

METRO *Life*

The Portland Observer

SECTION B

Community Calendar

Housing Conference

Come celebrate 30 years of Fair Housing at Oregon's Annual Fair Housing Conference on Monday April 27 and Tuesday April 28 at the Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel. The conference will offer an informative array of speakers, workshops, and presentations designed to educate the public on civil rights laws in housing as well as proactive strategies for building community. Call 412-6000.

Breast Cancer Forum

Experts in medical, surgical and radiation oncology will present the latest information in breast cancer risk, detection and treatment. A medical geneticist will also be available to answer questions. The event is a free community forum. It will be held on Thursday, April 16 from 7-9 PM. Call 215-6433.

Buy A Bridal Gown

The Arc of Multnomah County is having a sale of bridal gowns and bridesmaid dresses. Tina and her attendants from Tony n' Tina's Wedding are promoting sales with full schedule of events featuring wedding cake, drawings and a bouquet toss. The event will be held at the Value Village Store on Saturday, April 4 at 10 AM. Call 223-7279.

Elders in Action

There will be a public meeting to address problems of elderly mobile home owners. Pat Schwoch, a lobbyist for the Manufactured Home Owners of Oregon, Inc. will address Elders in Action's Housing Task Force on the problems experienced by elderly mobile home owners on Monday, April 13, at 3 PM. The Task Force meets in the Portland Building and is open to the public. Call 823-5269.

Storytelling

Johnny Moses, Northwest coast storyteller of the Si.si.wiss medicine tradition, will be in Lake Oswego on April 3rd at 7:30 PM at Unity World Healing Center. At thirteen, after chemotherapy, surgery and radiology had failed, Johnny was healed from cancer through the care and ceremonies of his elders. Storytelling will be opened by Native American powwow songs, sung by Spirit Learning Drum. Call 452-4483.

Meet The Authors

Heidi Neale & Nick Manolukas, authors of the new adventure novel, *The Coming of the New Millennium*, will be appearing in person at Barnes & Noble Lloyd Center in Portland, on Thursday, April 9 at 6 PM. They'll be talking about their travels to Greece, which inspired the story, and showing a video of Greek archeological sites combined with live readings from their book. A free event.

Food Drive

Volunteers needed! You can help Oregon Food Bank and your Letter Carrier fight hunger on May 9. Letter Carriers will collect food from residents; volunteers are needed to box food at local post offices, including Holladay Park, Kenton, Piedmont, Rose City Park, and St. Johns stations. Groups of 6-12 people are encouraged, and families with older children are welcome! Or, use your large truck to help deliver the food to Oregon Food Bank! Call 282-0555 to sign up!

Sport Safety Training

The Red Cross will offer Sport Safety Training at American Red Cross, on Sunday, April 5, from 8:30-4:30 PM. Sport Safety Training, an eight-hour course, provides individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide a safe environment for athletes while they are participating in sports; and, in an emergency, to help sustain life and minimize consequences of injury or sudden illness until medical help arrives. Call 280-1440.

"OWLS" see crones as people who inspire

By NEIL HEILPREN

The Portland Chapter of the Older Women's League (OWL) last week took a look at Crones—mature women once regarded as ugly hags, but now seen as wise and inspiring elders.

Members of the group, whose purpose is to promote social and economic equality for women age 40 and over, shared recollections of older women who inspired them.

One recalled a suffragette grandmother who "made it possible for me to vote." Another recalled an aunt who was bold enough to tell people what was on her mind. And yet another remembered Eleanor Roosevelt.

Some were inspired by elders who "created what they wanted," "taught me to hold my head high," "was stimulating and started a career," "stoked a lot of fires to accomplish things and said I wouldn't get anywhere unless I do so too."

The group met at the Portland Senior Center on 4610 SE Belmont.

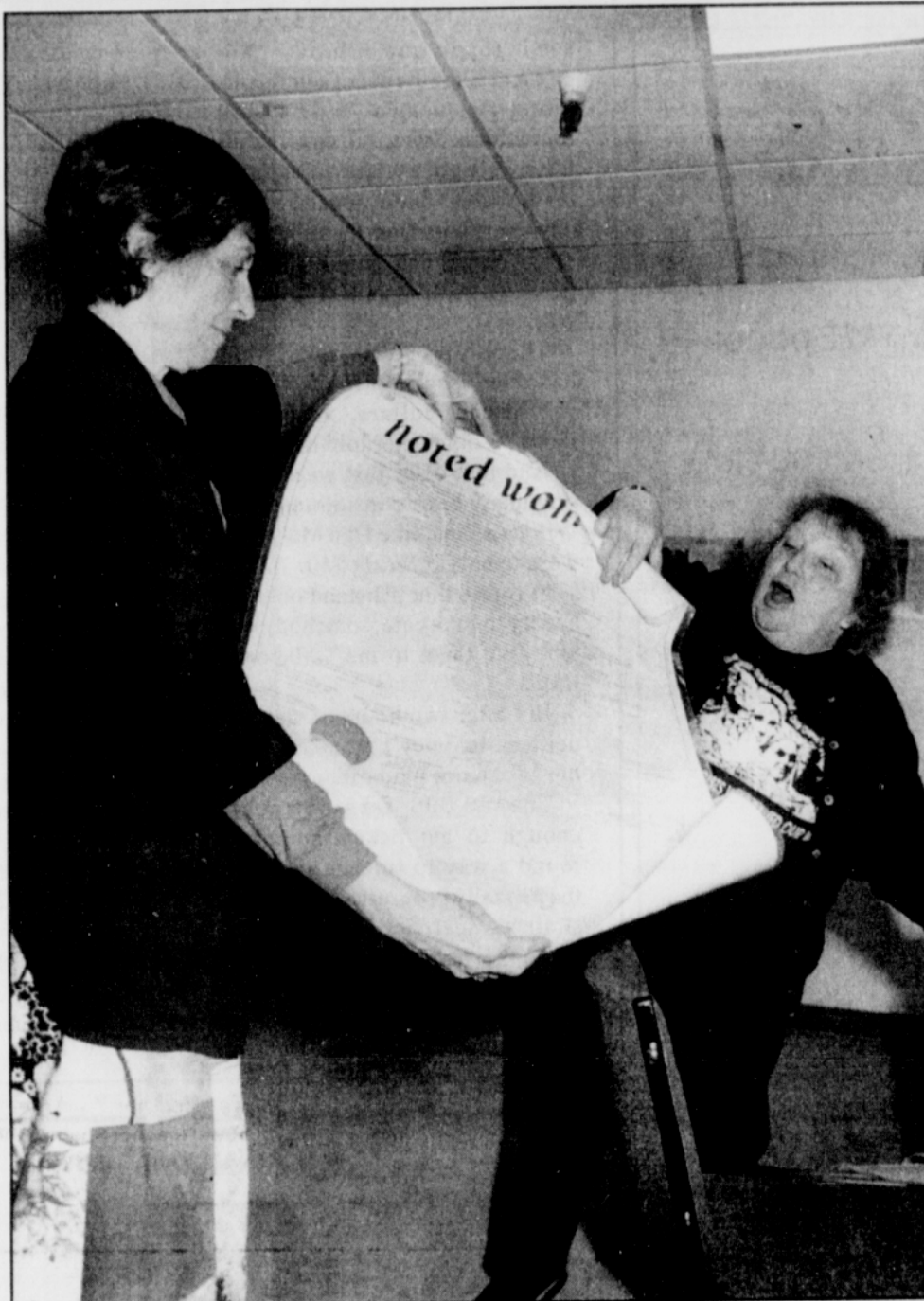
"Two years ago I became a crone," said guest speaker Marlene Loisdotter, noting the theme of wise old women showed up in myths, fairy tales, poems and songs for many years.

Loisdotter is a women's studies instructor at Portland State University, Clark College in Vancouver and Mt. Hood Community College.

She shared a long list of motherly names for "the great mother" spirit around the world, then contrasted the feminine and masculine images of the universe. "Space is not a virgin to be conquered, but a grandiose space pregnant with neutrinos, quarks and bits of energy every nanosecond."

"Respect for crones disappeared," said Loisdotter, "with the false notion that women feed on man's energy."

Who can become a crone? "Anyone past menopause who wants to," said Loisdotter, who said she celebrates the "menopausal



Speaker Marlene Loisdotter (left) and OWL treasurer Barbara Drageaux display a chart of "Noted Women" in history during a talk on Crones, elderly influential women. (Photo by Neil Heilpern)

party and the bi-focal bash."

Loisdotter shared parts of her mother's diary, a collection of thoughts revealing a woman who could only identify herself in relationship to husband and children.

"She didn't make her own mark until she reached her late 50's" said the speaker, describing the difficult time after her father's death when her mother was considered too old for employment at age 39. "It took several years before she became a nurse's aid and eventually a practicing nurse helping dying patients in a tuberculosis hospital."

Loisdotter recalled finding the few surviving diary booklets from a house fire 20 years ago.

"I was thrilled and read it like a novel." One poem, entitled "Eighty Two," included the lines "If they call me an old lady, why do they do it? If I am an old lady I never knew it."

Loisdotter also shared tales of her crone grandmother who took a train west in 1886, worked as a logging camp cook and used the same strong, spicy language as the fellows.

"She told jokes and played jokes on people," Loisdotter recalled, including the time the grandmother disguised herself as a tramp with false beard, fooling the kids into giving her a meal.

"We tried to make a lady out of her, but she was a wonderful, strong, independent, woman who never let anyone tell her what to do."

Loisdotter teaches memoir writing classes for senior women 62-94 who have become more outspoken.

The national OWL group was founded in 1980. "We got our chapter going early 1983," recalled Executive Director Ruth Curtie, who at 79, considers herself "a wise old owl" and charter member of the national organization. For more information on club activities call her at 721-0848.

Mediation Center to Get Another Year's Funding

Commissioner Kafoury will ask City Council for \$404,000 in next year's budget

By LEE PERLMAN

Commissioner Gretchen Kafoury will ask City Council for \$404,000 in next year's budget to operate the Neighborhood Mediation Program, as a committee she appointed has recommended.

The appropriation will pay for an interim director, three full-time mediation specialists and an office manager, its current staff, plus an upgrading of its computer and phone system. If approved by the rest of City Council, it would be a reversal, or at least postponement, of last year's decision to cut the budget to \$200,000 and contract the services out to private agencies. Its budget in fiscal year 1996-97 was \$336,000.

The proposal was the preferred choice of four options developed by a nine-member advisory committee formed in December. Other options called for allocating \$200,000 for 2.5 positions, \$308,000 for 3.75 positions, or \$474,000 for six positions. Under the last proposal, there would be a full-time volunteer coordinator.

The report said that under any scenario, the center should put much more effort into training and utilizing volunteer mediators, maintain an advisory

committee, develop and use performance measures, seek ongoing funding from other sources, and do "community outreach" to build support for the program.

Still to be determined is what will happen to the program and its services at the end of next year.

The committee made no recommendations but did suggest the city send out a Request for Qualifications, asking private and non-profit mediators to suggest how they would provide mediation services on contract.

The Neighborhood Mediation Program helps individuals having disputes to reach written, but non-binding, resolutions to their problems. It is a part of the city's Office of Neighborhood Involvement, and as such reports to Kafoury.

Judith Mowry, co-chair of the advisory committee was torn between scenarios B (\$308,000), and C (\$404,000).

The lower-cost proposal would be "more in keeping with the (budget-cutting) spirit of Measure 47," she says. However, she says, the more expensive proposal would more quickly "build capacity" in the program that it would need if it tries to operate independently next year. "We needed to develop some razzle-dazzle, and you can't do that for

\$300,000," she says.

The committee felt that the program's weakest element was its lack of volunteers, and lack of connection to the community. In other mediation programs, Mowry says, volunteers perform the bulk of the work.

Kafoury was unavailable for comment. Aide Mary Carroll says she was impressed by the committee's work and the persuasiveness of its arguments.

Last year Council approved \$200,000 for the program and called for its services to be transferred to the private sector by year's end.

Late last year, after the death of director Emmanuel Paris and protests by the program's supporters, Council allocated another \$93,000 and extended the transition period to June.

The committee concluded that the transition could not occur so rapidly without harm to the program or its services.

Former ONI director Diane Linn, who conceived the transition idea, "was convinced you could get the same level of services for \$200,000 from a non-profit, and convinced Council to do it," Mowry says. "They later realized it wasn't that simple."

The Hawthorne Bridge Is Closed

Dear Citizens,

The closure of the Hawthorne Bridge will be inconvenient for many of us.

That's why we asked the community to consider options for bridge repair and chose the plan that had the most support. That plan calls for a total closure of the bridge to allow for completion of the work as quickly as possible.

This project will take a year to complete because it includes repainting the bridge, replacing the deck, widening the sidewalks and replacing the drums and ropes that help lift the span. An added complication is the need to protect the river below from the lead based paint on the bridge. This is a big job.

If we all work together we can minimize disruption and traffic delays by choosing the best transportation alternatives.

The reward for our patience and inconvenience will be a safer bridge that will last longer and better accommodate all users.

Thanks for your cooperation,
Beverly Stein
Multnomah County Chair

Day Light Savings Time Is Here!!

☀ "Spring Forward" ☀

Don't Forget To Set Your Clocks