

# 'Like a giant bulldozer'

THURSDAY

OCTOBER 9, 2008

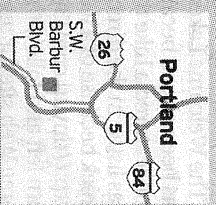


BRENT WOJAHN/THE OREGONIAN

From the air, it's easy to see the path a Southwest Portland home took when it slipped about 100 yards down a hill Wednesday near Southwest Terwilliger Boulevard. No one was injured in the predawn landslide.

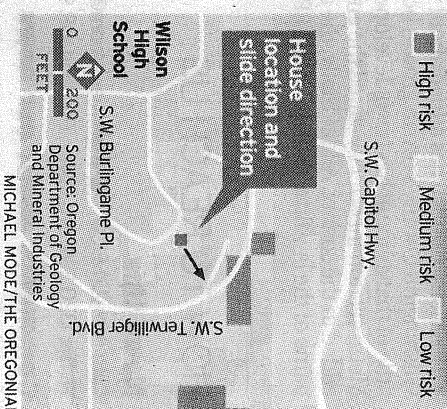
## West Hills slide

Geologists say this area is prone to landslides because of unstable soil.



### Landslide hazard

High risk Medium risk Low risk



**House slide** | Neighbors use a ladder to pull the owner to safety as her home falls apart around her

By **JOSEPH ROSE, NOELLE CROMBIE**  
and **MICHAEL ROLLINS**

THE OREGONIAN

A sound like garbage cans scrapping across the street rattled Greg Sherwood from his sleep Wednesday morning.

The noise quickly became louder and more ominous, like wood snapping and concrete cracking apart.

Out the window of his home on Southwest Burlingame Place, Sherwood saw the house across the street slowly drop from the horizon. It was going down like an elevator, he thought.

In a blur, Sherwood and his wife, Debbie, raced into the predawn chill to see Kathy Hendrickson sliding down the hill, her house falling apart around her. She was frantic, riding a slab of debris, looking for a patch of earth that wasn't moving.

Next door, Sam Silverberg ran from his house and grabbed an aluminum ladder. Together, Silverberg and the Sherwoods were on their bellies, trying to extend the ladder to a still-sliding Hendrickson.

"Grab the ladder, Kathy!" Greg Sherwood shouted.

The 5:40 a.m. landslide sent the Southwest Portland home about 100 yards down a 45-degree embankment. Please see **LANDSLIDE**, Page A9

### Inside

To find the cause of Wednesday's slide, geologists say, just follow the water | **A9**

To see a video and a slide show and to hear the 9-1-1 emergency calls from the scene of Wednesday



morning's landslide, go to [oregonlive.com/portland](http://oregonlive.com/portland).

# Landslide: Moving home hit two others on way down

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Down the slope, along Southwest Terwilliger Boulevard, the sliding house — built in 1930 at 6438 S.W. Burlingame Place — hit two other homes, moving one off its foundation and bending it in the middle.

Lt. Rich Tyler, a Portland Fire Bureau spokesman, said the stretch of Southwest Burlingame where the house was situated is "now in question."

Officials flagged six houses in the area as uninhabitable and indefinitely closed sections of Terwilliger Boulevard and Burlingame Place.

Hendrickson, who declined to be interviewed, was home alone. When the house started to creak and shake, she called her husband, who was in Phoenix, Ariz., and he told her to get out, according to neighbors who talked to her afterward.

Neighbors said Hendrickson, 50, initially couldn't open the front door, but she eventually got it to budge as everything buckled around her.

As the sliding house collapsed into hundreds of pieces, Silverberg's wife, Anne Johnston, called 9-1-1 and told the dispatcher that her neighbor's house had just fallen down the hill.

"Your neighbor's house fell down the hill?" the emergency dispatcher replied in disbelief.



A landslide destroyed a Southwest Portland home and heavily damaged others around it. As the home slipped down the hill, neighbors called 9-1-1. "Your neighbor's house fell down the hill?" a dispatcher asked one neighbor in disbelief.

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THE OREGONIAN

to repeatedly shout "come this way" to Hendrickson.

Johnston then told the dispatcher that she needed to put down the phone to help. She yelled, "Sam, get the ladder!" The line stayed open.

Reaching for the ladder as the silty soil continued moving under her, Hendrickson grabbed the bottom rung. On the 9-1-1 call, she can be heard sobbing after the trio hauled her up the hill to safety.

versity, awoke to what he thought was the sound of rain. It was actually the first smattering of dirt to give way above.

"But then it started to sound like a cracking fire," Chou said.

Chou peered out of the window and initially thought the Hendricksons' house was on fire because sparks were flying as the structure hit power lines. He shouted for his son Ben, 26, to call 9-1-1.

Ben Chou, though, realized what was happening. He told his parents to get out.

Next door, Rachael Hemphill

house to see if somebody was out in the front," Hemphill said. "And my husband goes to the back and yells, 'Get the kids out, get the kids out. The house is sliding. There's a landslide.'"

The couple called 9-1-1, fearing for whom ever was in the sliding house.

Shan Hemphill said the scene was surreal as he looked out a bathroom window at the rear of the home.

"It was creepy to ... see a house creeping towards you from uphill," he said. "I never dreamed it would come down

Chou's home was knocked off its foundation. From the street, Yuan Chou watched rolling gravel turn into a wall of dirt and cartwheeling trees. He noticed a neighbor backing his car out of a garage.

Chou thought about the expensive Honda that he had just bought. He told his son that there was still time to get the car. But as he started to run toward the garage, Ben Chou grabbed his father and held him back.

"No," Ben Chou said, "there is no time to be concerned about the car. It is a small thing."

Silverberg-Johnston house were among four residences red-tagged, meaning that they are unsafe to enter.

Hours after the landslide, Yuan Chou clutched two small shoulder bags as he watched an American Red Cross worker pour a hot drink for his wife,司徒.

She still wore her pajamas. He paced, trying not to tear up.

"We have been living there 20 years," he said, looking at the broken brown house with the square picture window. "That house up there was big, like a mansion. But I never worried

Downslope, in the 6300 block