

READER REPLY

Letters can be sent to
allan@nwexaminer.com or 2825 NW Upshur St., Ste. C, Portland, OR 97210.
Letters should be 300 words or fewer; include a name and a street of residence.
Deadline third Saturday of the month.

Freeway capping possible

I was pleased to see the editorial on the I-405 Freeway ["I-405 created permanent scar"] in the April Examiner. In case you haven't seen it, here's a link to a website I created showing a freeway cap project in Columbus, Ohio, that might serve as a model for Portland: <http://sites.google.com/site/freewaycaps/>

Dan Friedman
SW Park Ave.

City defends decisions

In response to your May 2010 article titled "City lets Pearl developer slip between tracks," I thought you would appreciate some additional information as follow-up.

First and foremost, all of the interior work associated with the permit in question was for life/safety, seismic and ADA upgrades. All of these areas of work are exempt from the valuation threshold trigger for right-of-way improvements. As such, only the \$80,000 (11 percent of total of assessed value) invested in exterior alterations (work reviewed through design review) would apply towards the 35 percent trigger of this site's total assessed value, not the entire permit value of \$256,000 as noted in your article.

In other words, street improvements would not have been triggered by the interior life/safety, seismic and ADA upgrades regardless of the job valuation of such work because it is work that is exempt. And, since the valuation of the storefront improvement project (\$80,000) is only 11 percent of the site's assessed value, it also did not trigger the right-of-way improvements.

Your article states that PBOT and BDS have been pointing fingers back and forth. This was stated out of context and sequence. Both Kurt Krueger and Tim Heron were working together on this issue when the neighborhood (Ann Niles) raised the issue. Your individual contact with them was amidst our two bureaus' collaborative efforts to figure out what the issue was and what, if anything, went awry. Your "pointing fingers of blame" is misleading of our two bureaus' coordination efforts and is not an accurate portrayal of events.

Lastly, the Diamond project came in last summer for design review (August 2009 decision) as a PDC storefront remodel improvement project valued at \$80,000. This was not a low-ball figure. It was the cost of the exterior alterations portion of the project, which, at the Land Use Review stage, did not include the additional interior upgrades.

Thank you for your efforts in exploring this issue of importance to the neighborhood.

Susan McKinney
Section Manager, Design/Historic Design Team
Portland Bureau of Development Services

Editor's note: See story on Page 11.



Editor's Turn

By Allan Classen
Editor & Publisher

When the saints go riding on

I used to have trouble understanding the often-maniac behavior of Portland bicyclists, but lately my eyes have been opened. Bikes here are not merely a mode of transportation; they're a religion.

I should have picked up the clue three years ago when they began an annual Blessing of the Bikes ceremony at St. Mary's Cathedral. I thought it was cute, so I ran a picture in the paper. I may have badly underestimated the situation. All I can say is, from about that time onward, the Portland Church of the All Mighty Bicycle has been gaining adherents at every turn, and I don't think they're all Catholics.

The converts love to ride bikes down steep mountain trails at high speed on Sunday mornings. Forest Park, it seems, is something like their church. They come out all black and muddy but smiling nevertheless. It's almost as if they've just been baptized.

It makes sense that, if the park is sacred ground, they would want to liberate it for the work of their lord. That's why they plot and congregate in great numbers in hopes that one fine day they can ride all over the park on paths paved with mud.

They are willing to sacrifice for their cause. Last year, one of the faithful offered \$500 if 100 cyclists would join the Forest Park Conservancy, the organization trying to preserve the park and the wildlife in it for secular purposes. The plan was apparently to get so many bike advocates on the organization's rolls that they could turn its policies toward their righteous mission.

I know members of the Portland Bicycle Church thought this was pretty clever and nothing to be ashamed of, but true believers have a way of being insensitive to the complaints of the unconverted. If, however, members of the Forest Park Conservancy had launched a campaign to take over the leadership of their church, they would figure out in a minute that it wasn't kosher.

Religious zealots sometimes say things that make no sense to the nonbelievers. Some have argued that the number of

bicyclists using the park would multiply if more trails and facilities were built for them, as if all would see that as an unalloyed blessing. They have equated more bicycle commuters with fewer cars on our streets, less petroleum consumption and fewer greenhouse gases. Amen to that, but in their evangelistic fervor, they assume that more bike riding anywhere—even in a fragile, over-used wilderness park—is a benefit to all. When you're holier than thou, you assume your excrement doesn't stink, I guess.

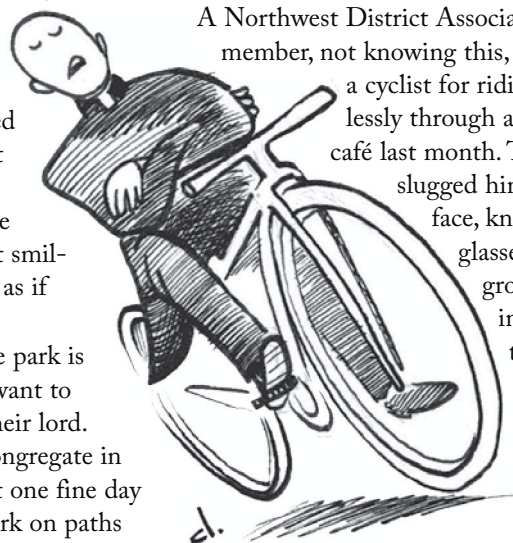
Bicycle zealots adhere to a higher law than mere ordinances of the city or state. A Northwest District Association board member, not knowing this, questioned

a cyclist for riding recklessly through a sidewalk café last month. The rider slugged him in the face, knocking his glasses to the ground. Nothing is owed the infidel.

Ever notice how religionists place enormous

importance on slight differences in doctrine? The current target of their rage is people who deign to ride bicycles boosted by electric motors. Would be better for these people to have millstones tied around their necks and be cast into the sea (or perhaps to be driving Hummers) than to be corrupted by electric power. They're called cheaters and are scorned for riding in bike lanes. They are not true believers in the one and only, true, holy, sanctified church of the bicycle, and they must be shunned.

If you've ever been flipped off, sworn at or physically attacked by a bicyclist who didn't like the way you drive or walk on the sidewalk, keep in mind that these are not ordinary people. They live on another plane. They believe that danger, disdain and ridicule may follow them all their days on the earth, but one day they will sit in glory at the right handlebar of God.



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EDITOR/PUBLISHER ALLAN CLASSEN

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allan@nwexaminer.com • mikeryerson@comcast.net • www.nwexaminer.com

