

## Speak Out

Do you think the livability is improving in Oregon?



Arnold Pitre, 41, native Oregonian and local businessman, seeks to present important, pertinent, community issue questions, to randomly picked citizens, and report the responses.

by Arnold Pitre



**Maurice Lucas**  
NBA Player/Businessman

Yes, the business opportunities are certainly here, but with opportunities come preparation and desire to produce when it presents itself. There are some major developments about that will certainly improve the livability, but the livability in Oregon is pretty good right now. In all our travels, my wife and I have found Oregon to be a very pleasant place to live. People are extremely friendly. Most of my holdings are here. The livability is good, and appears to be getting better.



**Lynne Johnson**  
Portland Community College  
Community Education Coordinator

Yes, we are becoming more and more aware of different options and opportunities to make Oregon a more livable place: more opportunity for career building, educational growth opportunities in a business career, through various kinds of programs such as the PCC Incubator Program. The Portland Convention Center will open up more possibilities for everything from jobs to entertainment. It will really make Portland more livable and more pleasant. I think that more and more options are being made available.



**Prof. McKinley Burt**  
Educational Consultant

Not really. Drugs and crime activity are on an increase. Preparation for kids, white and Black, educationally has not been adequate. The parental input to our education system and child rearing, in general, has not been adequate, and all that affects our present livability as well as our future livability. Our economic development has got to be more "home grown". We are developing a foreign market, but ignoring our "home market". We need to emphasize home grown entrepreneurship equally as much as the foreign market. These are needs that I feel require immediate attention. Blacks are not involved to any measurable extent in this regard, and that, of course, affects our livability.



**Del St. James**  
Retired Maintenance Worker

Yes, not quite up to standard yet, but improving. There appears to be a few more jobs available these days, and of course, that helps the State's economy. A lot of people have been hit pretty hard and have not recovered yet, but I can still see some improvement. Public service help seems to be a little more available to people in need. The cost of living seems to be a little high, but things seem to be evening out.

# Social Security

## Questions and Answers

**Question: My father has Medicare and has a medical condition that requires he have diagnostic X-rays. Since he can't leave home, his doctor has ordered the X-rays to be made at home. Will Medicare pay for these services in a person's home?**

**Answer:** Yes, medical insurance helps pay the approved charges for diagnostic X-ray services made in a person's home if the services are ordered by a doctor and are provided by a Medicare-certified supplier.

**Question: I have heard that I must show a Social Security number for all dependents I list on my 1987 Federal tax return. Is this true?**

**Answer:** A provision of the Tax Reform Act of 1986 requires that when you file your tax return for calendar year 1987 you must show a Social Security number for each dependent listed on your return who is age 5 or older. Oregon residents can get applications and instructions for completing the application by telephoning 223-1616 in the Portland area or toll-free 1-800-452-1654 from outside Portland.

**Question: My disabled nephew has never been employed and has no income. He lives in public facilities. Would he be eligible for any financial help from the Social Security Administration, such as SSI?**

**Answer:** Generally, a person who lives in a public institution is not eligible for Supplemental Security Income (SSI), but there are some exceptions. First, a person who lives in a publicly operated community residence which serves no more than 16 people may be eligible for SSI. Second, someone who lives in a public institution primarily to attend approved educational or vocational training offered there may be eligible, too. Third, a person may be eligible for a monthly SSI payment — usually \$25 if he or she lives in a public or private health facility and Medicaid is paying more than half the cost of his or her care. There are also exceptions for certain individuals who work or homeless individuals temporarily living in public shelters. For more information, telephone Social Security at 223-1616 from Portland and 1-800-452-1654 from elsewhere in Oregon.

**Question: My mother is no longer able to get around easily or to dress or bathe herself without help. Since my wife and I both work each day, we have someone come to our home to take care of my mother while we're working. Would my mother's Medicare insurance cover the cost of this care?**

**Answer:** The type of care you have described is considered custodial care and is not covered by Medicare. Under Medicare, care is considered to be custodial when it is primarily to meet the personal needs and could be provided by persons without professional skills or training. Examples include: changing the bed, helping with bathing, dressing, eating and taking medicine. Even when a person is hospitalized, in a skilled nursing facility, or is receiving home health care, Medicare cannot cover care that is mainly custodial.

**Question: Since my neighbor owns his home and a car, I was surprised to learn he was getting SSI payments. How can that be?**

**Answer:** Eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is limited to people with little or no income or resources, but some resources do not count when deciding if a person is eligible. For example, the applicant's home and adjacent land are not counted. Depending on their value, a car, personal and household goods, insurance policies, and burial funds may also not count. Social Security thoroughly verifies whether each applicant's resources and income fall within the limitations.

**Question: My youngest daughter has Medicare coverage because she has permanent kidney failure. I plan to donate one of my kidneys to her for a kidney transplant operation. I know Medicare will pay for most of her hospital costs except for the \$520 hospital insurance deductible and coinsurance. Will Medicare also pay for the hospital costs I'll incur when I donate my kidney?**

**Answer:** Medicare Hospital Insurance (Part A) pays the full costs of care for a person who donates a kidney to a Medicare Renal patient. Furthermore, a donor does not have to pay the hospital insurance deductible or coinsurance charges.

## Telephone Bill Overcharge To Be Corrected

The Oregon Public Utility Commission has directed General Telephone Co. of the Northwest (GTNW) to give bill credits to thousands of its Oregon customers who were overcharged on bills prepared in late October and early November.

GTNW was directed to credit customers by Dec. 16, the same day the company must submit a detailed report to the commission on the number of customers who were overbilled and steps taken to correct the error.

At the commissioner's request, GTNW officials attended the PUC's regular public meeting Tuesday, November 10, to discuss the problem.

The company said more than 90,000 Oregon customers were overbilled for a new monthly surcharge that began appearing on telephone bills in October. The 25-cent surcharge is applied to telephone lines in Oregon to pay for two new programs approved by the 1987 Legislature and operated by the PUC, The Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP) and the Telecommunications for the Deaf Access Program (TDAP).

GTNW officials indicated they had already initiated action to credit customers who were overcharged. They said the problem was caused by a computer error that identified some customers as having more phone lines than they actually have. In some cases, the overcharge amounted to several dollars.

At the public meeting, the commissioner asked that an order be prepared directing the company to take the following actions:

- Develop a bill insert to notify customers as soon as possible of the billing error. The company has agreed to send the bill insert to all customers.
- Identify all customers who were overcharged and the amount overbilled.
- Credit those customers for the amount overbilled at the earliest opportunity, but no later than Dec. 16.
- Submit a detailed report to the PUC by Dec. 16 on the overbilling problem and steps taken to correct it.

The commission became aware of the billing error Nov. 2, when PUC Consumer Assistance started receiving customer inquiries about the surcharge amount. The PUC then contacted GTNW about the overcharge.

GTNW officials said part of the problem was lack of communication between the company and its billing operations, which are conducted in Florida for all subsidiaries of General Telephone and Electric (GTE).

GTNW has about 241,000 telephone lines in Oregon, including major service areas in Beaverton and other parts of metropolitan Portland, Coos Bay-North Bend and La Grande.

## PCC Classified Contract Ratified

The Portland Community College Board of Directors and Federation of Classified Employees, American Federation of Teachers, signed a three-year employment contract Monday, November 2.

"Increases in the wage and benefit package will be distributed over the three years, assuring competitive wages with business and industry," said Federation President Niky Nikula. A new salary schedule will offer a range of \$11,000 to \$31,000 per year on eight levels of employment. The previous range was \$10,916 to \$29,613.

PCC Vice President of Administration Services Roy Lindsay said, "We are pleased to resolve the issue and move forward. A three-year contract gives us stability and the ability to plan our resources." Lindsay reported that the wage increase will be reflected in a new salary scale and in one-time payments over three years with a total increase of 12.6% over current salary.

Changes in the insurance program allow employees to choose one of three carriers for medical, dental, optical and prescription coverage. The contract also increases educational benefits for classified employees and their families.

The College agreed to recognize and include in the Federation bargaining unit regular part-time employees who work over 600 hours in a fiscal year, a reduction from the 1000-hour limit in the previous contract. "Adding 100-plus employees to the 375 members currently in the unit will maintain the integrity of the union and secure union jobs," Nikula said.

The new contract clarifies the job classification system and updates the grievance procedures. All classified jobs at the College will now be described according to specific duties and responsibilities, hours and location of work. "Conflicts may be resolved through a newly adopted progressive approach to the grievance procedure," Nikula noted.

Other highlights of the contract include the addition of Martin Luther King Day as a paid holiday and the option of early retirement for employees covered by the last contract.

## PCC Foundation Announces New Scholarship

A veteran Portland Community College English instructor and her husband have endowed a new scholarship to benefit Black students at PCC.

The Jean L. Buck Scholarship Fund was created by Mr. and Mrs. Bel-ford Buck to honor Mrs. Buck's many years of teaching at PCC. First awards will be made in the fall of 1988. The fund, with an initial endowment of \$5000, will be administered by the PCC Foundation.

Jean Buck started teaching for PCC in 1965 at Shattuck Hall. When Cascade Campus was opened in 1971, Mrs. Buck was one of the original instructors, concentrating on transfer and developmental English classes. She also designed the first drop-in centers at Shattuck Hall and Cascade Campus and trained tutors to staff them. She retired from PCC in 1986, but continued as a volunteer tutor at the Cascade drop-in center.

For information about this scholarship, contact Mark Skolnick, PCC Development Office, 244-6111, Ext. 4358.

## Portland Students to Visit Children's Museum

Students from two Portland schools visit the Children's Museum's "Sticks, Stones and Sealbones" interactive games exhibit this Thursday and Friday, November 19 and 20, 1987.

Located at the Custom House, Southwest Second Avenue and Hooker Street, the Children's Museum exhibit give Portland's students opportunities to learn more about how children in other cultures play with and learn from games.

Atkinson Elementary School first-grade students will visit the exhibit on November 19th and Woodlawn Early Childhood Center fifth-grade students will attend one-hour presentations on November 20th.

Student tours include viewing and explanations of a large collection of games and toys from many nations, then dividing into teams to play some of the games.

Some students will play "Image of Birds," and Eskimo dice game, while others play dice games from India and ancient Sumaria.

A Nigerian game, "Sand Pictures", is played by drawing figures in the sand without crossing lines of lifting fingers.

Teachers will leave the museum with special packets to help them make many of those multicultural games in their classrooms. The packets were funded by a grant from Portland Public Schools.

For more information, please contact: Tricia Knoll, Children's Museum, 248-4587; James Wells, Atkinson principal, 280-6333; Pamela Shelly, Woodlawn principal, 280-6282; Bill Garbett, director of public information and communication, Portland Public Schools, 249-3304.

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