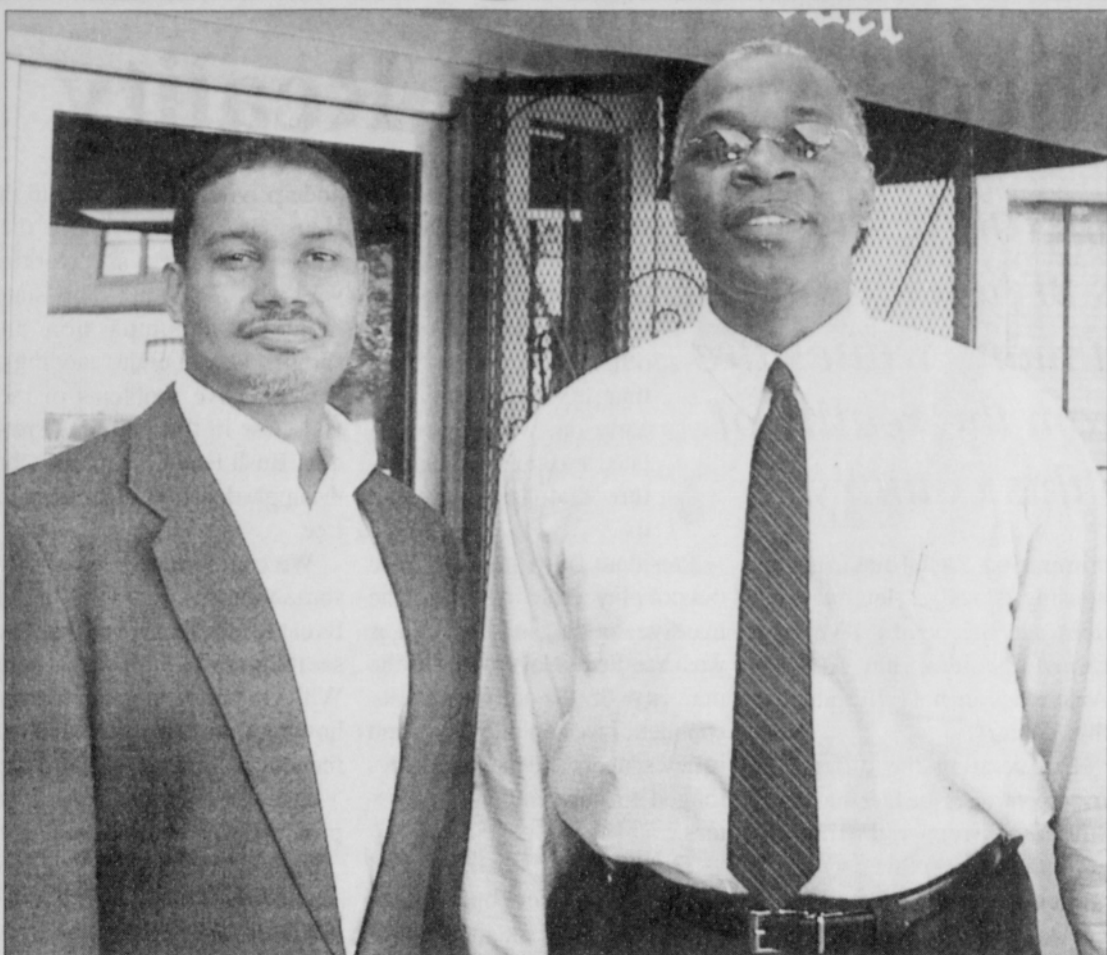


New Drug Benefit Promoted



Important dates for signups ahead

Medicare will be offering new benefits soon, with coverage for preventative screenings and prescription drugs. Everyone with Medicare is eligible for this plan, regardless of income and resources, health status, or current prescription expenses.

Joining the new program is voluntary, with some important paperwork deadlines that are necessary to watch if you'd like to be involved.

In October, a "Medicare and You Handbook" will be sent via mail, outlining details of prescription drug options. The first possible sign up date is Nov. 15, with coverage beginning by Jan. 1. May 15 will be the last day to join the plan. If you change your mind after the May 15 deadline and decide to join, a late enrollment fee will be added.

For more information, call 1-800-MEDICARE or visit www.medicare.gov on the web.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL LEIGHTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Bill Beamer of the African American Health Coalition (left) and Ozell E. Bledsoe, health insurance specialist with the Department of Health and Human Services in Seattle, are spreading the word locally about the new Medicare prescription drug program.

Prescription Drug Benefits Delay Proposed

Republicans are looking at delaying or scrapping the new prescription drug benefit under Medicare to offset the cost of rebuilding the Gulf Coast.

The drug benefit program, set to begin Jan. 1, is expected to cost \$40 billion a year

Democrats question how President Bush and trim the budget to pay for Katrina recover and support tax cuts for the wealthy.

Sen. David Vitter, R-La., said tax increases will not be a part of the recovery plan he intends to offer this week.

Healthy Oregonians Asked to Wait on Flu Shots

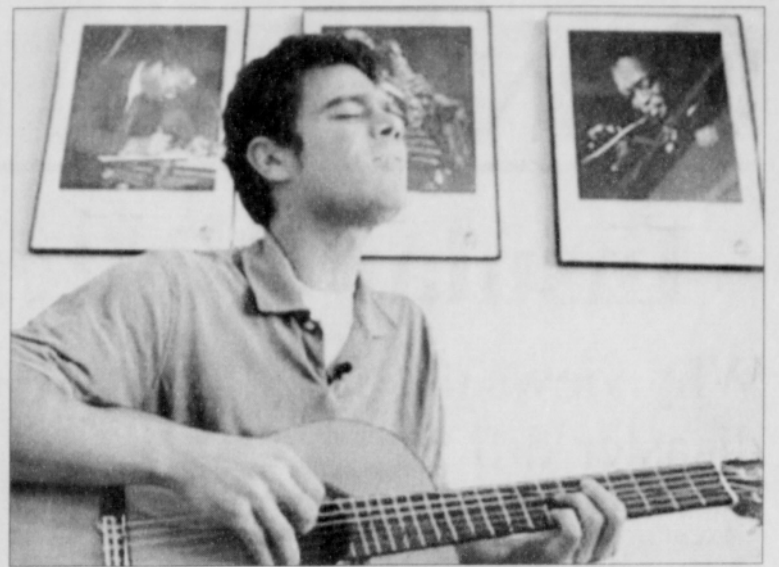
If you don't absolutely need it, the Oregon Department of Human Services is asking people to hold off getting a flu shot until Oct. 24 in an effort to reserve medicine for those at high risk.

Health officials are not expecting the majority of flu vaccine to be available until late October because of various supply issues, but some vaccine shipments are going out this week. Officials are hopeful that there will be more influenza vaccine available than was last year,

but it's still unclear. Through Oct. 23, only people in the following groups should receive flu shots: children ages 6 to 23 months; adults ages 65 and older; residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities; anyone ages 2 to 64

with underlying medical conditions; pregnant women; health-care personnel who provide direct patient care; and out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children under 6 months.

For more information, visit www.dhs.state.or.us.



New Orleans guitarist Jesse Young plays in the Portland Jazz Festival office in Portland. He's just one of a few musicians to be helped with temporary housing after being displaced by Hurricane Katrina. (AP Photo)

Portland Embraces New Orleans Jazz Musicians

Displaced offered temporary homes

The Portland Jazz Festival is helping two New Orleans musicians and a well-known jazz brass band get back on their feet after Hurricane Katrina, offering temporary homes in Portland.

New Orleans residents Devin Phillips, a saxophonist and Jesse Young, a guitarist, are among those being assisted, along with the group Bonerama. The program is working with local businesses to find housing and performance opportunities.

"The word, obviously, is out and we've had a great response by people in the Gulf trying to help musicians," said Sarah Bailen Smith, managing director of the Portland Jazz Festival. "We know these people need a place to live, a

place to practice and venues to play as they rebuild their lives and their careers."

Bonerama, whose members scattered from Shreveport to New Jersey, California, Texas and Arkansas, will perform a benefit concert at the Blue Monk at 3341 S.E. Belmont Street on Saturday Sept. 24 at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$20 on a sliding scale with proceeds going to the Tipitina's musician's fund.

This effort is also receiving substantial support from Mercy Corps and VH1, the television music network.

Those wanting to house the musicians or help this effort can call 503 228-5299 or e-mail at sarah@pdxjazz.com. For more information, visit the Portland Jazz Festival website at www.pdxjazz.com.

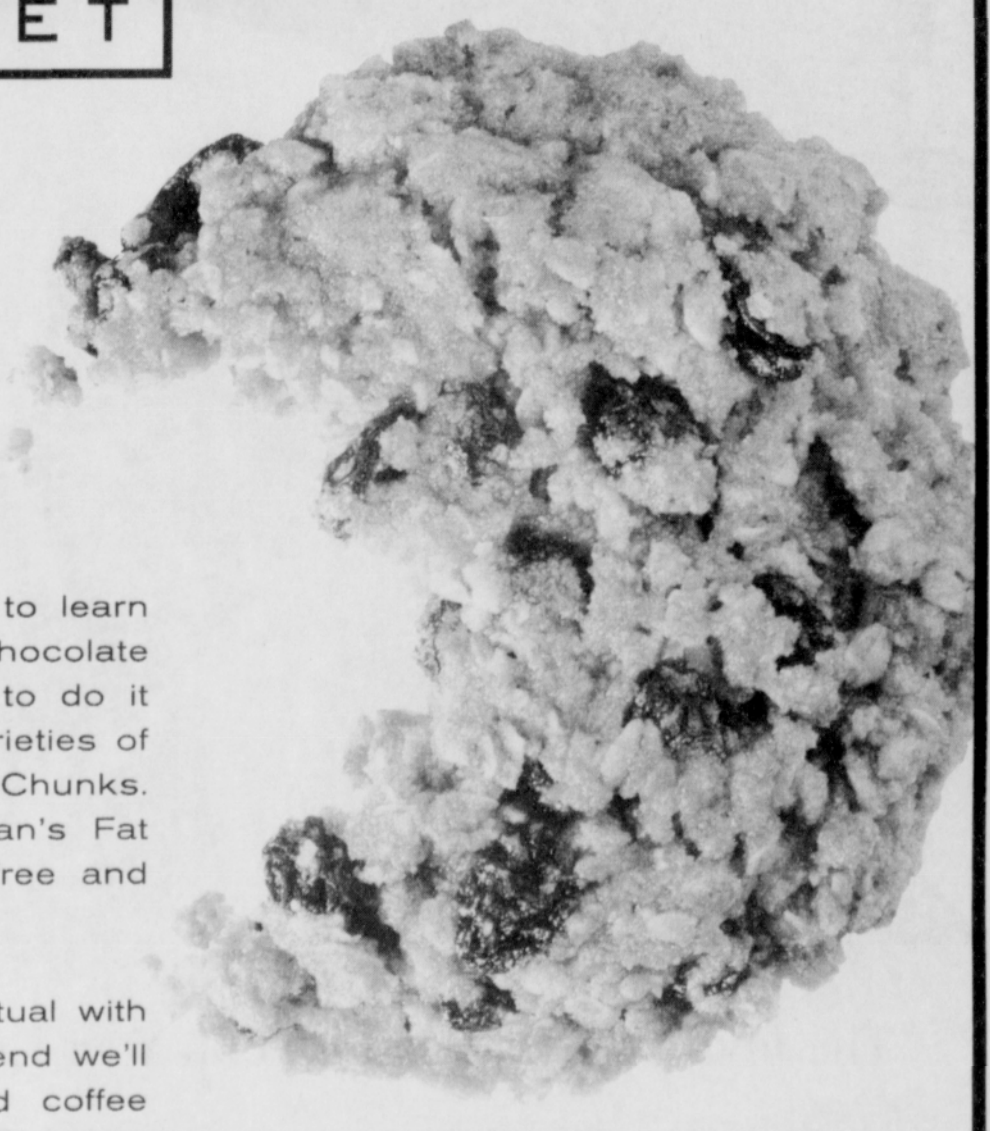
NEW SEASONS MARKET

Don't be a cookie rookie

Cookie & Coffee Tasting
Saturday & Sunday
11:00am-5:00pm

Are you ready to become a cookie connoisseur? There's a lot to learn about the world of snaps, grahams, sandwich, oatmeal, chocolate covered, and low fat cookies - and there's not a better place to do it than at our tasting this weekend. We'll be opening almost 200 varieties of cookies for you to sample. Go for it with the Double Chocolate Chunks. Spice things up with Ginger Snaps. Or, snack lite with Newman's Fat Free Fig Newmans. On a special diet? We have some wheat-free and gluten-free cookie varieties that actually taste good.

If you're a regular coffee drinker you probably have a morning ritual with your favorite cup o' joe. Open yourself up to change! This weekend we'll also be showcasing some of the Northwest's most celebrated coffee roasters. Sample Stumptown, Portland Roasting, Batdorf & Bronson, Equal Exchange, and Tully's. Sip organic, experiment with medium-bodied, dark-roasted, and espresso blends. Try and find a decaf that you actually like. You may find some serious competition for your usual stand-bys.



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