

Laurelhurst Studio Set to Reopen

By SANDY MILLER

The City of Portland has announced plans for the reopening of the historic Laurelhurst Studio. This small but significant building, nestled in the heart of Portland Parks & Recreation's (PP&R) Laurelhurst Park, dates from the mid-1920s. The Tudor style, half-timbered and stucco structure was used for community activities including dance, drama and art classes for nearly a century before budget cuts forced its closure in 2019. Now a local group is partnering with the city to restore the building and bring it back into use.

Sellwood Community House (SCH), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is undertaking the project and will provide the programming. According to Ashley Murray, SCH's executive director, the City of Portland has offered the group the use of the studio building through a 10-year lease. No City funds (including zero tax dollars) will be required for the nonprofit to renovate, operate and maintain it.

Murray, who has led SCH for seven years and has a background both in public education and social work, envisions a multitude of activities rolling out by this September. Program-

ming will be driven by the results of community outreach, she explains, with a mix of physical activities like dance, tumbling and tai chi offered along with meeting space for local discussion groups, language lessons and arts and crafts classes. People of all ages will find tempting selections. The cost of activities will vary, with a mix of free, sliding scale and full price programs.

"The Laurelhurst Dance Studio partnership leverages Sellwood Community House's demonstrated success and trusted relationship to keep recreation affordable and accessible for families," says Kellie Torres, External Affairs & Partnerships Manager with PP&R. "It will revive a historic public asset, expand opportunities in arts and recreation and tap nonprofit resources to increase services at no additional cost to taxpayers."

Phase 1 of the building renovation process is almost complete, with interior floors redone and walls painted. In Phase 2 an ADA-compliant restroom will be added along with an HVAC system. The third phase will include a new roof and stucco repair at some future date.

Beginning this month some

drop-in activities will be offered, and a full slate will roll out as the 2026-27 school year begins. To learn the latest or to volunteer, sign up for SCH's online Laurelhurst Studio newsletter: sellwoodcommunityhouse.org/laurelhurst-studio.

Laurelhurst Park was opened in the early 1910s and is considered the jewel of the neighborhood. The 27-acre park's creation was championed by then city Parks Director Emanuel T. Mische, who persuaded the city to acquire several parcels of land based on the recommendations in a plan submitted by the firm of Frederick Law Olmsted. Mische had been a horticulturist for Olmsted, who designed Central Park in New York City and other urban parks along similar flowing and naturalistic lines.

The City of Portland purchased the land for Laurelhurst Park in 1909 for \$92,482 from the estate of William S. Ladd, the former Portland mayor who developed Ladd's Addition. The tract of land was part of a larger parcel Ladd used as a dairy farm.

Mische established seven distinct areas in the park: the concert grove, Firwood Lake, children's lawn, plateau and broad



Laurelhurst Studio sits ready to welcome the community back.
Photo by Sandy Miller.

meadows, picnic grove and Rhododendron Hill. Three-acre Firwood Lake was created from a spring-fed pond once used as a watering hole for cattle. A playground was established between SE Oak and Stark streets, with separate areas for boys and girls.

In 1915 electric lighting was added to a series of paths and sidewalks. The Pacific Coast Parks Association named Lau-

relhurst Park the "most beautiful park" on the West Coast in 1919.

Marked by a pond, winding paths, wildlife and many mature trees, Laurelhurst became the first park ever to receive National Historic Place designation in 2001. With the revival of Laurelhurst Studio, Portlanders and out-of-town visitors have yet another reason to frequent the historic park.

Reducing Screen Time During Summer Break Utilizing Lower the Ratio

By MEGAN ORTON

Summer vacation is here! It's the season of popsicles and sprinklers. However, the kids aren't in school, so it can also be the season when families have the hardest time managing screen time. Having to make so many technology decisions every day with very little guidance is often overwhelming. Here's a summer tech tip that can help parents make healthier choices when it comes to kids, screens and socializing. It's called Lower the Ratio and it's one of the strategies developed by Mindful Media (mindful-media.net) to manage screen time concerns.

The amount of in-person

hangout time has dropped 50 percent for kids and teens since 2000, because so much of their social life has been moved to a screen. It's easy to assume that this is "just how kids are today" and that on-screen socializing is no different than in-person hangouts. But the latest research shows that there are big developmental benefits to hanging out in person, and kids and teens are missing out on crucial growing experiences when they spend hours socializing on screens.

50 percent less time in-person means half as much practice reading body language, looking people in the eye and master-

ing the social skills necessary to thrive in relationships and careers. It also means 50 percent less of the positive mental health benefits that in-person friendships bring. With all the technology choices parents have to make today, we can make a healthier choice for kids if we Lower the Ratio between the number of kids versus the number of houses and screens.

Let's imagine the common scenario of our child or teen coming home from school and spending the afternoon and evening gaming with five friends on Discord. Here, we have six kids, six separate houses and six different

screens. Aside from the opportunity cost of fewer hours practicing social skills, socializing over a screen also wraps a child or teen in a perfect cocoon of ease and comfort for many hours a day.

It turns out that kids actually need a steady dose of small hardships, difficulties and awkwardnesses to develop resilience and the ability to manage in the world. Think back to being at a friend's house as a child or teen. It was lots and lots of fun and it required you to handle many small discomforts. You had to talk to your friend's parents, deal with annoying younger siblings

or intimidating older ones, cope with different pets, eat unfamiliar food and adjust to another family's rules and parenting styles. You also often had the challenge of getting yourself there on foot, bike or public transportation. It is exactly this kind of constant, low-level challenge that protects kids and teens against anxiety, and excessive screen time socializing can keep them from getting enough of it.

In this way, on-screen socializing is a lot like the empty calories of highly processed food:

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Neighborhood Notes

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Block Party Saturday, June 27 and Energy Saving Solutions for Aging Well event Thursday, July 16. The MTNA second annual neighborhood-wide yard sale will be either September 12/13 or 19/20.

Topics discussed at the meeting included coyote awareness and a possible recent attack on a pet dog. Jan Caplener proposed doing another project to clear vegetation from Mt. Tabor crater area. Paul Leistner reported on the success of the Mt. Tabor/Montavilla booth at the Archeology Roadshow May 30. New MTNA Board member John Mertens shared how kids and families on his street are using new "tin-can phones" and walkie talkies to connect with each other and keep kids safe. (bit.ly/4fWQEmi). Leistner provided an update on the rapidly evolving changes to Civic Life and Portland's community and neighborhood engagement system. MTNA Board members Brad Yazzolino and Alex Roy shared the new MTNA flyer they developed to help the community find out about the MTNA and get involved; Caplener offered to print color copies of the flyer. Roy provided updates on the proposed cell tower at E Burnside St. and SE 52nd Ave., the proposed Dairy Queen redevelopment at SE 55th Ave. and Division St. and the proposed redevelopment of the Mt. Tabor Realty property at SE Belmont St. and 69th Ave. Rob Galankis reported on advice he gave to neighbors on SE Yamhill St. on how to deal with parked cars blocking the street during big events. Leistner reported on the MTNA's receipt of an AARP Community Challenge Grant for a neighborhood project on innovative housing options for older adults. Kay Hall reported on the "Tabor for All" accessibility project for Mt. Tabor. Nikki Mandell updated the group on efforts to advocate for greater safety at the Critical Energy Infrastructure (CEI) Hub fuel tanks along the Willamette River. Bing Wong reported on the Friends of Mt. Tabor Park, including the expected completion of the picnic shelter reconstruction by August.

MTNA Board members elected officers: Paul Leistner (president), Nadine Fiedler (secretary), Bing Wong (treasurer) and Pastor Drew Hogan (SE Uplift Delegate). Board members reviewed the new MTNA policy on political candidates coming to MTNA meetings and discussed idea for guidance on how to handle ballot measures presentation requests.

Want to make your mark on Mt. Tabor? Join us at our next meeting Wednesday, July 8. The MTNA meets every second Wednesday of the month at 7 pm, online via Zoom and in person at Taborspace, SE 55th Ave. and Belmont St. You can register to participate in the July 8 meeting via Zoom, sign up for the MTNA email list and get more info on our website, mttaborpxd.org. You can contact the MTNA at contact.mtna@gmail.com.

Richmond Neighborhood Association By Allen Field

The Richmond Neighborhood Association (RNA) Board met June 8 at Central Christian Church, 1844 SE 39th Ave. Meetings are the second Monday of the month, 7-9 pm, except January. Everyone is welcome in person or via Zoom. The Zoom registration link is at richmondpxd.org and on every agenda, which is sent to the RNA listserv. Meetings are recorded and posted on the RNA's website, richmondpxd.org. To join the listserv, email richmondnassecretary@gmail.com.

The annual RNA Board election took place over two nights, June 8 and 9, 6-8 pm. There were nine candidates for eight seats. At the beginning of the June 8 RNA meeting, seven candidates gave short statements and one absent candidate had their written statement read by the Chair. Elected to the Board were: Kate Connolly, Callie Cooper, Fran Davison. Allen Field, Jascha Lee, Sheryl Lee, Adam Meltzer and Eric Swehla.

Roger Geller, Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), presented on PBOT's Neighborhood Greenway Bike Bus Project, focusing on the District 3 portion of the project than centers on Bike Bus safety issues along the Harrison/Lincoln and Clinton Greenways. The project website is portland.gov/transportation/planning/neighborhood-greenway-bike-bus-project. PBOT's Survey on the Abenethy safety issues and treatment options closes June 28. The next issue of the Richmond News newsletter will include an article on the Bike Bus Project.

The RNA is continuing its new tradition of holding its August meeting in Sewallcrest Park with an Ice Cream Social, at the picnic table in SE corner of the park Monday, August 10, 7-8:30 pm. We will invite Neighborhood Response Team (NRT) Police Officers, District 3 Councilors and the Mayor/Mayor's Office. Enjoy ice cream and meet the Board, your neighbors and local officials and officers.

The RNA needs volunteers to deliver its quarterly Richmond newsletter. If you don't receive it, the route you live on lacks a carrier. Contact manewsletter@gmail.com to help with deliveries.

The next meeting is July 13. Join us to get more involved in your neighborhood.

South Tabor Neighborhood Association By Cathy Kudlick

We hope y'all are enjoying summer! Join us Thursday, July 16 (like every month, the third Thursday) at 7 pm, location TBA. Visit southtabor.org to learn more and to sign up for our low-traffic mailing list. And while there, be sure to check out our quarterly newsletter, The South Tabor Crow, for profiles of local businesses and nifty neighbors.

Sunnyside Neighborhood Association By Chris Waldmann

The Sunnyside Neighborhood Association welcomed its newest Board member, Ophelia Schechter, at our annual meeting in May. Schechter is not only a new SNA Board member, she is also the new leader of the Sunnyside NET Team! Since the retirement of our previous NET members (NET stands for Neighborhood Emergency Team), it'll be great to have Schechter help educate the public and keep the neighborhood safe. We also welcome back re-elected Board members Lindsay Cogan-Sant, Dresden De Vera, Tim Quayle and Chris Waldmann.

Land Use and Transportation issues have been front and center for many in the neighborhood. A new 150+ unit apartment building on the vacant lot at 4511 SE Hawthorne is in the early proposal stage. Neighbors are worried about the density, loss of light and the overall design impact to the community. A community-led conversation has also begun about the long-vacant Laurelhurst Village building at SE 30th Ave. and SE Stark St. This eyesore has sat empty for nearly 30 years and is a source of fire danger.

On the transportation side, neighbors on SE Stark St. have successfully lobbied PBOT to install a marked crossing at SE 43rd Ave. However traffic speeds continue to be a problem. The SNA is engaging with PBOT to further study the issue and arrive at solutions that serve community safety. Similar conversations are being had about the speed cushions that were installed on SE 30th Ave. between Belmont and Hawthorne streets—cushions that seem ineffective at mitigating vehicular speeds.

The Sunnyside NA does not have any Board or General meetings in July. Our next Board meeting will be Wednesday, August 12, 7 pm at SE Uplift, 3534 SE Main St. and online at tinyurl.com/sna-zoom. Our next Land Use & Transportation meeting will be Wednesday, July 15 at SE Uplift and online at tinyurl.com/sna-lute-zoom.

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it's missing lots of necessary and important nutrients but still fills you up, leaving no appetite for more "nutritious" socializing.

An example to Lower The Ratio is to imagine the scenario of our child or teen inviting five fellow gamers to the house for a big gaming session in the living room instead. There are still six kids and six screens but only one house. Now the kids are gaming and practicing their social skills.

Want to go one step healthier? Let's Lower The Ratio even further. What if these six kids decide to watch a movie instead? Now we've got six kids, one house and only one screen. For kids and teens, movies and TV shows are much healthier screen choices than YouTube, gaming or social media. This is because in 2007, the tech companies started hiring behavioral scientists, neuroscientists and psychologists to help make screen technology as irresistible as possible.

Since 2007, much of the tech our kids and teens are using has the same behaviorally addictive elements that casinos use in their slot machines. A few examples of this "behavior design" are

Snapstreaks in Snapchat, which drive engagement through fear of breaking the streak and the "infinite scroll" of Instagram and TikTok, which removes any stopping cues. Games like Fortnite, Roblox and Minecraft use "urgency triggers" like artificial resource scarcity to reward habitual play and make players feel like they're missing out if they don't engage constantly.

It's not possible to add this kind of addictive design to movies and TV shows, and they also have the benefit of coming to an end. When the movie ends and the kids are in the living room talking and eating snacks, you've now got six kids, one house and zero screens, which is the healthiest option of all!

You can also Lower The Ratio in your house with your family by lowering the ratio between the number of people, versus the number of rooms and screens. For instance, a shared family movie night where you all watch together in one room with one screen, is a much healthier version of screen time than each family member in a different room on a separate screen.

SE Portland City Councilors Pledge Funding for Frequently Broken Bob Stacey Elevators

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simply installing bulletproof glass will be sufficient, as vandalism has not been the only problem plaguing the elevators. Another has been drug use, with many commuters reporting seeing open drug use in the elevators. A Winterhaven parent and bike bus participant says she has frequently seen "feces and drug paraphernalia" in the elevators.

Lund believes that while the elevators "could benefit from funding," said funding "must provide for ongoing and regular maintenance and safety patrols, especially at peak hours in the morning and in the afternoon when students and families are more apt to be using them." To ensure the elevators can remain

open, the most important thing to fund is maintenance, "at least twice daily at peak hours and regular security patrols," as well as an alert button or phone number to inform the city or maintenance staff of any issues necessitating immediate attention. He believes these solutions could prevent issues from "snowballing into something far more challenging such as elevator disrepair."

"City staff, especially those with decision-making influence, are welcome to join our bike bus on a trip to school to better understand the issues and challenges present near the elevators," adds Lund.

PBOT estimates the new glass will be installed by this fall.

