

METRO

The Portland Observer

Happy KWANZAA

Committed to
Cultural Diversity

Community Calendar

Winter Solstice Blood Drive

The 3rd annual Winter Solstice Blood Drive at the American Red Cross on North Vancouver, Dec. 21-23, features free gift-wrapping for participants. To make a blood donation call 1-800-GIVE-LIFE.

Women in NAACP

Women in NAACP meets from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. the first Saturday of each month at the American Red Cross Building, 3131 N. Vancouver. For questions, call 503-249-6263.

Birth Ready

Whether you need childbirth preparation classes, or just a refresher, Providence Health Systems has a workshop for you. Prepare for pain, take a weekend seminar or prepare big sisters and brothers-to-be throughout the summer by visiting www.providence.org/classes or call 503-574-6595.

Parenting Classes

Newborns don't come with instruction manuals but parents and parents-to-be can attend classes through Providence Health Systems to learn about a variety of topics from pain and childbirth to breastfeeding to infant CPR and much more. For a schedule of events, call 503-574-6595 or visit www.providence.org/classes.

Free College Outreach

The first Saturday of each month, from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. high school students will be helped to prepare for college at the Matt Dishman Community Center, 77 N.E. Knott St., through the efforts of Oregon State University.

Red Cross Teaches Safety

The American Red Cross offers a range of safety classes for crisis situations, from learning how to baby sit to performing CPR. The courses are intended for children aged 8 through adult. For more information visit www.redcross-pdx.org.

African Drumming, Dance

The North Star Ballroom, 635 N. Killingsworth Ct., hosts beginning drumming and Ghanaian rhythm classes on Tuesdays at 6 p.m. On Wednesdays, intermediate drumming is offered in addition to an African aerobics and dance. Chata Addy teaches all classes. For more information call 503-632-0411.

Al-Anon Meetings

Al-Anon meetings are held Monday evenings from 7:15 to 8:30 p.m. at Miracles Club on the corner of Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Mason Street. Al-Anon is for friends and loved ones of alcoholics and addicts.

Bradley-Angle House

The Bradley-Angle House needs volunteers to help its outreach against domestic violence. Women of color and bilingual women are encouraged to call. For more information, call 503-282-9940.

Work For Change

Community Advocates invites those interested in protecting children from abuse to become an event volunteer, event outreach, technology expert, graphic artists or office support team member. For more information, call 503-280-1388.

35
years of
community service

Dirty Air Hits Neighborhoods

Pollution brings health dangers

(AP)—Coffee shop owner Eleza Faison grew up in northeast Portland and can't imagine ever wanting to leave what she considers one of the most livable, ethnically diverse neighborhoods in the state.

But Faison, who is black, says she and her 6-year-old daughter Ada are paying a price for staying in an area that, according to a new Associated Press analysis, has some of the worst air in Oregon.

"Ada suffers from asthma, and she didn't go to school on her birthday because she couldn't breathe," Faison, 33, says. "I think a lot of it has to do with the air quality in our neighborhood. We're surrounded by pollution."

The AP analysis shows Oregon's highest levels of air pollution occur in north and northeast Portland, where most of the state's blacks reside, meaning they disproportionately are forced to breathe air that could cause asthma and other serious health problems.

One expert calls it a "crescent of pollution" that surrounds north Portland, a traditionally industrialized area where dozens of industries and businesses pump thousands of pounds of toxins into the air each year.

That might come as a surprise to people who think of Oregon in general and Portland in particular as clean, environmentally friendly places, says Bruce Podobnik, assistant professor of environmental studies at Lewis & Clark College.

"We are a clean state for the most part, but

even within this so-called ecotopia, there are hot spots of pollution problems," Podobnik says. "Unfortunately, these pollution problems coincide with our African American communities."

In Oregon, blacks were more than four times as likely as whites to live in neighborhoods where air pollution likely poses the greatest health dangers, the AP analysis showed.



Sylvia Evans lives in an apartment complex one block from Interstate 5 and thinks diesel exhaust pollution is adding to the large amount of industrial pollution and construction-related air problems in north and northeast Portland. (AP photo)

Unfortunately, these pollution problems coincide with our African American communities.

—Bruce Podobnik, assistant professor of environmental studies at Lewis & Clark College

Nearly five out of every 10 blacks in Oregon live in high-risk neighborhoods, according to the analysis, which is based on industrial pollution and doesn't include risks from other types of air pollution, such as vehicle exhaust.

Some environmental officials and community activists in north Portland say that diesel exhaust from buses and trucks actually plays a larger role than industries in

polluting the air, especially in northeast Portland, which is bordered by heavily traveled freeways.

Sylvia Evans, a north Portland resident who lives in an apartment complex one block from Interstate 5, said she thinks diesel exhaust pollution is adding to the large amount of industrial pollution and construction-related air problems in the area.

"It's bad," Evans says. "When I moved to this complex back in 1990, my oldest daughter was 3 years old, and she never had asthma before."

"Six months after living here, she came down with a really bad asthma attack that landed her in the hospital," she says.

North Portland became home to large numbers of blacks who moved to Oregon during World War II to work in shipbuilding and other defense-related industries, then decided to stay after the war ended.

In recent years, though, north Portland has been undergoing "gentrification," with large numbers of young, white families moving in to take advantage of lower housing prices.

That trend seems a little ironic to Jeri Sundvall, head of the Environmental Justice Action Group, which fights pollution in north Portland.

In the 1950s, Sundvall said, there were many who did what they could to keep blacks in north Portland from moving to other areas of the city.

Sundvall said the white migration to north Portland "shows it's a very desirable neighborhood now," and that she hopes the newcomers will lend their voices to the battle against pollution in the area.

"The reality is, no matter what color you are, we're all breathing the same air," she said.

Police Dogs Search Tri-Met Max Trains

Terrorism security hits home

Portland is joining transportation systems around the world by increasing security against terrorism.

The recent Madrid and London transit bombings have sparked TriMet's first K-9 patrol unit. Pearl, a two-year-old black Labrador retriever and Officer John Blair are responsible for searching for explosives on both MAX trains and buses.

The unit is assigned to TriMet's Transit Police Division and will regularly participate in random security checks.

Officials said the patrols are part of ongoing safety and security enhancements since the overseas blasts.

Blair, an 8-year veteran of the Portland Police Bureau, has worked in the transit division for two years. He and his 55-pound Labrador, graduated from a 10-week training course at the Auburn University Canine Detection Training Center in Alabama.



TriMet General Manager Fred Hansen (from left), Rep. Jackie Dingfelder and TriMet Board of Directors member Sue Van Brocklin adhere a "powered by biodiesel" bumpers ticker to the back of a TriMet LIFT vehicle.

TriMet First to Use Biodiesel

Renewable fuel safer for environment

TriMet is beginning to test biodiesel in 75 buses that provide door-to-door service for elderly and people with disabilities. This move makes TriMet the first transit district in Oregon and one of a handful of transit districts nationally to use biodiesel in its bus fleet.

Biodiesel is a renewable diesel replacement fuel that can be manufactured from domestically produced vegetable oils and used cooking oils. The fuel consists of a blend of 5 percent vegetable oil and used

cooking oil based fuel and 95 percent petroleum diesel, a blend known as B5 biodiesel.

"TriMet has been interested in using biodiesel for some time, and now that high quality biodiesel is available locally and the price of B5 is similar to regular diesel, we're able to move forward on this environmentally friendly fuel," said TriMet General Manager Fred Hansen.

Biodiesel reduces reliance on oil, reduces air pollution and emissions and increases demand for biodiesel in region and will help expand supply.

If all goes well, TriMet plans to have the entire door-to-door LIFT fleet of 210 buses using B5 biodiesel within the year.

HOLIDAY EXPRESS

Trail Blazer Charles Smith and other volunteers from the annual Blazers Community Builders Holiday Express deliver free Christmas trees to the McCormick-Matthews Albina Headstart next to the Rosemont neighborhood of north Portland. Team personnel and other community partners distributed over 1,000 trees donated by Visions Unlimited Tree Farm to agencies serving Portland families.

