

**NEWSBRIEFS**

**Man turns life around thanks to the advice of passersby**

A Portland man who spent seven months sleeping under a bridge says his life was finally turned around by strangers who criticized his personal choices.

Andy Whitman, 37, says he used to buy himself a cup of Starbucks coffee every few weeks as a treat to keep his spirits up. But that raised the alarm with passersby downtown, who began to question whether Whitman could actually be poor.

"People kept sneering at me and saying that because I could afford a cup of Starbucks coffee once in a while, I must not really be homeless," said Whitman, who landed on the streets last year after he was laid off from his manufacturing job and could no longer afford his monthly rent.

Two weeks ago, Whitman said, he realized that the skeptics were right.

"The next time I'd scraped together \$3, instead of buying coffee, I used it for a security deposit on a new apartment," Whitman recalled. "Turns out there are a ton of places in the \$3 range right here in the middle of town. I guess I just hadn't been looking hard enough."

"If only I'd started foregoing good coffee two weeks ago," he added with a sigh. "I could have had my own condo by now."

**Social-service workers start self-help group at local hot spot**

Social-service workers who deal with alcohol- and drug-dependent people living on the streets have started a self-help group at a local bar.

Gathering once a month at a local pub, a handful of social-service workers get trashed as they discuss how important they are for homeless people.

"I personally feel like we are reaching these people," says Jeffrey, sipping on a Hefeweizen. "I feel the need to really be engaged in creating a revolution from within the system. I'm dedicated to making a change in our clients' lives."

"I think you do an amazing job," Allison tells Jeffrey. "Working day in and day out with some of these people. It just takes time. They didn't have the opportunities we had growing up. We're so lucky."

After more than three hours of discussion about the educational development of individuals with a history of alcoholism, Ken, who works at a local shelter, boastfully announces to the group that he's drunk and is going to bike to his friend's party across town if anyone wants to come.

The self-help group meets once a week on Fridays at 6-8 p.m. at the local Portland Pub at 136 NW Caesar Chavez Blvd. located downtown.

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 CAN SAM  
 STAFF  
 PSYCHIC**



It's only your future,  
 for what it's worth.

**City Council spinning over new chairs**

*Acquisition dominates discussion in packed City Hall chambers*

**BY RUSTY BEARINGS**  
 UNEMPLOYED WRITER

Portland City Council officials were forced to postpone several pressing agenda items this week after their habitual praising of their own accomplishments ran even longer than usual.

When their April 1 meeting convened, council members unveiled their new set of swivel chairs, which they will sit in to deliberate city policy and hear testimony from the public. Commissioner Nick Fish spearheaded the acquisition of new furniture after a wheel broke loose from his previous chair, leaving it with a lean and prompting concern about the safety of all the council seats.

The commissioners often take time to acknowledge the work of their colleagues when a policy passes or a project kicks off, but they seemed especially pleased about this project.

"This morning has literally been hours – or even days – in the making," Fish said as he sank into his plush new seat. "But I think I can speak for the rest of council when I say that it's been a real labor of love. Before we continue, I want to make sure we recognize the people who spent significant amounts of time and energy making this happen."

"First," Fish went on, "I want to recognize Roger Stillman of the Office Depot furniture department, without whom this really would not have been possible. It has truly been an honor to work with Roger, who was kind enough to walk me through the office chair aisle and offer his opinions and support."

"I'd also like to thank, from the bottom of my heart, chief of maintenance Edgar Delgado, who had to unpackage the chairs and screw all of the pieces together. And boy, you practically need a whole new committee to read those instructions," Fish added with a chuckle. (The Furniture Assembly and Regulation Team appointed by former Mayor Tom Potter was cut in 2007 for lack of funding.)

Fish then presented Stillman and Delgado, who were in the audience, with the city's first-ever "Spirit of Furniture" awards.

"I'd like to pause for a moment," declared Commissioner Randy Leonard, swiveling his chair toward Fish and steepling his fingers under his chin, "to recognize what a great orator Commissioner Fish has become. It has truly been a pleasure to watch."

Leonard then launched into a lengthy meditation on the history of distinguished rhetoric. "Not since Frank Lloyd Wright,

however, has a speech about furniture stirred me so profoundly," he concluded.

The packed council chamber erupted in applause. As the cheers died down, Commissioner Amanda Fritz reached down to adjust her own new chair's pneumatic column to a more fitting height.

"Nick, I commend your initiative in bringing the issue of unstable furniture to our attention," Fritz said. "I also note that the up-and-down mechanism on these new chairs glides smoothly and without inordinate noise, meaning the business of council will not be interrupted if we need to adjust our posture. You really have done your due diligence on this one."

Commissioner Dan Saltzman, known as the council's stalwart realist, surprised his fellow council members by speaking out against the new chairs.

"While I certainly recognize the importance of council furniture in general, and seating in particular, I find that I cannot in good conscience support these chairs," Saltzman said. "Having taken into account the chairs' sensible price, comfortable back support and – I'll admit – superior rolliness,

I still find that the embroidery pattern on these seats is too ugly to make them a wise choice for the city at this time."

Fish assured Fritz that although they disagreed on the issue of chair style, he was sincerely grateful for her dissenting opinion and her commitment to high standards of interior design.

"The input of all my colleagues in this process has been invaluable to me," Fish said, boosting his chair to its full height for greater effect. "I'm enormously proud of all the work we have done, the changes we have made, and the fact that we all showed up to work today to test these things out. In fact, I'm reminded of the words of Barack Obama, whom I always find inspiring."

Fish began to quote the president but was interrupted by the council clerk, who announced that the council session had run out of time. The remaining agenda items, including an emergency ordinance regulating sewage overflow, were deferred to the next week's meeting.

Mayor Sam Adams was not available for comment.



A swivel chair

**RESIDER, from page 1**

of Portland and said, pointing south, "That's where I want to live someday: The City of Roses. Make those Rose Bushes." And then he chuckled.

In conjunction with the library is the George W. Bush Policy Institute (It had been proposed as "The Freedom Institute," but that name was scrapped because people associated the word "freedom" with freedom.) A spokesman for the project has said the institute will highlight Bush's policies, including his principles for creating a thriving economy and world peace. It will also include lots and lots of horrific pictures from Sept. 11, 2001. Special focus areas might also include the

**"Fool me once, shame on – shame on you. Fool me – you can't get fooled again."**

— GEORGE W. BUSH

administration's landmark positions on torture, extraordinary rendition, warrantless wiretapping on Americans and the war in Iraq, which began six years ago and continues today.

White said she expects the Bush's to make a final decision in the coming month.

**Because kittens need love too**

