

METRO

Life

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Free Tri-Met holiday shuttles

Holiday travelers can avoid the seasonal traffic and parking crunch by taking free Tri-Met holiday shuttle buses to Portland International Airport (PDX). The shuttle buses run between PDX and Tri-Met's Gateway Transit Center December 20 through January 2. The buses operate every 20 minutes from 4:30 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Shuttle buses connect with MAX light rail trains at Gateway. Because of limited parking at Gateway Transit Center, travelers should not park their vehicles overnight at Gateway to use shuttle buses. Gateway Transit center is located at NE 99th between Glisan and Halsey. Tri-Met customers can get information about the shuttle buses by calling 238-RIDE.

Toys For Tots

Amtrak and the U.S. Marines "Toys For Tots" will be running the 2nd annual "Santa Express" on Saturday December 14, 1996. Train 750 departs Portland union station at 8:50 a.m., with stops in Vancouver, Kelso, Centralia, Olympia, Tacoma, and Seattle WA at 5:10 p.m. for the return trip. Join us for the whole trip or just part of it. Adult fares start at \$29.00 round trip, children 15 years old and younger are free when accompanied by an adult and a new, unwrapped toy, two children per adult. Santa will be along for the ride, so please join Amtrak, the Marines and Santa in making this a wonderful Christmas for those less fortunate. For more information and to make your reservation please call Amtrak at 1-800-USA-RAIL.

Catlin Gabel Open House

Sunday, December 8 from 1-3 p.m., Catlin Gabel, located at 8825 SW Barnes Road in Portland will host an open house for all children who will be entering grades 6 through 12. The Catlin Gabel School has a proud history of sending students on to some of the finest colleges in the nation. Open House is an opportunity for both parents and children to meet the faculty who have helped to make this happen. For more information call 203-5111.

Singles Finding Love Workshop

December 15th, Sunday, 6-8 p.m., 3824 SW Troy, Portland. Overcome sabotaging behaviors, why we choose our partners, and how to nurture intimate relationships. To register, please call Beyond The Storm Counseling Center at (503) 244-4661.

Couples Growing Together Workshop

December 15th, Sunday, 12-2 p.m., 3824 SW Troy, Portland. Strengthen your most committed relationship. To register, please call Beyond The Storm Counseling Center at (503) 244-2661.

New Years Eve casino Night

The public is invited to Forest Grove Residential Community's New Years Eve Casino Party, on December 31st, 1996 at 7:00 p.m. The event will feature Blackjack, Roulette, Bingo and Wheel of Fortune. Goodies to eat and drink and then an auction to spend the money you win! We will have party favors and hats too. The cost of this event will be \$6.00 per person. Please RSVP by 12-27-96, at Forest Grove Residential at 357-3288.

HCDC Meeting

Please be advised that there will be no December HCDC meeting. During that time period HCDC members will be attending a retreat. The next regular HCDC meeting will be held on January 8, 1997 in the Portland Building, Room C from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

SUBMISSIONS: Community Calendar information will be given priority if dated two weeks before the event date.

Violence Against Women

Centerpiece of 16 Days Will Be Tribunal on Violations of Women's Human Rights

Women Empowered Beyond Beijing for Equality, Development and Peace (W.E.B.B.), in collaboration with other groups from throughout Oregon, is sponsoring 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence from November 25 to December 10.

A variety of activities will take place to draw attention to abuses suffered by women and to make recommendations for change.

"This joint effort is historic. It may be the first time that so many different groups have joined together to expose violence against women in all its forms--from rape and domestic violence to the institutional abuses of prison and poverty," says program coordinator Judith Armatta. "Women of all ages, backgrounds and ethnicities experience violence simply because they are women. The 16 Days, which encompasses the day fourteen female engineering students were massacred in Montreal on December 6, 1989, will spotlight the numerous and daily violations of women's human rights in a country that prides itself on being the leader of the 'free' world."

Part of an international campaign initiated by the Center for Women's Global Leadership, the 16 Days began Monday, November 25, International Day Against Violence Against Women, and will end Tuesday, December 10, International Human Rights Day.

The centerpiece activity will be a day long tribunal on Saturday, December 7 at Portland State University, where a panel of judges will have the opportunity to hear personal testimony from women who have experienced violence and make recommendations for



Youth in Action Workshop - sponsored by Sisters in Portland Impacting Real Issues Together and Movements in Charge Self-Defense.

change.

Judges at the tribunal will include community activist and Portland Public School Board

Member Joseph Tam, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs representative Anita Jackson, and Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indi-

ans representative Bill Ray.

Please call Judith Armatta at 284-5262 for more information.

Scouting For Food

THE ANNUAL "SCOUTING FOR FOOD" DRIVE WILL TAKE PLACE SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7TH IN 13 OREGON COUNTIES

Every year since 1989, scouts from Boy Scouts of America Cascade Pacific Council have joined with Oregon Food Bank to make the last major food drive of the holiday season a success.

The Scouts will kick off the drive by serving a pancake breakfast to homeless and otherwise hungry people under the Morrison Bridge. The breakfast will begin at 8:00; the Scouts expect to serve approximately 300 people. Sponsor Boyd Coffee Company will provide all the food for the breakfast.

"This is a great partnership between many groups in the community. Scouting for Food really exemplifies the spirit of cooperation and giving that makes the holiday season so special," says Kirsten Lee, Oregon Food Bank Special Events Program Manager.

Scouts will collect food by going door to door in their districts. They use area fire stations and local agencies of Oregon Food

Bank as drop-off points for food, and to warm up in between runs.

After the drive, the Oregon National Guard will transport the food to the Oregon Food Bank warehouse in Portland.

From there the food goes right back to the community it came from, where local hunger-relief agencies distribute emergency food boxes and serve emergency meals to hungry people.

Last year, Scouting for Food raised almost 175,000 pounds of food, enough to provide a 3-5 day supply of emergency food for 4,375 people. Since its inception in 1989, the event has raised a total of nearly 605,000 pounds of food.

The Boy Scouts will be asking residents for donations of nutritious foods such as canned meats like chicken or tuna, soups, stews, canned fruits, and vegetables; and other healthy items like powdered milk, peanut butter, and beans.

The Scouts will not ask for cash donations and cannot accept money. However, Oregon

Food Bank encourages contributions, which help the organization to secure, store and transport donated food. If you would like to make a monetary donation to Oregon Food Bank, please call 282-0555.

Joining Boy Scouts of America as Scouting for Food sponsors are Boyd Coffee Company, providing the food for the pancake breakfast and the bags the Scouts will carry; Hollywood Video, KGW NewsChannel 8; Portland Fire Bureau; Tualatin Valley Fire and Rescue; and the Oregon National Guard.

Scouting for Food is a benefit for the Oregon Food Bank network of hunger-relief agencies. Covering 37 counties in Oregon and SW Washington, OFB network agencies provided emergency food assistance to more than 400,000 hungry people last year.

Nearly half of those people were children under 17. All food donated during Scouting for Food will remain in the communities where it is collected.

Merchants play Santa

Merchants at Walnut Park Retail Center are starting the holiday right by playing Santa for neighborhood children this year. The merchant group is sponsoring a Christmas Toy Drive through December 20, 1996.

All toys will be donated to the northeast Boy's and Girl's Club on MLK Boulevard. The toy drive will culminate in a Christmas party at the Boy's and Girl's Club on Christmas Eve.

Community members are asked to bring new toys, which have not been gift wrapped, to any business at Walnut Park Retail Center. Walnut Park Retail Center is located at the intersection of MLK Boulevard and NE Killingsworth. Walnut Park businesses participating in the toy drive include: Walnut Park Laundry, JP's Custom Picture Framing, Reflections, Videoland, Mother Dear's Tasty Pastries, Donaldo's Shoe Repair, the NE Community Police Precinct, Blimpie, Key Bank and "It's my kind of face."

Elliot owners protest tax assessments

BY LEE PERLMAN

A discussion with Multnomah County tax assessment official and commissioner Gary Hansen left Elliot neighborhood taxpayers more knowledgeable, and more angry, than they already were.

About 30 homeowners came to the session sponsored by the Elliot Neighborhood Association last week. Some complained of assessments that have increased more than 100 percent - in one case nearly 400 percent - in a single year. Several said their ability to remain in their homes was at stake.

Grey Byrd, a relatively new owner, said his taxes went from \$850, "which I admit is low," last year to \$2250. Another owner, who originally moved into his house in 1975 as a tenant, saw it increase in value from \$18,000 to \$68,000 last year, then jump to \$152,000 this year. "I want to know why," he said.

Bob Alcantara of the assessor's office said the increases are due to several factors. One is that the prices of homes throughout the city are increasing, and they are increasing faster in Elliot because it has long been undervalued. A second is that the county has done a door-to-door reassessment of this area this year for the first time since 1990. A third

factor is that people in the area in general are taking better care of their homes, and the county automatically assesses 10 percent more for properties that are "well-maintained."

Aviva Groner of the Elliot Association protested this. Penalizing people for upgrading their houses is "the wrong message to send," she said.

"We don't set the market, we follow it," Alcantara said. "We look to the market as to what buyers and sellers are agreeing on." Ask by one new homeowner why his house is assessed at considerably more now than it was when he bought it 13 months ago, Alcantara replied, "We assume an increase in value of one percent a month."

When a house hasn't sold recently, he said, the county considers the recent sales of similar houses nearby. When there have been none, they must consider "comparable" house sales further away, which he admitted affected the accuracy of the assessment. They also consider such things as the size of the house, its quality, materials and workmanship, its floor covers, and features such as built-in appliances and cabinets.

Asked how he could know about a house's interior Alcantara replied, "Once upon a time

an assessor went through the house." In addition, he said, "More often the not, the quality of the outside reflects the quality of the inside."

Not always, Byrd argued. He and his wife Polly Kreisberg bought their home from a rip-off artist for \$131,000. It is not worth that today, he said, even though they've already spent \$12,000 on repainting and a new roof. He and the assessor were both fooled by cheap cosmetics.

At the other end of the time continuum were Mildred Stewart and Phillip Casey. Stewart, who has lived in her current house since 1955, saw her taxes jump 100 percent. Casey says he has lived in his house for 47 years. Of his large tax increase he said, "I try to keep track of property values and set something aside for taxes, but when something like this happens to a retired person, it kind of wipes you out."

Mary Batson said she would have to appeal her assessment. "My mother told my sister and I that if we wanted her house we'd have to pay the taxes on it," she said. "That's okay, but we're getting to where I can't afford to keep it."

Joan Mitchell complained that landlords, responding to the market, were evicting ten-

ants of 10 years or more on 30 days notice.

Hansen said that seniors such as Casey and Stewart could seek senior tax deferrals. Several people called the deferrals a "rip-off" that deprived people of their equity. "You should be able to leave something to your children besides debts," one person said.

Hansen said that thanks to Measure 47, this year's increases will disappear next year. The next step for government, he said, is "not the repeal of measure 5 and 47, but a completely new tax system. You can only put so many layers on a system before you lose track of it."

In the meantime, Alcantara said, homeowners can appeal assessments they consider unfair. "You know your house better than we do," he said.

Realtor Brian Faherty suggested that those wishing to challenge an assessment take pictures of "deferred maintenance and other factors showing the dwelling isn't a luxury unit." He defended the assessment system, saying, "What you really want is for your property values to be lower. Sorry, but I think your values are still too low. The market is strong, and it's fueled by people who are looking for affordable housing."