



# Business



## Second death causes Burger King to urge customers to discard Pokemon toys

CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Burger King Corp. are again urging consumers to immediately destroy and discard Pokemon balls distributed with Burger King kids meals in November and December, 1999. On January 25, 2000, a 4-month-old boy in Indianapolis, Indiana, reportedly suffocated when one-half of a Pokemon ball that was in his crib became stuck on his face.

Burger King Corporation, in cooperation with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, issued a voluntary recall of more than 25 million Pokemon balls on December 27, 1999. The balls may pose a suffocation hazard to children under three years of age.

In December, a 13-month-old girl reportedly suffocated when one-half of a Pokemon ball covered her nose and mouth. Also in December, an 18-month-old girl nearly suffocated when a ball half got stuck over her face. On the second attempt, the girl's father was able to pull the ball half from her face.

Pokemon balls are plastic, ball-shaped containers between 2.75 and 3 inches in diameter. They pull apart to reveal one of 57 different Pokemon toys inside. The balls were distributed in a variety of colors including red and white, and hot pink. Packaging described them as safety tested and recommended for all ages of children.

Burger King restaurants nationwide distributed the Pokemon balls inside Burger King Big Kids Meals and regular kids meals from early

November through December, 1999. Consumers should immediately take the balls away from children under the age of three. They should discard the ball or return both halves of the ball and the clip to a Burger King restaurant for a free order of small fries. Children can continue to use the Pokemon toy that came inside the ball.

As part of the voluntary recall effort, more than 8,100 Burger King restaurants posted recall notices in both English and Spanish. When the recall was first announced, Burger King placed an ad in USA Today, and CPSC broadcast a video news release so local television stations could use video tape showing the danger. CPSC Chairman Ann Brown also announced the recall on the Today show reaching millions of viewers.

## State Farm sponsors "Kids Day"



Heather Tanner and her child were entertained Sunday at the Portland Auto show by Bizzy the clown.

February 6 was State Farm Insurance Kids Day at the Portland Auto Show. All children 12 and under got in free with a paying adult.

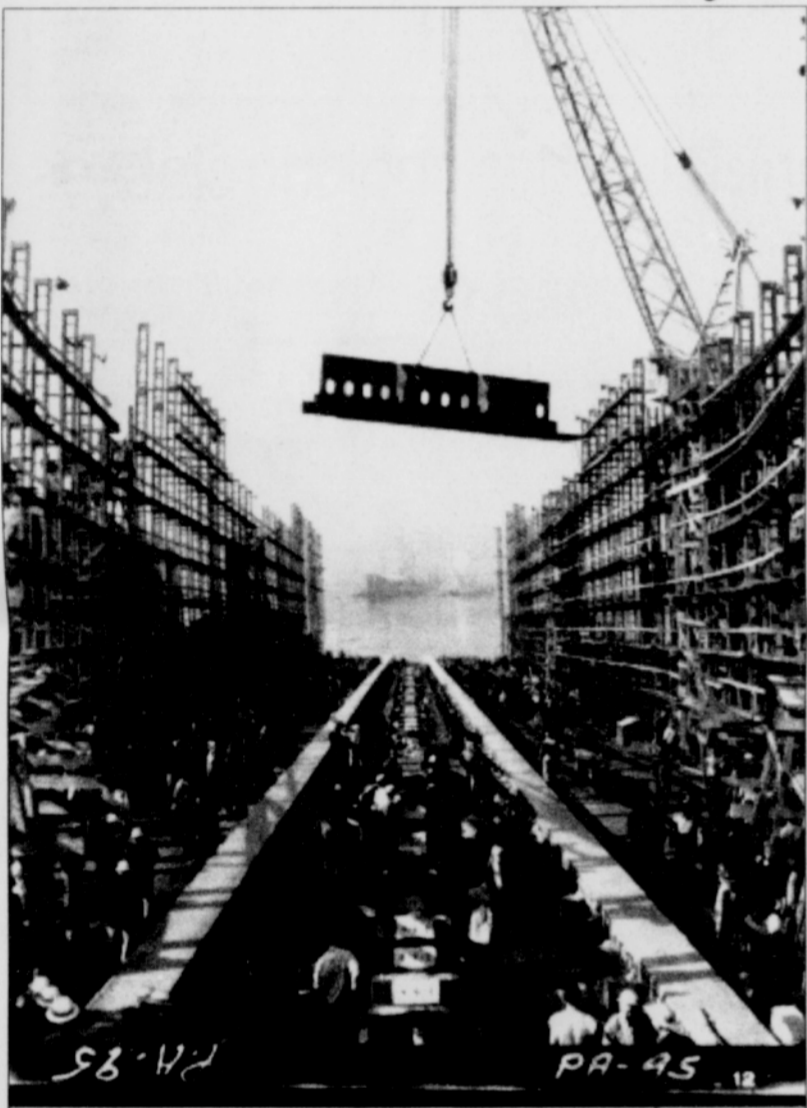
On this special day "Bizzy the clown" was handing out balloon animals and performing magic tricks; Ronald McDonald and friends performed in the "Big Red

Shoe Revue" and State Farm "Good Neigh Bear" was on hand to hand out hugs, candy, and bear ears to all.

State Farm company representatives were available, during the entire four day event, to provide valuable information to car buyers including: instant auto insurance quotes and detailed on-line reports of any new

car available on the market today. Showgoers also had the opportunity to enter a raffle for valuable prizes including \$500 in free gas, and Emergency Roadside Service Kit valued at \$115, and 100 long distance phone minutes. State Farm policyholders picked up a free road atlas just for stopping by.

## Black History Month



During World War II, the war and maritime boom changed the course of Portland history. The ship building industry attracted many people to work. Many Black southerners who had worked for extremely low wages, came to Portland in hopes of doubling and tripling their wages while working less hours. Can you name the shipyard company that attracted many out-of-state Blacks to work for them. They have also founded one of the largest hospitals in Oregon.

Answer: Kaiser.

## Senior property tax deferral deadline is April 17

CONTRIBUTED STORY FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

The Oregon Department of Revenue reminds taxpayers that April 17 is the deadline for filing applications with county assessors for the senior property tax deferral program.

"The senior deferral program allows qualified senior citizens to defer payment of their property taxes on their home," explained Shirley Leiper, supervisor of the department's Senior Deferral Unit. "The state pays the taxes to the county, maintains the account, and charges 6 percent simple interest, which is also deferred."

Taxes and interest must be repaid when the taxpayer dies, sells the property, changes ownership, or ceases to live permanently on the property.

To qualify, senior citizens must be 62 years of age or older by April 15 of the year they apply, must live on the property which is the taxpayer's principle residence, and must have a deed or recorded sales contract. The total household income must be less than \$24,500 for the year before application. Once on the program, senior citizens need an adjusted gross income of \$29,000 or less to continue to participate. Participants can come in and out of the program if their income goes up or down.

A surviving spouse may continue to defer past and future taxes if she/he is at least 59 1/2. A new application is required for surviving spouses or in the case of re-marriage.

Senior citizens can get applications and information about the deferral program by contacting their local county assessor's office.

For additional information, taxpayers may contact the Department of Revenue's Tax Help line at 503-378-4988 or may call toll free within Oregon at 1-800-356-4222. Spanish speakers may call 503-945-

8618. For TTY, the year-round toll-free number within Oregon is 1-800-886-7204. In Salem the number is 503-945-8617. These numbers are answered by machine only and are not for voice use.

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