

METROPOLITAN



Bo and Kathy Urban peddle the only 50¢ street burger in town. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)

50¢-burgers bless bus mall

Grassroot News, N.W.—When was the last time you've had a burger for fifty cents?

Well, if it has not been since the 1940s you just haven't heard of Portland's only 50¢-burger, the Urban Burger. The Urban Burger is the creation of downtown street vendors Bo and Kathy Urban. The Urbans started vending downtown with their "Hot Nuts" cart but the novelty of hot nuts cooled down with the economy and the Urbans stirred their creative juices developing the Urban Burger.

Kathy Urban explained, "We wanted to bring something affordable to Portland. If you are at the bottom of the barrel or from the West Hills you can afford an Urban Burger." She called this aspect of their burger "exciting." "You can see street people turn in the bottles

that they find downtown just to buy an Urban Burger."

Since their business transformation to 50¢-burgers the Urbans said other street vendors have become more cautious with them. "When we had the Hot Nuts we were everybody's friends. They were aware that we were no competition. Since the Urban Burger they have become a bit more hesitant."

They blame the depressed economy for the attitude of their vending neighbors. "Watching the downtown streets for the last five years is like looking at a ghost town. All the vendors say that business is way off. I also see greed among some vendors. As opposed to coming up with creative ideas everyone is copying the other person. Again, I say that greed is behind it. They see someone who they think is making money and they want to get right on

it." Due to expensive overhead created by inventory, high quality meat and their brightly colored cart, the Urban Burger is not making as much money as to be expected from a 50¢-burger. "We need volume. We do not want to raise our prices. If we do we'll just close it down."

Urban said she will "hang out" until December to see if the economy will turn their way. "If we can't get the volume this will be our last shot in Portland. We've been here for eight years and we wanted to energize the City. A whopper it's not but it's a baby burger. It's the best kind of ground beef between two enriched buns—an affordable feast for fifty cents."

The Urban Burger's cart is located downtown on the Bus Mall on the corner of S.W. Fifth and Washington.

2,000 eyes donated

The Oregon Lions Eye Bank, the statewide center for donor eye tissue, recently received its two-thousandth pair of donor eyes, according to Executive Director Kristi Voth.

This milestone is significant, Ms. Voth said, because "it has shown there is a decided interest and concern by Oregonians to provide sight to the blind through corneal transplantation."

Two thousand pairs of donor eyes would not have been realized without the help of Oregonians and cooperative efforts of the state's 240 Lions Clubs, who have distributed over a million donor cards, and participating Oregon funeral homes, which provide the majority of donor eye tissue as a community service, Ms. Voth said.

Since January 1975, the Lions Eye Bank, based at Good Samaritan Hospital and Medical Center in Portland, has served as a statewide receiving, processing, research, and distribution center for donor eye tissue. The Eye Bank coordinates donor eye flow with surgeons throughout Oregon and SW Washington who use the tissues for corneal and scleral transplants on visually impaired and blind patients.

The cornea is the transparent covering in the front of the eye. The sclera is the white elastic coating that surrounds the eye which is used in eye reconstructive or plastic surgery.

One of the 1,300 Oregonians who have received the gift of sight through the Lions Eye Bank is Keith Johnson of Portland, who received tissue from the two-thousandth pair of donor eyes for an operation in which surgeons replaced a malformed and scarred cornea in Johnson's right eye with a new cornea. 27-year-old Johnson has been legally blind since 1975, when the progress of an eye disease called keratoconus thickened both corneas to the extent that his best vision was "count fingers at 1 foot." He says



The Oregon Lions Eye Bank, based at Good Samaritan Hospital & Medical Center in Portland, recently received its two-thousandth pair of donor eyes. Keith Johnson of Portland, age 27, enjoys reading now that his vision has been restored from "count fingers at 1 foot" to 20/25.

his recent transplant of donated corneal tissue made an immediate difference in his life. Now an eager student of computer electronics, he advises anyone considering filling out a donor card, "Don't hesitate. The gift of eyes that are no longer of any value to their owner can open a whole universe to someone else."

Mr. Johnson's ophthalmologist states that vision is now 20/25 in the right eye and that Keith has been placed on the waiting list for a cornea transplant in his other eye.

The only source of tissue is the donation of recently-deceased persons. Any person 18 years or older may sign a donor card in the presence of two witnesses, and carry this card in his or her wallet at all times.

To provide more donor eyes, over 250,000 Oregonians have indicated a "D" on their driver's license to signify they are a potential donor. This is in addition to their donor card. Pre-arrangements for eye donation can also be made through any funeral home.

Because the Eye Bank, understands the important concerns of the family in eye donations after death, it always contacts the next-of-kin for permission even though a donor card may have been signed and witnessed.

Removal of donor eyes is performed free of charge by a statewide network of certified funeral directors and eye bank technicians. Donor eyes must be obtained within 6 hours after death, and are donated to recipients at no charge. Transplantation occurs within 24-48 hours.

Throughout Oregon, branch banks in 72 cities have been established as collection centers. It is possible for Portland residents to help turn darkness into light, blindness into sight, by pledging their eyes. To obtain a donor card in your area, contact the Lions Eye Bank at 229-7523 or your local Lions Club.

The Oregon Lions Eye Bank is a project of the Oregon Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation supported by local Lions Clubs, and is a member of the Oregon Donor Program.

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