychology and the Ballmer Institute for Children's Behavioral Health will likely also be moving to the new campus.

"We are pleased to announce that KISS Coffee will take over the coffeeshop in the Library and Learning Center and is expected to open in late fall," she says.

Students will initially be housed in the 27th Street Apartments which are equipped with kitchens and independent living spaces offering two, three, or four bedroom units. Hiassen says that security precautions will be provided by the University of Oregon Police Department (UOPD); the Director of Security will oversee campus safety. Additional UOPD community service officers and unarmed private security officers will be on-site.

Administrative offices set to open this fall include Student Life and Belonging,



Kathryn Crabtree is a retired Nursing Educator and author of books that celebrate women of a certain age- invisible to many, who use their deductive reasoning to solve mysteries. The bad guys never see them coming.



New University of Oregon banner at former Concordia campus, photo by Raymond Crabtree

Concerts in the Park are ON!

Where: Alberta Park, 1905 NE Killingsworth St.
When: Saturday, July 29, 6:30 p.m.
Who: Pa'lante — Fiery salsa and Latin jazz!
Sponsored by Concordia Neighborhood Association

Where: Alberta Park, 1905 NE Killingsworth St.
When: Thursday, August 17, 6:30 p.m.
Who: Jujuba — Danceable Afrobeat music, featuring Nojeem Lasisi.
Sponsored by Black Parent Initiative



Ready, set, go! Start planning those picnic basket feasts and come early to find a spot for your favorite blanket or chair!

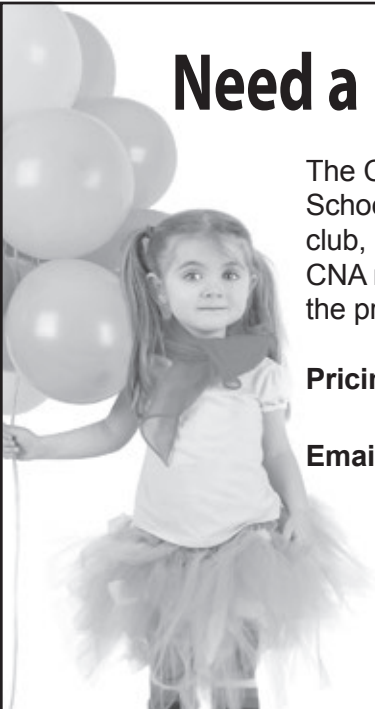


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Need a place for your PARTY?



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Pricing: \$40/hr (\$25/hr for nonprofits)
Email: CNARoomKennedy@gmail.com



SUMMER UNLEASHED

Hello neighbors! I hope your summer is off to a great start! I'm your neighborhood Realtor, joined by my furry assistant, Truman. Whether you're buying, selling, or exploring the market, we're here to help. With personalized service and expert guidance, we'll make your real estate journey a walk in the park. Contact us anytime for a friendly chat. Cheers to a sensational summer!

Melissa Moran
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UO COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Join us for our next community event and hear updates about building renovation schedules, arrival of students and employees, coffee shop timeline and other details related to our move to the new University of Oregon Portland campus.

Wednesday, Aug. 9
4:30-6 p.m.

Library & Learning Center
2800 NE Liberty St.

Questions?
pdxinfo@uoregon.edu



pdx.uoregon.edu/northeast-pdx-campus



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Land Use and Transportation

What Is Residential Infill Project Zoning?

By Rich Burton
LUTC Committee Chair

Residents of Concordia and other inner NE neighborhoods might have noticed new construction that reflects Portland zoning changes known as Residential Infill Project (RIP). If you see two, four, six or eight-unit structures popping up where you once saw one home, that likely is the result of RIP.

RIP took effect in August 2021 and its second iteration, RIP2, took effect in June 2022. Both measures were intended to address housing shortages and affordability by allowing more density and flexibility on plots that previously allowed only single-family homes. People who aren't familiar with zoning rules (particularly during the COVID pandemic) might be surprised to learn some of the specific impacts of RIP and RIP2:

- With the changes introduced, a developer could opt to put four to eight units on a lot on your street, depending on the lot size and their ability to divide the lot.
- No on-site parking is required for these new multi-household units.
- Required setbacks; minimum distances from the property line to the structure, have been reduced to 10 feet.

Proponents hailed RIP as a way to bring much-needed affordable housing to Portland, but the effort also had critics. Andre Baugh, a Planning and Sustainability and Commission (PSC) member at the time, objected with concerns about

displacing low-income and minority residents. Others worried about traffic congestion, strain on infrastructure and lack of true affordability. Check out this YouTube video of Baugh addressing the PSC in 2018 at bit.ly/lutc-youtube.

Anticipating the impact of RIP/RIP2, the Laurelhurst and Eastmoreland neighborhoods worked to be designated as historic districts, which reduced their being affected.

If you see two, four, six or eight-unit structures popping up where you once saw one home, that likely is the result of RIP.

Here are a few links to learn more about this topic:

- Overview of RIP
Portland.gov/bps/planning/rip/about-project
- RIP reports and plans for specific areas
Portland.gov/bps/planning/rip/project-documents
- Resources for homeowners to protect against predatory behaviors
Portland.gov/bds/zoning-land-use/rip-protection-against-predatory-behaviors

For more information, email the CNA LUTC (Land Use and Transportation Committee) at landuse@concordiapdx.org or share your thoughts with us at the LUTC meeting held the 3rd Wednesday of each month, 7-8:30 PM at the Kennedy School Community Room.



Rich Burton is the Chair of the Land Use and Transportation committee and serves as Member at Large #4 for the Concordia Neighborhood Association board. He is interested in building community.

Do you like walking in your neighborhood?

















We need volunteers to help deliver monthly Concordia News to businesses in the Concordia neighborhood.



Interested? Please email Dina at MediaTeamLead@ConcordiaPDX.org or call 541.306.8006.

Summer Bingo

Cross off the activities in the boxes as you complete them this summer.
Can you get 4 in a row by the end of August?
Can you get all of them (black out) by the time you go back to school?

 WATCH A MOVIE	 GO ON A BIKE RIDE	 DO A CRAFT	 SLEEP OUTSIDE
 EAT FOOD FROM SOMEONE’S GARDEN	 GO TO THE PARK	 GO TO THE FARMER’S MARKET	 MAKE A NEW FRIEND
 GO SWIMMING	 GO TO LAST THURSDAY	 HAVE A PICNIC	 GO TO A CONCERT
 MAKE A BOUQUET	 MEET A NEIGHBORHOOD PET	 EAT ICE CREAM	 READ A BOOK

All icons created by Smalllikeart at flaticon.com

Tongue Twisters

How fast can you say these tongue twisters?

1. A box of biscuits, a box of mixed biscuits, and a biscuit mixer
2. How can a clam cram in a clean cream can?
3. Which wrist watches are Swiss wrist watches?



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Kids & Teens

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Concordian Creates Free Porch Puzzle Swap

By Kepper Petzing
Contributing Writer

Pandemic Puzzle Passion

The daughter of a professional chess player, Sonya Kaidanov has always known that playing games are in her genes. When the pandemic began, she found it was jigsaw puzzles that became her passion. “Puzzles helped me thrive while inside. I would do eight puzzles monthly.”

Tired of spending money on new puzzles and wanting to share her puzzle joy, she was inspired to begin a puzzle library exchange in August 2022. She found a free cabinet at Rerun Thrift Store on Fremont Street and installed the puzzle library on her porch. Visitors borrow and return her puzzles like they would books at a library, and sometimes leave their puzzles for others to try. Her puzzle library has at least two visitors each day, sometimes more. She encourages people to come as often as they can.

Kaidanov estimates she owns 100 puzzles. With so many puzzles, she is happy for people to take multiple puzzles, even if they don’t have one to give in

Visitors of all ages and puzzle abilities are welcome to come and look over the offerings. “I put in new puzzles almost daily.”

– Sonya Kaidanov

return. Although her sign says, “Puzzle Swap”, Kaidanov clarifies; “I want people to take more puzzles. Sometimes people look, don’t take anything, and it bums me out.”

Her passion is working with kids, so Kaidanov wants the puzzle library to cater to them. Easier puzzles for children occupy the right side of her cabinet while more complex puzzles are on the left. Visitors of all ages and puzzle abilities are welcome to come and look over the offerings. “I put in new puzzles almost daily.”

A few months ago, she was googling Portland puzzle meet-ups and made an amazing discovery: an official Portland Puzzle Exchange. The Portland, Oregon Jigsaw Puzzle Trading Cooperative started in 2006 and now meets



Concordia resident Sonya Kaidanov at the puzzle swap she built on her porch, photo by Michael Lang



Puzzles for trade, photo by Mark Giles

monthly to puzzle and trade on the first Saturday of the month from 11–1 at the Matt Dishman Community Center, 77 NE Knott St. More information about the Portland Puzzle Exchange can be found at portlandpuzzles.org.

About Sonya

Kaidanov is completing her Masters in School Counseling. “In my future office, I will have a puzzle out on my puzzle board for kids and then one for me to do on my lunch break.” When we get overwhelmed, she says, puzzles require a focus that can help reduce stress and anxiety. It’s a brain workout that is self-competitive, not competitive with others. Plus, it’s

fun. She appreciates the satisfaction and pride that comes from completing a challenge and “seeing what I can do alone.”

In addition to the puzzle library, Kaidanov has a TikTok account at @ThePuzzleAddict and an Instagram account @TheAddictedPuzzler, with hopes of getting free puzzles!

Kaidanov hails from Lexington, Kentucky, moved to Portland in 2013 and has lived in Concordia for five years. Her other hobbies include dogs, chess, piano, gardening and embroidery. She is a native Russian speaker and would love to meet neighbors to speak Russian with. You can visit her puzzle swap at 3031 NE Rosa Parks Way.



Kepper Petzing has lived in Concordia for 40 years, where, with their partner Lowen, they raised two children. They are nonbinary. They love community and are grateful for Concordia News.

Save The Date!

Concordia Neighborhood Annual Yard Sale

Saturday – Sunday, Sept. 16 – 17
8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

To learn how to register, contact Michelle Fitzgerald at Social@ConcordiaPDX.org



The Oregon Jigsaw Trading Cooperative meets monthly on first Saturdays at the Matt Dishman Community Center, photo by Mark Giles

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News from the NET

Planning a Firewise Landscape

By Micha Wolf
Contributing Writer

The summer months in the Pacific Northwest have become hotter and drier over the last few years, which has resulted in large wildfires. These fires have not only ravaged forests and mountain areas in the southern part of Oregon; they have moved dangerously close to urban spaces as well as the larger Portland Metro area. Because it does not take much to ignite a fire (a carelessly thrown match, a hot barbeque), it is all the more important to minimize fire danger by thinking ahead.

In order for your home to remain relatively safe from spreading fires, respect these home safety zones:

- 0-5 feet from home—NO plants
- 5-30 feet from home—grass mowed to 4” or lower, low-growing perennials
- Space trees 18 feet apart, pruned to 10 feet above ground
- Space mature plants 2 times their width apart

AVOID flammable plants or those that have:

- Dead or dry material within the plant (i.e. dry cedar core)
- Dead leaves or twigs
- Leaves that are aromatic
- Goopy sap (conifers, arborvitae)
- Papery bark (loose bark; like birches)

AVOID planting:

- Gorse
- Scotch Broom
- Italian Cypress (Leland)
- Arborvitae

Snow in Summer (Top) and Mock Orange (Bottom) are two attractive flowering plants that are deemed firesafe, photos by Home Stratosphere and Gardener’s Path.

Instead look for plants which:

- Defoliate in autumn
- Have broad leaves
- Have supple, moist leaves
- Have water-like sap

The following is a list of plants that are safe for hotter climates, easy to take care of and fire-resistant. These are only suggestions; please refer to your local garden center for a more extensive list.

Ground Cover:

- Snow in Summer
- Creeping Phlox
- Sedum

Ornamental:

- Pineleaf Penstemon
- Yarrow
- Sun Rose
- Daylily
- Yucca
- Daphne

Bushes / Trees:

- Mock Orange (very fragrant, long bloomer)
- Red Maple

Remember, even fire-resistant plants are *not* fireproof. Always maintain a well mowed lawn, water adequately and have a working fire extinguisher on hand. Also, follow burn guidelines and fire alerts published by the city. It takes all of us to keep our home and our neighbors safe.



Micha Wolf has retired from teaching primary school, loves being in nature and believes in building community through engagement.



Free video tutorial

For more information, watch this Oregon State video tutorial on firewise landscaping:
[Media.OregonState.edu/media/t/1_816qw1mf](https://media.oregonstate.edu/media/t/1_816qw1mf)



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Open positions on CNA Board

The Concordia Neighborhood Association Board of Directors has two vacant positions. Anyone interested must be a resident, property owner, business licensee, from an educational institution, from a governmental agency, or from a nonprofit organization located within the boundaries of the Concordia neighborhood (a map can be found on Page 2), and must be at least 14 years of age.



Nominations will be heard and a vote for each position will be held at the CNA Board Meeting on August 1, 2023 at 6 p.m. See Page 2 for ways to attend this meeting.

Powers and duties of board members can be found in the CNA bylaws, Article VII, Section F: ConcordiaPDX.org/about-cna/bylaws/

For more information or questions, please contact Astrid Furstner, Chair, at Chair@ConcordiaPDX.org or Brittany van der Salm, Vice-Chair at AL6@ConcordiaPDX.org.

Volunteers Care for Meek Campus Trees

By Jordana Leeb
Contributing Writer

The Concordia Tree Team

It was a blazing 90 degrees at 5 pm when I walked over to Meek campus (home to Alliance Alternative High School) to talk to Concordia Tree Team members about why they spend their free time caring for neighborhood trees. The Concordia Tree Team, established in 2010, prunes and waters trees in the neighborhood to keep them healthy.

Over the course of several hours that day, seven hardy volunteers had weeded, watered and mulched the diverse tree species making up the experimental arboretum. Portland Public Schools provided the hemlock mulch while the volunteers provided their own tools and wheelbarrow.

With the help of volunteers Jim Gersbach, Barbara Wharton, Rebecca Weatherby and others, the first trees were planted at Meek Campus in 2010 in partnership with Portland Parks and Recreation’s Learning Landscape

The Concordia Tree Team, established in 2010, prunes and waters trees in the neighborhood to keep them healthy

program, a program aimed at empowering students to plant trees at schools. The diverse tree species at Meek Campus include ginkgo, golden larch, Kentucky coffee and a wide variety of oaks. The trees now offer much needed shade for youth, families and dogs who access the park.

Meet the Volunteers

I first talked to Barbara Wharton, a member of the tree team for over 10 years, who describes the work they do as “part of the heart of the community.” She moved to Portland from New Jersey, where she was also involved in a tree team. The next person I talked to was Lise Gervais, who traveled from the Richmond neighborhood to help care for trees at Meek Campus. Like Barbara, she likes how active the Concordia Tree Team is compared to her neighborhood tree



Mallory Pratt and Rick Vetter work to help trees at Meek Campus. Photo by Jordana Leeb

team. Her answer about why she volunteers was simple, “I like to help trees out.”

In talking to Lise, I learned an important tree mulching tip: it’s better to create “donuts” around trees than “volcanoes.” Volcanoes are when mulch is piled near the tree trunk, which can lead to a rotting trunk. Donuts are an open space around the trunk which gives the trunk more room to breathe and move.

I also spoke with Rick Vetter, who has

been volunteering with the tree team for about 4 years. Within a month of moving to the neighborhood, he bumped into a member of the Concordia Tree Team while on a dog walk and she recruited him to join. Rick wants Portland to be green and likes the “little things you can do to make a difference.” He enjoys meeting people he wouldn’t otherwise meet while caring for trees.

Lastly, I talked to Mallory Pratt, who is the current team convener. Although she has only been involved with the Concordia Tree Team for a few years, she has been deeply invested in trees since 2010. She has volunteered with Friends of Trees, a nonprofit who plants trees in residential areas and she is a science teacher, leading lessons on forests and restoration. In addition to getting exercise from caring for neighborhood trees, she likes to see the fruits of her labor and “tangible outcomes involving other people.”

The Tree Team meets monthly and hosts street tree pruning events. Portland Parks and Recreation provides pruning permits, tools and safety vests. To learn more about the Concordia Tree Team, its work in the neighborhood and to get involved, check out the Concordia Tree Team website: AinsworthLinearArboretum.org/get-involved.



Jordana Leeb is a longtime Concordia resident who is passionate about the neighborhood, its people and trees. She lives with her partner and newly adopted special needs dog. You can see her recent film about Concordia at TinyURL.com/DiaryOfAStreet.



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Want to get involved locally?

Join us at the next Concordia Neighborhood Association Board Meeting on Tuesday, August 1, 6 p.m.

Attend in the McMenamins Kennedy School Community Room. To attend remotely, go to ConcordiaPDX.org/CNAMeetings.



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Alder Commons Merges with Portland Underground Grad School to Host Courses

Alder Commons, a nonprofit community center and event space located at 4212 NE Prescott Street, has joined forces with Portland Underground Graduate School (PUGS).

The relationship began in 2020 when the organizations partnered for an online workshop and realized their missions were aligned; both aimed at cultivating a community of independent learners.

“I personally had taken three PUGS courses between 2018–2020, so I was a huge fan of them already” says Rachel Munzig, Alder Commons Outreach Director and part of the team that launched Alder Commons in 2019.

In the fall of 2022, PUGS leaders Steph Routh and Lyndal Cairns approached Alder Commons to see if they’d be interested in carrying the PUGS torch. The two organizations worked together to figure out how best to do this and a contract was signed at the end of December.

According to Munzig, Alder Commons has since acquired PUGS’ physical assets including folding tables, chairs, whiteboards, a projector, its branding assets, digital course files, email mailing list, website, and social accounts. PUGS is now one of Alder Commons’ programs.

Before the merger, the majority of PUGS courses were held in person at different locations across Portland. During the pandemic, classes were held online over Zoom. Currently, PUGS



Alder Commons staff members Savannah Jackson, Brian Outlaw and Rachel Munzig in front of a 2021 mural painted by community members



Alder Commons community library and meeting space

offers a mixture of classes held in person at Alder Commons and online.

PUGS courses offer equitable pricing for all ages of learners. One upcoming course is *Nonprofit Board Fundamentals* (taught by PUGS steward Steph Routh), held every Monday night in August from 6 – 8 pm. More information about PUGS and its course offerings can be found at pugspdx.com.

In addition to PUGS courses, Alder Commons provides a variety of services to the community including cultural events, artist studios, a library, woodworking classes and the use of a commissary kitchen. Learn more about Alder Commons’ other programs and services at aldercommons.org.

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Concordia community events calendar

Tuesday, August 1st, 12 – 1:30 pm
SUMMER READING IN THE PARK
KENTON PARK
Location: 8417 N Brandon Ave.
Reading and prizes

Wednesday, August 2nd, 11 – 11:45 am
OUTDOOR SUMMER STORYTIME
ALBERTA PARK
Location: NE 19th Ave. and NE Jarrett St.
Live storytime with song, rhymes and more for toddlers

Wednesday, August 2nd at 5 pm
CLASS–SHOP 101: GENERAL SHOP SAFETY
ALDER COMMONS
Location: 3120 N Williams Ave.



Thursday, August 3rd, 5 – 8 pm
OPEN MIC NIGHT
ALBERTA ABBEY
Location: 126 NE Alberta St.

Friday, August 4th, at 4 pm
BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY MOVIE SCREENING
ALBERTA ABBEY
Location: 126 NE Alberta St.

Saturday, August 5th, 10 – 10:30 am, 10:45 – 11:15 am
FAMILY STORYTIME
KENTON LIBRARY
Location: 8226 N Denver Ave.

Saturday, August 5th at 6:30 pm
IRON PROPHECY
KENTON PARK
Location: 8417 N Brandon Ave.
Free reggae concert

Every Monday, August 7th – 28th, 6 – 8 pm
CLASS–NONPROFIT BOARD FUNDAMENTALS
ALDER COMMONS
Location: 4212 NE Prescott St.
Learn the basics of board service in this 4-week PUGS course.



Tuesday, August 8th, Time TBD
RACE TALKS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIALOGUE
MCMENAMINS KENNEDY SCHOOL GYM
Location: 5736 NE 33rd Ave.
Community forum on race with host Donna Maxey

Tuesday August 8th and 22nd, 4:30 – 6 pm
TWEEN COUNCIL
KENTON LIBRARY
Location: 8226 N Denver Ave.
Advise your librarian on books, movies, comics, programs, and events for you and your friends.

Wednesday, Aug. 9; 4:30 – 6 pm
COMMUNITY CONNECTION
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON LIBRARY & LEARNING CENTER
Location: 2800 NE Liberty St.
Updates about the building renovation schedules and academic programs

Wednesday, August 9th, 6 pm doors, 7 pm show
DRAG QUEEN BINGO WITH POISON WATERS, 21+
MCMENAMINS KENNEDY SCHOOL
Location: 5736 NE 33rd Ave.

Thursday, August 10th at 7:30 pm
DANCE UNITED
PENINSULA PARK
Location: 700 N Rosa Parks Way
Free world music festival and dance party

Saturday August 12th, 3 – 3:45 pm
CLOWNIN' AROUND WITH NIKKI BROWN
KENTON LIBRARY
Location: 8226 N Denver Ave.
Story time with activities for families

Saturday, August 12th, 8 – 11 pm
PROJECT WITH MERCURY TREE
ALBERTA ABBEY
Location: 126 NE Alberta St.
The ultimate progressive rock experience



Tuesday, August 15th, 6 pm doors, 7 pm show
OMSI SCIENCE PUB
MCMENAMINS KENNEDY SCHOOL THE-ATER
Location: 5736 NE 33rd Ave.
Science presentation with beer and food available

Thursday, August 17th, 3 – 4 pm
CARTOONING WITH MR. WOLF'S CLASS
KENTON LIBRARY
Location: 8226 N Denver Ave.
Cartooning and comic-creating class for middle schoolers led by award-winning cartoonist / author

Thursday, August 17th at 6:30 pm
JUJUBA
ALBERTA PARK
Location: NE 22nd and NE Killingsworth
Free danceable Afrobeat concert

Saturday, August 19th, 3 – 4:15 pm
ANIME YOUR WAY
Location: KENTON LIBRARY, 8226 N Denver Ave.
Step-by-step drawing instruction for teens led by former Simpsons artist

Sunday, August 20th at 7:30 pm
SOUL (DISNEY + PIXAR, 2020, PG)
OVERLOOK PARK
Location: N Fremont St. and Interstate Ave.
Free family movie in the park

Thursday, August 24th at 6:30 pm
MO PHILLIPS AND THE SPAGHETTI PANTS DANCE BAND
IRVING PARK
Location: NE 7th Ave. and NE Fremont St.
Free dance party



August 26th, 1 – 5 pm
THIRD ANNUAL ALDER COMMONS FESTIVAL
ALDER COMMONS
Location: 4212 NE Prescott St.
Local vendors, prizes, food carts and DJ supporting nonprofit

Thursday, August 31st, 5 – 9 pm
THIRD ANNUAL AFRICAN FASHION SHOW
ALBERTA ABBEY
Location: 126 NE Alberta St.
Fashion show and auction benefiting Firmina Foundation

Every Monday, 5:30 – 7 pm
DRUMMERS AWARENESS CLASS
NAYA FAMILY CENTER
Location: 5135 NE Colombia Blvd.
Drum with community and find your voice.

Every Monday at 7 pm
TRIVIA
THE WAYPOST
Location: 4212 NE Prescott St.
Weekly trivia night at intimate venue

Every Wednesday, 1 – 3 pm
FREE SWIM
GRANT OUTDOOR POOL
Location: 2300 NE 33rd Ave.

Every Wednesday at 7 pm
KARAOKE!
THE WAYPOST
Location: 4212 NE Prescott St.

Every Thursday, 10-2
BIPOC FOOD PANTRY DROP-IN
ALDER COMMONS
Location: 4212 NE Prescott St.
Free food for BIPOC community members

Every Thursday, 4 – 8 pm
CULLY FARMERS MARKET
Location: 5011 NE 42nd Ave.
Local food vendors and artisans

Every Friday, 12:30 – 2:30 pm
TECH HELP DROP-IN
KENTON LIBRARY MEETING ROOM
Location: 8226 N Denver Ave.
Free tech help for mobile devices, websites, getting started and more

Every Sunday, 10 am – 12 pm
LIVE MUSIC – VARIOUS ARTISTS
JUST BOB
Location: 2403 NE Alberta St.
Watch various live artists every Sunday at this café.



Every Sunday, 10 am – 2 pm
PORTLAND FARMERS MARKET–KING
KING PARK
Location: NE 7th and Wygant
30 farm vendors and food artisans, live music

Every Sunday at 7 pm
OPEN MIC
THE WAYPOST
Location: 4212 NE Prescott St.
Weekly open mic at intimate venue

Every Wednesday and Friday, 8 – 10 pm
OPEN GYM
NAYA FAMILY CENTER
Location: 5135 NE Colombia Blvd.

Monday–Friday, 11 am
NEIGHBORHOOD WALK
ALBERTA PARK
Location: 1905 NE Killingsworth St.
Join neighbors under the covered area for a daily walk.

Every Monday and Saturday, 10 am – 1 pm
COMMUNITY GARDEN VOLUNTEER DAY
NAYA FAMILY CENTER
Location: 5135 NE Colombia Blvd.
Volunteer at the NAYA Community garden.

Community calendar items

Priority is afforded to local events sponsored by—or which benefit—local nonprofit organizations. Submit information to CNewsEditor@ConcordiaPDX.org by the 10th of the month preceding the event.