



# Family

## Electrical safety ensures happier holidays

CONTRIBUTED STORY  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

One of the greatest gifts you can give your family this year will never appear under your tree—it's the gift of safety. Shannon Shoul, local Pacific Power spokeswoman, offered several suggestions to help ensure a safe holiday season.

For families decorating for the holidays, some key tips to keep in mind:

- Never use indoor lights outdoors.
- Check for frayed wires or uncapped plugs.
- Only using a ladder to hang lights, keep at least 10 feet away from any overhead power lines. And fasten outdoor lights to trees or house walls to protect them from wind damage.
- Never modify three-pronged plugs to fit into two-pronged sockets.
- Don't overload extension cords or outlets.
- Test extension cords. If they're hot to the touch, it's likely a sign of a serious problem. And always turn off holiday lights when leaving home.

Shoul said other at-home safety tips should also be noted.

- Be sure that all electronic gifts are UL approved.
  - Don't use appliances with frayed wires or uncapped plugs.
  - Unplug electronic appliances and toys by pulling the plug, not the cord.
- Also, children should be reminded of the basic rules of electrical safety. Keep electrically-powered games, toys and appliances away from water and keep little hands away from wires, cords and outlets. Grownups also should help children heed the safety precautions that are included with games, toys and other electronic items.

"During the holidays and throughout the year, always think twice about safety," Shoul said. "And remember the most basic rule of all—use common sense."

## Preparing Blended Families to Deal with the holidays

BY COLLEEN LEWIS, WILLIAM TEMPLE HOUSE  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The holidays can be especially stressful for blended families with "hers," "his" and "our" children. Here are some practical and timely tips for easing the stress of the upcoming holidays on separated, divorced or re-married parents and their children.

**Children come first**—Remember, the children didn't have a choice about the divorce, so they need to know they are not the cause. The adults must see that the children's needs come first, and work to accommodate those needs. Especially in planning for and celebrating the holidays.

**Plan for the holidays**—Acknowledge the added complications of blended families and plan now on how you will deal with the holidays, who will be where and when. The holidays often involve travel, so start making preparations now, ahead of time.

**Include the children**—Adults aren't the only ones who feel stressed this time of year. The excitement and disrupted routine so prevalent in the

holiday season can be even more stressful on children. So, have a family meeting. Include the children, no matter how young. Ask them what they'd like and respect their wishes. Keep things as simple as possible.

**Pay special attention to younger children**—Ask them about their favorite holiday traditions and honor them if possible. It's different with older children. They may enjoy blending family holiday traditions. It's very important, however, that different religions in a new family system be honored and supported. For example, celebrate both Christmas and Hanukkah. It's vital to maintain continuity for the children.

**Children are often confused in divorce**—It's normal for youngsters in any household to play their parents against each other. The more they have been impacted by the divorce, the needier they will be. That means the adults have to communicate and be in agreement on how they can provide as much continuity as possible between the two households. But be realistic. There are limits. A good solution is to try

alternating holidays, so one holiday can be celebrated at mom's, another one at dad's. It's essential to plan in advance. Do not split up the day.

**Don't be alone**—if the kids are going to be at the other parent's for Christmas or Hanukkah this year, you need to plan something special for yourself. You can plan a get-together with other adults, or do some holiday volunteer work or just go to a movie or for a hike with friends.

**One big family is fine**—sometimes it is possible for the biological parents and new partners to all celebrate the holidays together with their children. In fact, this is the ideal. It's great if you can do it, but it's ok if you can't. When the family gets older—the focus in planning for the holidays is on the needs of the children. But it doesn't end when they become adults. As members of your family mature, leave home and start their own families, their lives may be complicated by having four separate households to visit at holiday time.

**Help is available**—For families dealing

with separation and divorce or blending new family units, there is help. William Temple House in NW Portland offers counseling, classes and emergency services, at no cost. Phone: (503) 226-3021.

Colleen Lewis has been at William Temple House since 1991. As Director of Family Therapy, Ms. Lewis provides clinical supervision for interns and counselors who see 30-40 families a month. She also is a parent-trainer and is skilled in the various aspects of family dynamics. Ms. Lewis holds an M.S. in Counseling from Portland State University and has done graduate work at Reed College. The mission of William Temple House, a non-profit organization founded in 1965, is to provide counseling, social services and training without charge, and to preserve human dignity while promoting self-sufficiency. Services are available regardless of age, race, religion, gender, marital status or income. Located in Northwest Portland, William Temple House serves people in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

## Applebee's and the National Kidney Foundation provide toys for the kidney kids this holiday

CONTRIBUTED STORY  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Applebee's restaurants will collect toys this holiday at eight of their locations throughout Portland, Salem and Vancouver for kids who are directly affected by kidney disease through the National Kidney Foundation of Oregon & Washington (NKF\_OSOW). Over 200 kids will receive games, new clothes and other toys through Applebee's "Wish Tree" and anyone can help. By selecting a tag from the return it to Applebee's these are gifts for kids where toys and new clothes are often a luxury these families can't afford to provide their children. General public contributions are also welcome to help NKF-OW provide their children. Some holiday cheer to these families struggling with kidney disease, dialysis treatments or waiting for an organ transplant. We need financial support and volunteers to help in this campaign. Please contact the National Kidney Foundation of Oregon & Washington at 1-888-3 KIDNEY with your support, visit your local Applebee's and drop-off a toy or new clothing. Together we are Making Lives Better. Petitions are available from state employment service offices or other officials designated by the governor. Based on the petitions, the Labor Department investigates to confirm whether workers were adversely affected by increased Mexican or Canadian imports or by transfer of production to those countries.

After they are certified eligible, workers may apply for benefits at a state employment service office. They may receive a broad range of reemployment and retraining services, including career counseling, job placement assistance, job search and relocation allowances, income support during long-term training, and under the regular TAA program support service such as child care and transportation assistance. Benefits are administered by the Employment Department, State of Oregon, with funds provided by the federal government.

## Human rights award dinner

Join other supporters of human rights at the Metropolitan Human Rights Center Annual Award Dinner, a highlight will be the presentation of the Russell Peyton Award, an honor given every year since 1973 to our most dedicated human rights advocates.

Nominations for the Russell Peyton and other awards are earnestly requested. Send one page with at least three reasons supporting your nominee to: The Metropolitan Human Rights Center, 1120 SW Fifth Avenue, Room 516, Portland, Oregon 97204. Call 823-5136 with questions or reservations.

To be presented:

The Russell A. Peyton Award to an individual for "outstanding service and commitment to protecting the human rights of all persons within the City of Portland and Multnomah County."

Business Diversity Award to a business outstanding for its success in recruiting and maintaining a diverse workforce. Must be located in Multnomah County.

Non-Profit Diversity Award to a non-for-profit organization maintaining a diverse workforce and embodying cross-cultural values in its work. Must be located in Multnomah County.

Community Harmony Recognition to individuals or organizations who cross ethnic and cultural lines to respond to injustice and promote harmony in daily life.

### African American Men's Club

A Non-Profit Organization  
'In the community... For the community'  
Happy Holidays!

Holiday Benefit Dance  
(Helping Those Who Are In Need)  
Donation: \$5 & 2 Cans of Food  
(At the Door)  
Raffle: 50/50 Split  
Food, Friends & Fun  
Saturday, December 11, 1999  
9 PM - 2 AM  
Elks Lodge  
6 N Tillamook Street  
Music by: DJ Papa Chuck

## Dad's Oil Inc.

is pleased to have provided commercial fueling, Off Road Diesel and Heating Oil Services for the following companies:

- Intel Site - Jones Farm 4 - Ronier Acres Hillsboro, OR
- Seattle Stud Welding - Kent WA
- CleanPak Systems - Renton, WA
- Harder Mechanical Contractors - Portland, OR
- Western Concrete Pumping Company - Tigard, OR
- C & J Rebar - Beaver Creek, OR
- Western Partitions - Tigard, OR
- Streimer Sheet Metal Works - Portland, OR
- Drake - Portland, OR
- L.H. Sowles Company - Billings, MT
- Performance Contracting - Portland, OR

If you are in need of this type of service, contact:  
Dad's Oil Inc., 104 N.E. Russell, Portland, OR  
97212 PH: (503) 282-5111

## Become a community peacemaker!

CONTRIBUTED STORY  
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Neighborhood Mediation Center is seeking community members to serve as volunteer mediators.

Mediators help Portland resident have constructive conversations and work out peaceful solutions to everyday conflicts. Women and men

of all ages, cultures ethnicities and background are encouraged to apply. Mediation training is free in exchange for volunteering three hours a week for at least one year.

The Portland Neighborhood Mediation Center has helped Portland residents resolve neighborhood and community disputes since 1978.

Mediators assist neighbors, landlords and tenants, schools, consumers, businesses, government agencies, and community groups throughout the city.

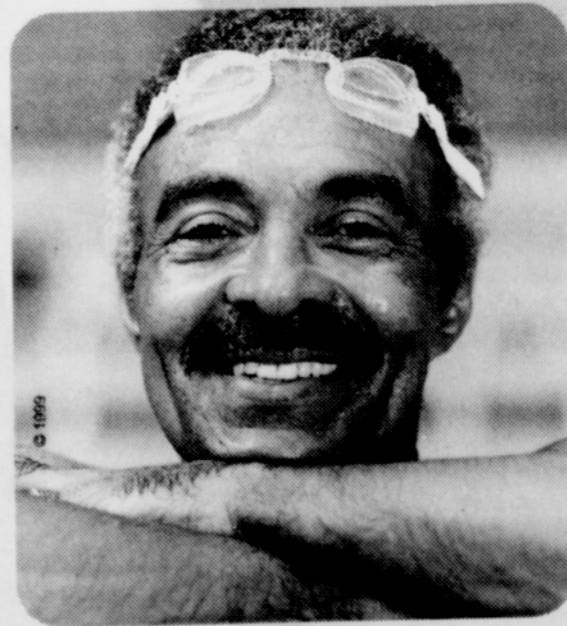
Application deadline: December 31, 1999. Call 823-3152, or stop by the Mediation Center office at 4815 NE 7th AVE. Portland, for application information and materials.

Imagine this: You're proud of the children you raised. Your grandkids are talented and beautiful, too. The reality of retirement has finally arrived and it's even better than the fantasy

# You have family behind you.

You couldn't have done it without family behind you. American Family Mutual Insurance. When it comes to your future, over 70 years in the insurance business is experience you can trust. With over six million policies in an operating area of 14 states and a consistent rating of A+ (Superior) from insurance rating authority A.M.

Best, we've got the kind of stability that invites you to relax. And isn't that precisely what you had in mind? So, call today and talk to a helpful, friendly agent. Then dive right in. We'll be close behind you.



All Your Protection Under One Roof.

American Family Mutual Insurance Company and its Subsidiaries, Madison, WI 53783-0001 www.amfam.com