

PortlandExtra

**PORTLAND
FORECAST**
Thursday
temperatures



Mike Sublett, president of the Sylvan-Highland Neighborhood Association, posts one of many signs in Washington Park Wednesday urging park users to be alert after attacks on two women joggers within 10 days. ROGER JENSEN/THE OREGONIAN

Park neighbors tell users to be cautious

After two attacks this month in Washington Park, nearby residents post signs to keep "this gem, this jewel"

By **MAXINE BERNSTEIN**
THE OREGONIAN

Dressed in running tights and a windbreaker with a bright-red whistle hanging from the zipper, Mike Sublett headed out the door at dawn Wednesday on a mission.

Under a steady drizzle, Sublett posted fluorescent signs throughout Washington Park and the Hoyt Arboretum to alert walkers, runners and motorists of two attacks against women in the past 10 days.

"Somebody is trying to steal this gem, this jewel," Sublett said, motioning to the landscaped, tree-lined trails surrounding him. "And we can't just let that happen."

Sublett, past president of the Sylvan-Highlands Neighborhood Association, and Preston Wong, a crime prevention specialist, were among those Wednesday who worked to inform residents and park users to take precautions in the wake of the two attacks.

On Jan. 15, a woman in her late 30s was raped by a man with a

knife as she walked home shortly after 10 p.m. on Southwest Knights Boulevard, between Fairview Boulevard and Kingston Drive. On Tuesday, a 32-year-old woman jogging about 2:30 p.m. on the Wildwood Trail was approached by a man who grabbed her from behind and covered her mouth before she ran off.

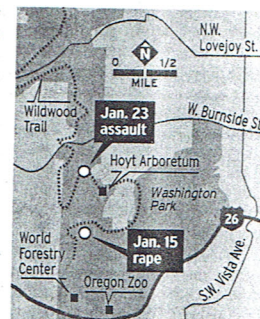
Detective Sgt. Jess Smith of the Portland Police Bureau said the attacks are not related, based on different descriptions of the suspects. But two attacks in such a short time have heightened concerns.

Neighborhood residents who regularly walk their dogs, jog or use the park as a shortcut to get home said they want people to be aware of what happened and safeguard themselves, yet still enjoy the park's beauty and trails.

"We've got to keep people in this park and keep our eyes open," Dave Hawley said as he walked his dog Wednesday morning. "Obviously this causes some worry. But if people quit coming here, we'll all lose out."

Releasing information

Sublett began posting copies of a news story about the rape in the park during the weekend, then returned with his own "Exercise Ex-



MICHAEL GUILLEN/THE OREGONIAN

ercise Caution" signs after the second attack. Sublett said some members of his association raised concerns about why police did not release information on the rape until three days afterward.

"A lot of people share more than a curiosity as to the lag. That's an issue," Sublett said. "People need the information. That's an important part of community policing. We're trying to get the information out, both to prevent another attack and possibly apprehend the perpetrators."

Police said detectives needed to review and evaluate the information before releasing anything.

Jeff Bolv, vice president of the

Arlington Heights Neighborhood Association, said he will push for better lighting in the park, a police mounted patrol presence and parking near the MAX light-rail stop at the Oregon Zoo to enable area residents to drive instead of walk home late at night.

Wong, a retired Portland officer, is working with the neighborhoods to set up a meeting to educate residents and park users about the risks they face and precautions they can take. No date has been set.

"People should be aware of their surroundings, walk in pairs and stay on well-traveled roads," Wong said.

Sally Kneuen of the Sylvan-Highlands Neighborhood Association said she has decided not to walk her dog at night alone.

"Just because we haven't experienced a high amount of crime here, it's important for us to look out for each other," she said. "We need to stay informed and be cautious."

Anyone with information on the assaults should contact Portland police detectives at 503-823-0400.

You can reach Maxine Bernstein at 221-8212 or by e-mail at bernstein@news.oregonian.com

The Oregonian

MAN HELD IN JANUARY RAPE NEAR CITY PARK

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MAXINE BERNSTEIN - The Oregonian

A former Portland parks maintenance man has been arrested and accused of rape in a mid-January attack on a woman who was dragged off a road while walking near Washington Park.

David George Alden, 44, faces charges of first-degree rape, first-degree kidnapping, menacing, second-degree criminal mischief and possession of child pornography.

He was arrested Saturday, arraigned Monday and is being held in the Multnomah County Detention Center on \$510,000 bail.

A break in the case came after a description of the suspect was circulated in news reports, and Portland Parks Bureau employees reported to police that the description closely matched that of a former employee. The victim later identified Alden from a police photo lineup.

Alden worked as a seasonal Parks Bureau employee in the city's West and North districts for about 14 years, but has not worked for the city since 1991, said Mark Warrington, Parks Bureau public safety manager. The city did not rehire him because of "spotty performance," Warrington said.

The rape occurred the night of Jan. 15. Alden is accused of confronting a 39-year-old woman who was walking home about 10 p.m. from the westbound MAX train. She told police a man grabbed her as she walked along Southwest Knight Boulevard, between Fairview Boulevard and Kingston Drive, and thrust a knife to her neck.

Alden is accused of dragging her across the road and down an embankment while holding a knife to her throat and threatening to kill her. On a gravel trail, he raped her as she screamed and yelled for help, police affidavits said. The victim told police that her attacker wore a condom and put it in a black fanny pack afterward. Immediately after the sexual assault, the man ran down the hill and disappeared.

The victim called police from a cell phone and described the suspect in detail and the knife he threatened her with.

Once police released information on the assault three days later, numerous tips poured into the detective division, including tips from two Parks Bureau employees, a police affidavit said.

Detective Sgt. Jess Smith, of the bureau's sexual assault division, followed up. Smith learned that nine days before the rape, police temporarily detained Alden on a traffic stop in the area where the assault occurred. Police used that traffic stop as a premise to arrange a Jan. 20 meeting with Alden, according to the affidavit.

During that interview, Alden told officers he had worked for the Parks Bureau, specifically at Washington Park, and "knew the park like the back of his hand."

On Saturday, after months of investigation, police obtained a warrant to search Alden's residence in the 3300 block of North Farragut Street, and arrested him about 5 p.m., Smith said. In his room, police found and confiscated child pornography, Smith said.

Police said this case is not related to a Jan. 23 attack on a 32-year-old woman who, while jogging about 2:30 p.m. on the Wildwood Trail, was approached by a man who grabbed her from behind and covered her mouth before she ran off. That case remains under investigation.

After the assaults, Mike Sublett, past president of the Sylvan-Highlands Neighborhood Association, walked through Washington Park and posted cautionary signs to inform other residents and park users. Sublett said of Alden's arrest, "It's very good news. I think there's been a heightened presence of police in and around the park since this occurred. At this point, there's a sense of relief, and hope that this brings some healing to the victim."