

# How Oregon Protects Children

GUEST OPINION BY KAY TORAN, DIRECTOR OF THE STATE OFFICE FOR SERVICES TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Knowing in which families children will be abused or reabused is not a science. Child protective service professionals, in conjunction with law enforcement and judicial partners, base decisions on the information we have.

Even with perfect information, there is still room for error. The following are some of the questions we are most frequently asked about child protective services.

Q. If a parent spans a child, is it considered child abuse?

Parents have a right to discipline their children. Simply spanking is not child abuse. However, tissue damage such as bruises, welts, or lacerations may be signs of child abuse and must be investigated.

Q. How does Services to Children and Families respond to a report of child abuse or neglect?

SCF assesses the family situation to determine whether abuse or neglect has occurred and if the child is at risk of further abuse.

Q. What is the difference between SCF's assessment of suspected child

abuse and a criminal investigation and prosecution?

The two systems may operate at the same time but they are independent. SCF is part of the social service system designed to protect children by helping families. SCF does not prosecute. Law enforcement and the courts make up the criminal justice system that is designed to protect the community, including children, and to punish offenders.

Q. What happens if SCF determines that abuse or neglect has occurred? When possible, children remain in their homes. SCF offers services to strengthen families so children are safe in their own homes. Family resource workers teach parents basic physical and emotional care of children, hygiene practices, nutrition, and how to run a household, including budgeting.

Q. What if a child can't be kept safely at home?

Where a child is in immediate danger, Oregon statute permits law enforcement or SCF to place a child in protective custody. SCF first looks to relatives for a temporary placement and then to foster parents in a family setting.

Q. What can parents do if a child protective service worker removes a child from their home?

Within 24 hours of a child's removal, a juvenile court judge reviews the need to place the child. At this hearing parents are expected to attend and may bring legal representation. SCF's goal is to see that parents are always closely involved in planning what must be done to make the home a safe and healthy environment before the child is returned.

Q. What if a child in foster care can't be returned home?

If a child cannot be safely reunited with a parent, SCF will find an alternative plan such as adoption, guardianship or long-term relative care. If adoption is the goal, a family that best matches the child's needs is recruited.

Q. Is SCF held accountable for its decisions and actions?

SCF operates within a system of checks and balances. Judges, counselors, law enforcement officers, Citizens Review Boards, and court-appointed special advocates are involved in ongoing review of SCF decisions.

# ANNOUNCEMENT Pamplin Fellows Present The 3rd Annual "Increase the Peace" All-Star Basketball Game

The "Increase the Peace" All-Star Basketball Game is a yearly event designed to foster community unity and promote non-violence. This year's event is scheduled for March 16, 1999 at 7:00 p.m., and will take place in the gymnasium at the Center for Self Enhancement (3920 N. Kerby St.).

The game will pit some of today's standout high school prep basketball players like Pamplin Fellow Ben Coffee and Terrence Greene from Benson High School, Brandon Brooks and Pamplin Fellow Andre Lawrence from Jefferson High School, against SEI All-Star staffers such as former College All-American Phil Hopson and Steve Adams, a member of the Benson High School '83 State Championship Squad, also a former college player for the Idaho Vandals.

With all of the heated competition and attention this year in the Prep sports arena, the Pamplin Fellows feel this is an excellent opportunity to motivate the youth of their community towards making positive choices

when faced with the pressures of drugs, gangs, and violence.

### ABOUT THE PAMPLIN PROJECT:

The Self Enhancement, Inc. (SEI) Pamplin Project is a high school leadership program funded by local businessman Dr. Robert B. Pamplin, Jr., with thirty student "Fellows" participating from Benson, Grant, and Jefferson High Schools. The project encourages and empowers young adults to use their natural skills of influence to persuade peers to make positive choices when confronted with teen pressures such as drugs, gangs, and violence. The premise is simple: give young adults a chance to live and learn by positive influence and they will, through their own natural ability, persuade their peers to make positive decisions when confronted with the challenges of growing up in today's inner-city. The Pamplin Fellows believe that giving back to the community programs, they will positively

influence their peers, and serve as role models to inner-city teenagers within the community.

### ABOUT SELF ENHANCEMENT, INC. (SEI)

Founded in 1981 by Tony Hopson, SEI is a non-profit organization committed to helping Portland's inner-city youth make positive choices to achieve their full potential. Located in north Portland, SEI provides young people with constructive options for personal success to help them avoid the pitfalls of drugs, gangs and violence. Today, SEI serves 1,200 school-age youth with services in 11 Portland public schools in north/northeast Portland as well as in after school and summer programs in its new Center for Self Enhancement. SEI has been recognized as a national model of youth violence prevention by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and was ranked in the top 100 of President George Bush's Thousand Points of Light.

# New Cost Estimate For Siting Women's Prison Shows Day Road Is Cheaper Than Umatilla

Representative Merkley released a new budget analysis comparing the cost of siting a Women's Prison and a co-gender Intake Facility (WPIC) at Day Road and the cost of siting it in Umatilla.

This analysis, prepared by the Legislative Fiscal Office in Salem, shows that siting the WPIC at Day Road results in \$29.4 million in savings. This analysis modifies a preliminary analysis that suggested savings of approximately \$90 million for siting the prison in Umatilla.

Also, Representative Merkley observed that the savings for Day Road over Umatilla increase to \$35.4 million if one adds into the analysis the \$6 million in special payments that the House Water and the

Environment Committee has voted to send to Umatilla.

Representative Merkley noted that "This new cost analysis corrects the mistaken impression that Umatilla is cheaper. Since cost is a big factor in the decision on siting the prison, I expect this analysis to influence the debate. Previously, it was reasonable to argue that we should save money by siting the prison in Umatilla. The same argument now leads to Day Road."

"The Change in the numbers," Representative Merkley noted, "is the result of completing the preliminary analysis. That analysis didn't supply a complete plan for Umatilla under both the Day Road and Umatilla scenarios. Thus, it didn't

reflect that using the second half for a man's prison is much more efficient than using the second half of the Umatilla site for a women's prison and co-gender intake facility. Also, the preliminary analysis didn't reflect that using the second half of the Umatilla site for a women's prison and intake facility means that the state must create another site for the men who would otherwise have been housed at Umatilla."

"To put it another way, the savings realized from operating two men's prisons at Umatilla more than offset the high costs of building and operating the WPIC at Day Road. Representative Merkley can be reached in Salem at (503) 986-1416 or via email at merkley.rep@state.or.us.

# Concert-Goers: 1 Ticketmaster: 0

State Rep. Ryan Deckert (D-Beaverton) has introduced a bill to stop ticket vendors from gouging consumers with unreasonable surcharges on tickets to concerts and sporting events held in venues built with public funds.

"These outrageous charges are a double hit on the taxpayers. When people have paid their tax dollars to build and maintain a facility," Rep. Deckert said, "it is appalling to charge them huge fees to attend events in these venues. It's like being charged rent to live in a house that you already own. It's a racket."

Stiff surcharges of up to 70% of a

ticker's face value are applied at just about any event requiring the advance purchase of a ticket at venues all over, from the Rose Garden to the Schnitzer. Attendees have no choice but to buy tickets through a vendor, and these vendors can charge as much as they want on top of the ticket cost.

The days of paying in service charges are numbered if Deckert's HB 2728 passes the Oregon Legislature. HB 2728 limits service charges to 15% of the face value of the ticket for events at venues built or maintained with public funds.

This bill would be the first

legislative action in the nation protecting citizens from the exorbitant fees Ticketmaster and other vendors impose on concert-goers and sports fans.

In the past, high-publicity suits arguing that Ticketmaster is a monopoly have failed. Rep. Deckert's bill tries a different approach by focusing on the types of venues Ticketmaster is contracting with and the relationship that taxpayers have to these venues.

HB 2728 has been assigned to the House Commerce Committee and is awaiting a hearing.

# Community Forum Focuses On Preventing Youth Suicides

Youth suicide prevention is the topic of a community forum scheduled for March 18 from 6:00 to 9:00 pm at the Portland State Office Building, 800 NE Oregon Street in Portland.

The forum will raise awareness about teen suicide and gather local input into a statewide prevention plan that is currently being developed, according to Ron Bloodworth, youth suicide prevention coordinator at the Oregon Health Division.

"Suicide is the second-leading cause of death for young people in Oregon, and reaches into every corner of the state. Youth suicide is also a

public health problem that can be prevented," says Bloodworth. "This forum is an opportunity to raise awareness, and for members of the community to help identify strategies to prevent youth suicide."

A 1998 Health Division report showed that one in five Oregon high school students reported they had considered suicide and that the suicide rate for 15-to-19-year olds has increased more than five-fold over the last 35 years. Oregon is 17<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation for youth suicide, according to Bloodworth.

The Portland forum is one of twelve

being held around the state. Input from the forums will be compiled and developed into a final statewide plan for youth suicide prevention. Members of the planning team represent different disciplines and different geographic areas of the state. They have been involved in the project for six months, since returning from a national suicide prevention conference in Nevada last October. Anyone wanting more information about the Portland forum can call Dr. Kirk Wolfe at 503-236-4343 or Ron Bloodworth, youth suicide prevention coordinator at the Oregon Health Division, 503-731-4978.


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# Commission Seeks Members

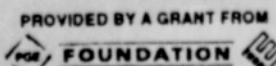
The Multnomah County Commission on Children, Families and Community seeks prospective members to apply for volunteer service. Successful applicants are appointed by the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners for four year terms and are responsible for setting social policy and making funding allocations for a wide range of social change initiatives. Members are asked to make a minimum commitment of four hours per month. Community advocate, and under-represented groups including low income people are encouraged to apply. Members are eligible for reimbursement of transportation, child care and other costs.




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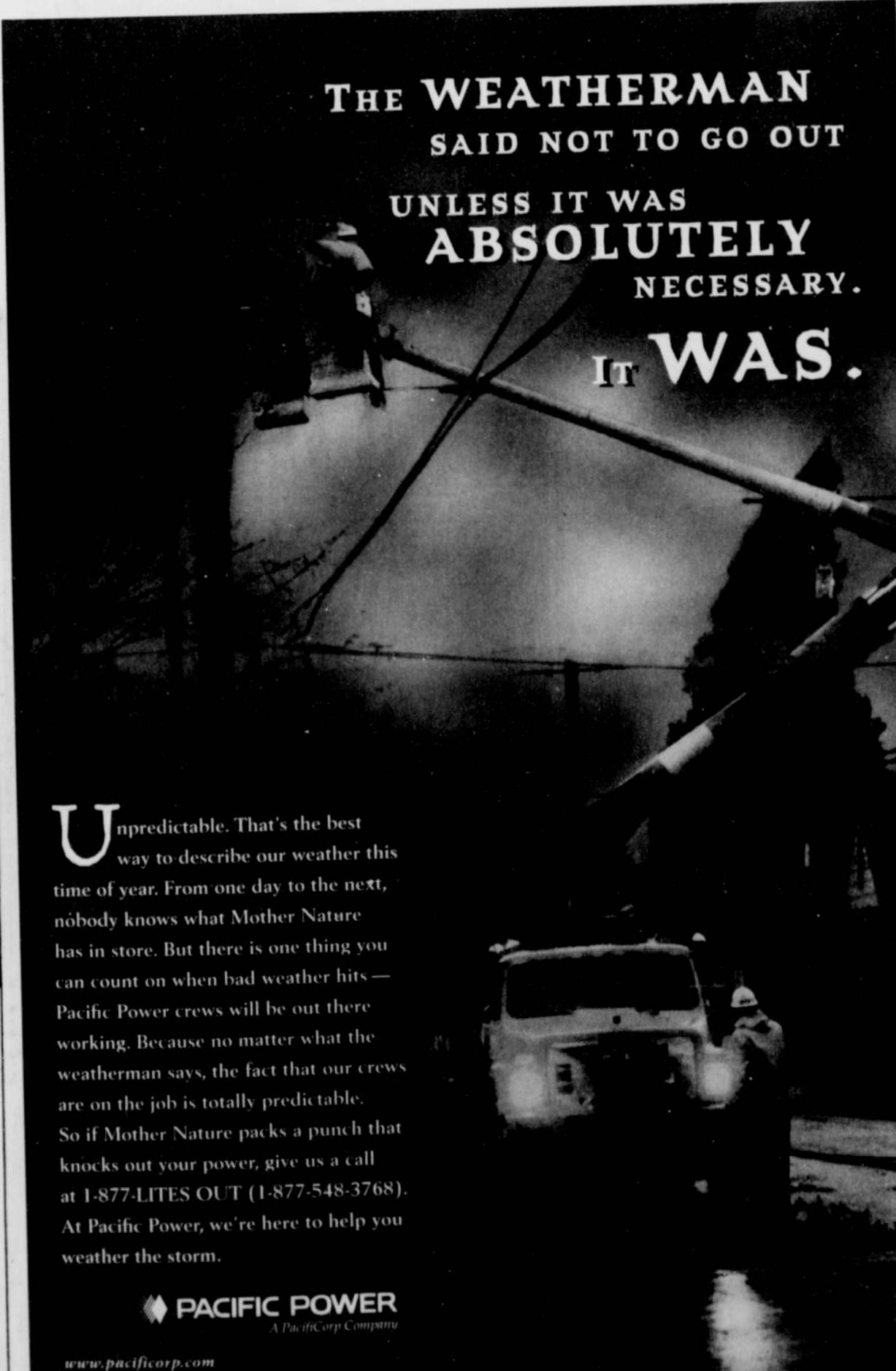
- Create a story with pictures on the Internet
- Participate in fun indoor and outdoor games and activities
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