

METRO Life

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Hospice needs volunteers

Hospice of Sacred Heart is seeking volunteers to become part of a multidisciplinary team supporting terminally ill patients and their caregivers in a home setting. Other areas of need include bereavement volunteers to support family members after the death of a patient and office help. An informational meeting will be held on Thursday, January 23, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Home Health Services office at 1121 Fairfield Ave. in Eugene. This will be followed by six training sessions on consecutive Thursdays from 1 to 4 p.m. beginning February 13. A tax-deductible fee of \$25 is charged to help cover training expenses. To register for the meeting or for more information, call Helen Barden at Sacred Heart's Hospice office at 461-7555.

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Meeting: Monday, January 13, 1997, 7:00 p.m. at the Northwest Service Center Boardroom, 1819 NW Everett, 224-5190.
Mickey Goes to Haiti: Video on the manufacture of Disney Products by exploited laborers. Action: assist National Labor Committee to improve conditions in Haitian factories Public Welcome.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Week Activities

(All activities will be held in the Student Center, Gaiser Hall, except as noted.)
Thursday, January 16
Noon--"Resume & Interview Tips & Techniques"
Central Conf.--Maxine Mitchell, Student Employment Program Manager, Clark College Rm., Gaiser Hall
Friday, January 17, 6:00-9:00 p.m.
Celebration of Harmony & Diversity, 6:30 p.m.

Trade show

Oregon Festival and Events Association 3rd Annual State Conference and Trade show "Thinking Outside the Box: Creative Approaches to Event Success"
When: January 23-25, 1997

Where: Red Lion Columbia River, Portland, Oregon

Registration information: David Cohen, Salem Art Association, (503) 581-2228, Carol Brewster, Eugene Celebration, (541) 687-5215

Trade Show information: Norb Murray, Noah Enterprises, (503) 691-2534

SIM 1997 Regional Learning Forum Date Western States Region

February 6-7, 1997

If you would like more information on the Western States RLF or its February meeting, contact SIM Headquarters at 312.644.6610.

Straw Bale

The Institute for Sustainable Culture Building Forum

Three leading techniques for the ISC's, February 1st (Institute for Sustainable Culture) Office, 2-6 p.m. & Community Straw Bale Structure will instruct this class in the history, present developments, techniques and design issues of Straw Bale Construction. \$40, SE Uplift Building, 3534 SE Main.

Form more information: 503-736-1143

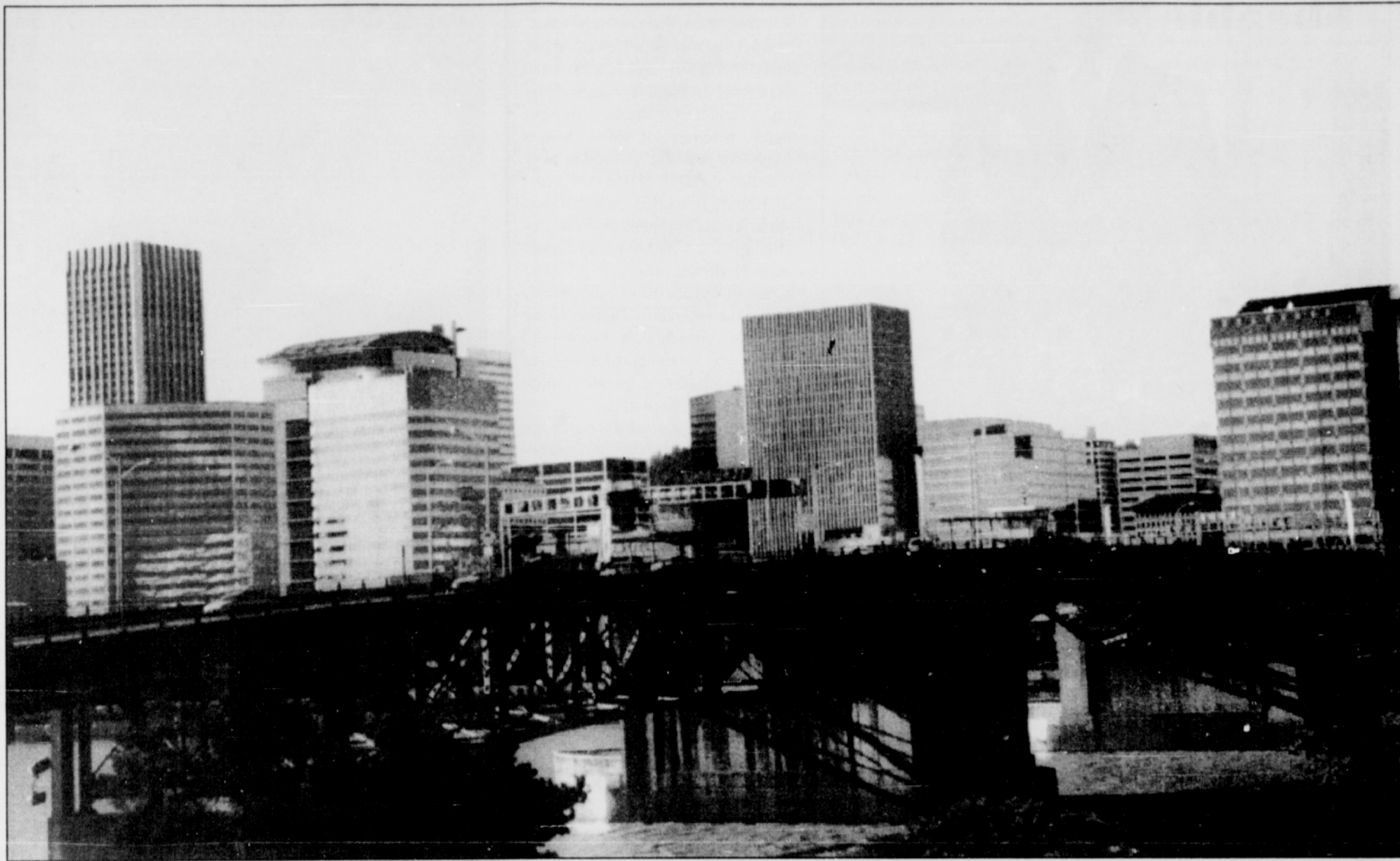
Winter In The Woods

Learn how different animals adapt to survive the winter, and what creatures leave the park for warmer climates. Explore the magic of winter through crafts, story telling and science activities. Come help us celebrate Groundhog Day with these special activities.

When: February 2, 1997, 2-4 p.m.

Where: Tryon Creek State Park, 11321 SW Terwilliger Blvd., Portland, OR 97219

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



Portland sighs relief as high water levels drop, but its not over yet. Forecasters predict cold weather, with possible freezing rain this weekend. Photo by M. Washington

Budget cuts close Metro Crises Line

After 18 years, volunteer-based Metro Crisis Line will close due to cuts in Multnomah County FUNDING.

Concerns over Social Service Crisis-Call Assistance persist, and the Crisis line has requested a formal assessment of potential gaps in the next six months.

The elimination of more than \$300,000 in annual support by Multnomah County's Community and Family Services Division will cut 63% of the Portland area's Metro Crisis Line operational budget, ending operations for the nationally recognized, volunteer-based community organization at midnight on Monday, January 13. The funding is being diverted by the county to the Multnomah County Crisis Triage Center to handle only acute mental health crisis situations. "Acute" mental health cases, such as suicidal and homicidal behavior, represent only 20% of the calls Metro Crisis currently receives annually, leaving a majority of future crisis calls unanswered.

"The most effective and cost-efficient manner to handle health issues is not to send

everyone to the emergency room when they have a cold. But this is exactly the mental health strategy that the Multnomah County program is implementing," stated Laura Jeibmann, Executive Director of the Metro Crisis Line. "The new triage center will be effective in handling acute 'emergency room' mental health cases, but, by itself, the program will leave the community without a safety net for crises such as relationship issues, parent-child conflicts, stress and anxiety. The Portland area will need a community-based crisis line to work alongside the Crisis Triage Center for a complete continuum of care."

The county and Providence Health System, which was awarded the contract to manage the Crisis Triage Center, have declined to transfer the Metro Crisis phone number to the new system. This Crisis Line phone number is posted on Portland area bridges as a suicide help line and in the front pages of Portland phone books. Triage Center staffing plans, according to Providence Health System, will accommodate about 100 calls per day, while Metro Crisis is currently respond-

ing to an average of 217 calls per day.

"Metro Crisis has been on the front lines for 18 years assisting our community when in crisis--whether it be a troubled teen contemplating suicide or an entire community rocked by flooding," stated Larry Norvell, President, United Way Columbia/Willamette. "In an era where mental health funds have consistently been decreasing, the loss of a cost-effective, successful organization such as Metro Crisis will represent a significant setback to our community."

Metro Crisis is requesting that the county conduct a normal Needs Assessment of Mental Health and Social Service Crisis Response within the initial six months of operation to determine if the needs of the community are being met. There is significant concern that many people in need will have nowhere to call.

While the crisis line will no longer be staffed on January 13, the Metro Crisis Line's infrastructure and existing computer systems containing Portland-area community resource information will remain intact for an additional six months. The Metro Crisis Line

Board of Directors has implemented this strategy to be responsive to the potential need from the community to resurrect the volunteer-based crisis line, provided that funding sources can be identified.

Since its founding in 1978, the Metro Crisis Line has responded to Portland-area crisis calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week, using more than 190 trained volunteers and a management staff of mental health professionals. With its volunteer base, Metro Crisis is extremely cost-effective, providing Multnomah County taxpayers a bargain during a time when mental health funds continue to be cut. The crisis line, which is certified by the American Association of Suicidology, responds to situations ranging from suicide and drug abuse to domestic violence and emergency shelter. Metro Crisis works cooperatively with emergency services such as "911" and assists callers through crises, often identifying local community resources to aid in longer-term crisis resolution. Other fully funded programs, such as The Oregon Gambling Hotline, the Clark County Crisis Line and United Way Information and Referral will continue to operate.

A powerful spokesman for the arts

"We have the power to make our community what we want it to be. It's important that you give OF YOURSELF AND BECOME A POSITIVE PART OF WHERE YOU LIVE."

So says George Bell, a leader in Portland's arts and culture community. He challenges others to follow suit by making at least a small investment of time in a positive community cause.

Bell spends long days as a vice president at the Bonneville Power Administration, where he manages more than 1,900 employees in the transmission services department. But when he leaves the office, this man of power transforms his energy into sculpting Portland as even a better place.

Bell's palate of culture-enhancing volunteer activities includes serving as Chairman of the Portland Center for the Performing Arts advisory committee, Portland Center Stage Theatre Company board of directors, the Lakewood Center for the Arts board of directors, and the Regional Arts & Culture Council board of directors.

Bell also founded Friends of the Performing Arts Center, a group that communicates the benefits of the center to the public, promotes general arts awareness, and creates a strong force of support for the center.

"In short, George really cares about the arts," said Kathleen Johnson Kune, represent-



George Bell

ing Portland's Business Community for the Arts. "He sees the big picture and is great at bringing together people and solving problems."

Bell began to get more involved--starting with the Performing Arts Center--about ten years ago.

"I was thinking a lot about the people who get involved in art and culture in our community, and those that don't. That issue really motivated me to begin doing more," Bell said. "I was, and still am, particularly interested in

the folks who don't use these facilities. Whether they know it or not, they're missing out on a lot."

Bell also said that keeping tickets at reasonable prices is an issue of continued concern, because low-income people should have access to cultural activities.

"If we are going to call these 'community activities', then we have to make sure the majority of people in the community can afford to attend them," Bell said.

In addition to his volunteer work for arts and cultural activities, Bell is an appointee for the Health Educational and Cultural Facilities Authority and the Metropolitan Exposition and Recreation Commission, or MERC, and he also serves on the Oregon Public Broadcasting's (OPB) board.

Additionally, he volunteers for the Police Activities League, an organization that works proactively to help prevent juvenile crime. Bell said the League reaches at-risk kids and brings positive influences into their lives.

"I like to see the enthusiasm in these kids when they learn that someone cares about them and where they are going", Bell said. "The league is a great alternative to the negative influence that often surround them."

Bell also is a strong advocate for OPB, because he says it conveys a similar message to its audience.

"OPB is a forum that encourages people to educate themselves, to turn away from the negative programming on television," Bell said. "We can't stop the negative programming of others, but we can give people a good, positive alternative."

Above all, Bell says that what he does is not unusual. In fact, he'd like to see more people jumping on the volunteer bandwagon.

He says one can find a balance among the callings of a demanding job, volunteer duties and a family. He says the volunteer aspect, just requires an initiative to get started and the drive to keep going.

And, Bell adds with a smile, it helps to have a spouse who is into volunteering as well.

"My wife, Val, and I are both involved with some different volunteer activities in the community. From this, we have a good forum for sharing thoughts or bouncing ideas off each other," Bell said. "We enjoy knowing that we are making a positive difference."

Which gets to Bell's challenge to others. "The bottom line is that there are too few adults out there who are giving of their time and of themselves," Bell said. "Whether it's getting involved with youth camps or helping out with tutoring, it's great if you can find something you believe in and then step in and give it your full support."