

## YOUR BRIEFS

### TriMet, union grumble over retirement benefits

TriMet is crossing its axels in the hope that a proposal to put some limits on its union's benefit plan for retirees will save a few dollars toward public fares.

TriMet is proposing to cut the transportation union's so-called "jet-ski" provision that guarantees the recreational vehicle to all retired TriMet union members who can claim a connection to property within 50 miles of a traversable waterway. TriMet estimates the adjustment to the union contract could save the public transit company \$7 million over the next two years.

Union leadership has said TriMet can save the money elsewhere, and that the contract should be preserved so they can jet-ski on the weekends.

Advocates weighed in on the "jet-ski" provision, saying consumers would pay the price. No one from either side listened, or cared.

Both TriMet and the union refused to comment on this story. It's thought that both sides would comment soon, but for now, they were both out to lunch.

### Housing, homeless advocates point fingers, shoot selves in foot

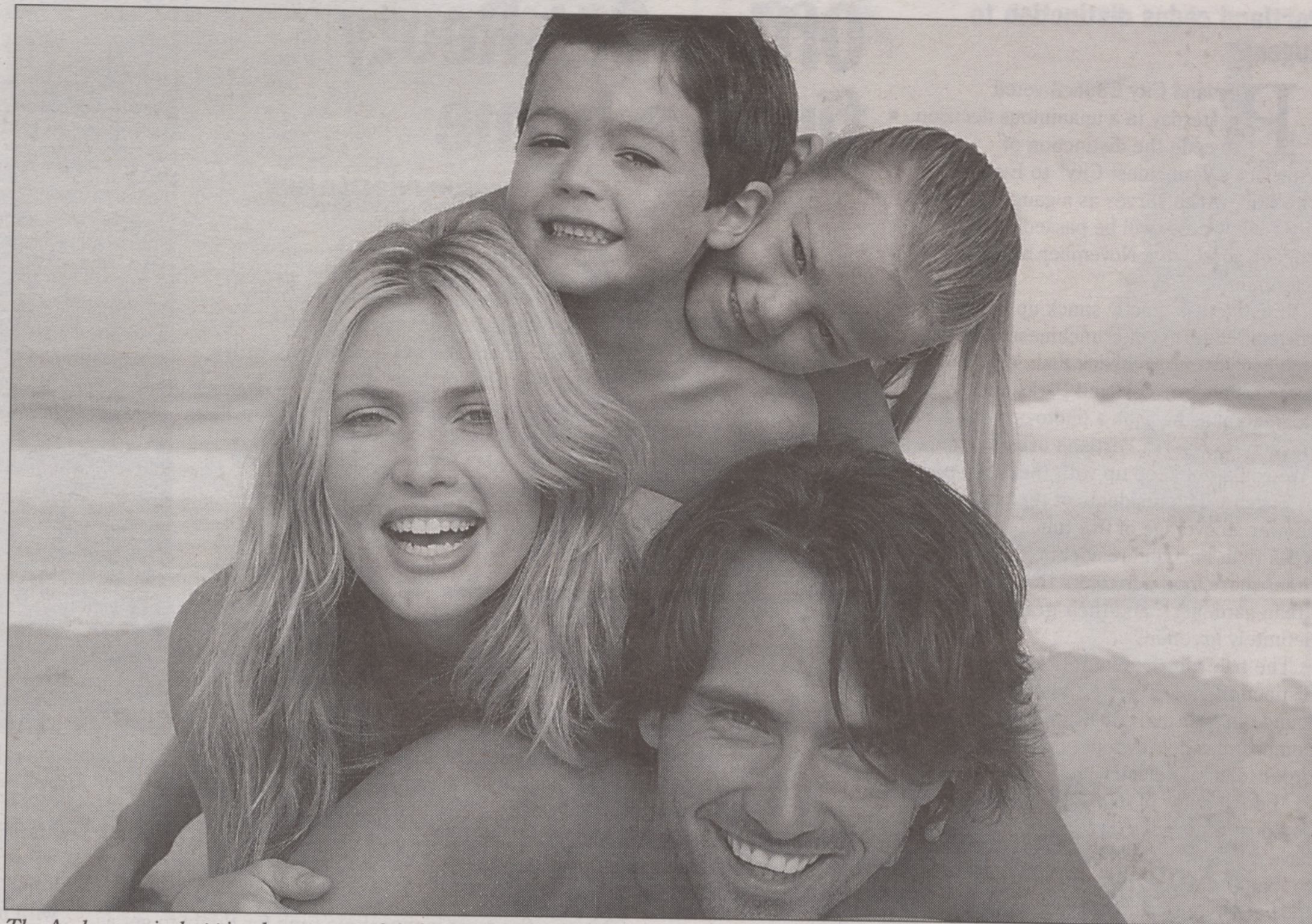
Political staffers blamed housing advocates who blamed social service advocates who blamed homeless advocates for screwing up momentum for housing resources in Portland.

One group said the other groups weren't tough enough, while another organization said other groups were being too soft. One group of people on the streets said being homeless was enough to qualify them to understand how to end homelessness, but hadn't gotten around to it yet.

Government insiders scoffed at the idea, and said that the only way Portland could think about ending homelessness would be by giving complete control over to civic authority.

One of the leading organizations on homelessness couldn't give its viewpoint because it had to go to an internal committee and missed the entire debate in the first place. Another group's members said it was too risky to get involved, as long as they kept their budget intact. "Screw everyone else," one member said.

While homeless and housing advocates squabbled, it's not exactly clear who was in charge, or if anyone should be, several other interest groups mobilized for their own cause and are expected to have a revenue building measure on the ballot this November.



The Andersons in happier days, one week before they went to IKEA and disintegrated in front of God and everyone.

## Merry trip to IKEA nearly rips family apart

BY GLADYS FRIDAY  
STAFF BITER

A fun-filled day for the Anderson family nearly ended in child abuse charges and divorce.

"It started out great," said mother, Lori. "We had been planning for months to get Jimmy and Suzie a new bedroom set."

"We were all very excited," said George the father of two, who had skipped his own breakfast to look at ESPN news while he fed and dressed the kids that fateful morning.

According to the Andersons, they then packed the kids in the mini-van and headed to IKEA.

"The kids were so mesmerized by the colors and the perfectly configured displays at the store," said Lori. "We had our maps and pencils out. We were one happy family."

According to Lori, things started to get a little tense, but it was no big deal when little Jimmy decided to hide in one of the Godmorgan cabinets. "I could tell my husband was getting irritated. He hadn't eaten a thing all day. I told him to just relax and have fun."

That's when little Suzie dropped her Juicy Juice on one of the Swedish couches.

Little Jimmy said that dad swore at Suzie under his breath. Mom freaked and mumbled something to dad under her breath and Suzie started crying. "I was out of there."

"That's when we all had a time-out," Lori said. "I cleaned up the mess, as always, and asked Dad to apologize to Suzie for yelling at her. That's when I realized I hadn't a clue where little Jimmy was. I panicked."

"It took us 10 minutes just to find a store employee," said George. "We found little Jimmy doing somersaults in a giant IKEA bag near the kitchen section. You could tell others around us were visibly disturbed and were thinking we were 'that family.' Lori just took off with Suzie to go to the bathroom."

"It split the family unit apart," George said. "We spent the next 45 minutes trying to find Lori and Suzie, walking back and forth in what seemed like a giant maze of displays from hell. It was horrific."

"By the time we found them," he added, "little Jimmy now had to go to the bathroom too. Lori snapped at me asking why I hadn't taken Jimmy to the restroom and what was I thinking."

Little Jimmy remembers the scene: "That's when Dad grabbed me by the arm and said, 'Let's go to the bathroom, Jimmy, it's what your mother wants.' I was so mad at my dad. Not only was he mad I had to go to the bathroom, but Suzie had picked out a nice dresser while me and dad wandered around the store for the last hour lost. I hate IKEA. I never want to go back."

Coming to the end of the maze that had

been the Andersons' undoing, George visibly lost it when he realized he was going to have to assemble the dresser when the family got home.

"You want me to assemble this frakking thing tonight?" George said.

"You're darn right I do, George, and I want you to assemble it with a big frakking smile on your face. It's for your daughter for goodness sake," Lori said.

At this point, George recalled that the kids started screaming for Swedish meatballs.

"I just went ballistic," he said. "I started yelling at Lori, the kids and one of the employees had to come over and ask me to chill out or leave. I asked him where he was two hours ago when my kid dropped her Juicy Juice. I wanted to punch the employee in the face."

After another timeout in the van, the Andersons made it home six hours later.

It took George three and half more hours to assemble the dresser, while Lori chain-smoked Camel Lights and drank white wine on the porch.

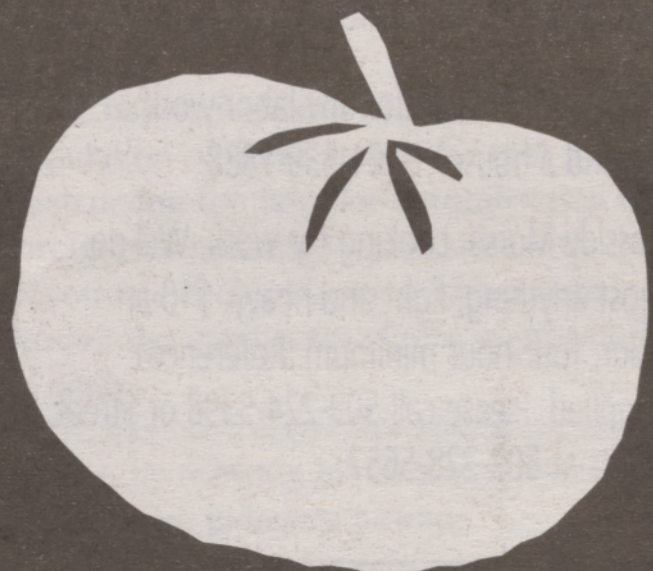
"Suzie and I," said little Jimmy, "Googled what 'Frakking' meant while pretending to play on the computer. It's either a sanitized swear word or the propigation of fractures using pressure."

"Sounds about right," Suzie said.

"Frakking IKEA."

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