

Family Living

The dangers of methamphetamine

BY BARBARA CIMAGLIO
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
"It's a very bad drug. It ruins your family and your life." That warning about methamphetamine didn't come from a government official or drug-treatment expert, it comes straight from a meth user. It's part of a report on methamphetamine users in five western cities, including Portland, by

the U.S. Department of Justice. Implied throughout the report is a theme that I take every opportunity to communicate to Oregonians: Parents must understand the dangers of drugs, and talk to their children if we're going to break the cycle of drug abuse. Methamphetamine, with nicknames such as meth, crank, zip, glass, and even "load of laundry,"

probably is the most frightening of the illegal drugs because of the violent and destructive behavior it so often causes among users. Newspapers frequently do articles containing personal stories of meth users. They focus on the damage meth does to families and children, who are high risk for abuse and neglect if a parent

(Please see "meth" on page A6)



Esther Dayman Strong Lectureship in the Humanities and Catlin Gabel School present *From Murder to Reconciliation in South Africa: Storytelling and Social Change*. As reported on 60 Minutes. Peter and Linda Biehl share their journey from the murder of their daughter Amy, beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, toward economic and social change in South Africa. Thursday, October 28, 1999 7:30 p.m. Cabell Center theater in the Catlin Gabel School. This presentation is free of charge and open to the public. For more information, call Peter Eddy, 297-1894, ext. 309.

Property tax statements hit mail this week

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
This year Multnomah County will begin mailing the first of approximately 259,000 real and personal property tax bills on October 19th. These statements have a November 15th due date and if paid in full will receive a three percent discount.

To receive a discount, payment must be postmarked on or before Monday, November 15, 1999. Taxes may also be paid in three installments which are due November 15, 1999, February 15, 2000 and May 15, 2000. Taxpayers are encouraged to pay early to receive the discount, avoid holiday mailing delays, and avoid interest on delinquent payments.

The total of all property taxes and special assessments to be collected for all districts in the County for 1999 is \$740.5 million, an increase of 3.7% over last year's \$713.9 million. The primary reasons for the \$26.6 million increase are the required 3 percent increase in assessed value and plus value added by new construction.

Measure 50 required a roll back of the 1997-98 assessed value to the 1995-96 level minus 10%. Each subsequent year the constitutional amendment allows the Maximum Assessed Value to increase by 3% annually unless it exceeds the Real Market Value of the property. Thus the assessed value of most properties increased by 3% over last year. New construction or new additions to a property are specific types of "exceptions" for which larger increases in the assessed value are allowed. The Real Market Value of these exceptions is reduced to give the owner tax savings similar to existing properties.

Ballot Measure 5, approved by the voters in 1990, is still in effect. This measure created a permanent limitation on taxes of \$10 per \$1000 of Real Market Value for education. Within Multnomah County, tax rates on individual statement vary because property taxes support 54 local government-taxing districts; most of which have different boundaries. These districts include education districts, and various branches of local government (cities, the County, local fire districts, Metro, Tri-Met and the Port of Portland).

This year a typical home in Portland with a Real Market Value of around \$150,000 will have an Assessed Value of \$108,470 and will be taxed \$2,176, which is a 1.65% increase over last year. A similarly valued home in

Gresham will pay \$1,840, an increase of 1.29%.

Value change notices are part of the tax statement. Taxpayers will have the opportunity to file value appeals with the Board of Property Tax Appeals until December 31, 1999. The Board will convene on Tuesday, February 1, 2000 and hear appeals through April 15, 2000. Taxpayers who are concerned that the 1999/2000 real market value and/or the assessed value is too high may contact the Board of Property Tax Appeals at 503-248-5241 to receive a petition for appeal, or a brochure that outlines the appeal process. The Board is located at 501 SE Hawthorne Street, Fourth Floor.

To determine if their 1999/2000 real market value is too high, taxpayers should ask themselves if they could sell their property for the Real Market Value shown on the tax bill. If not, they may want to research recent sales in their neighborhood in order to support their request for a lower value. Multnomah County has sales data at their public research counters in room 309 at 421 SW 6th Avenue. Note: A reduction in the real market value may not change your tax bill unless the real market value is reduced below the maximum assessed value.

To help taxpayers understand what their tax dollars pay for, Multnomah County includes an "Important Tax Information" circular with all statements. This enclosure also includes payment instructions and information on the appeal process. In addition, Multnomah County has a general tax information phone number 503-248-3326.

The Multnomah County Division of Assessment and Taxation is located at 421 SW 6th Avenue. Tax payments can be made on the 3rd Floor, Room 300.

However, it is recommended that payments be mailed to P.O. Box 2716, Portland, Oregon 97208-2716.

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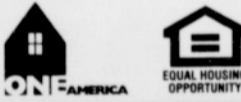
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