

Happy New Year!

Multnomah County Library

JAN - 6 2008

Portland, Oregon



The

Portland Observer

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Wednesday • December 31, 2008

Week in The Review

Minimum Wage Goes Up

Oregon's lowest paid workers will get some help in making ends meet starting on New Year's Day, when a 45-cent hike in the state's minimum wage takes effect. Adjusted for the cost of living, the wage will rise from \$7.95 to \$8.40 per hour. See story, page A2.

PGE Power Rates Rise

The New Year will bring an overall 5.6 percent rate increase for customers of Portland General Electric. The boost was blamed on fuel costs and market prices that are beyond PGE's control, said Lee Beyer, chairman of the Oregon Public Utility Commission.

Oldest Man Dead at 112

George Francis, the nation's oldest man, who lived through both world wars, man's first walk on the moon and the election of the first black president, has died. The Sacramento, Calif. resident was 112. See story, page A2.

Halt to Bombing Weighed

Israel, under international pressure, is considering a 48-hour halt to its punishing four-day air campaign on Hamas targets in Gaza to see if Palestinian militants will stop their rocket attacks on southern Israel, Israeli officials said Tuesday.



Defiant Governor Fills Seat

Gov. Rod Blagojevich named a black political trailblazer to Barack Obama's Senate seat Tuesday, putting the Illinois governor's opponents in the uncomfortable position of trying to block his choice from becoming the Senate's only black member. The appointment of former state Attorney General Roland Burris came days after Blagojevich was charged with trying to sell the seat to the highest bidder.

Franken Lead at 50

Democratic candidate Al Franken now holds a 50-vote lead over Republican Sen. Norm Coleman in Minnesota's Senate race, but wrangling over inclusion of absentee ballots continued Tuesday and any final determination of a winner was still days or weeks away.

Adult Film Star Sentenced

An adult film actress and former Penthouse model who failed to pay for more than \$200,000 in federal taxes was sentenced in Eugene Monday to six months in prison, followed by a year of supervised release. Janie M. James, 40, also known as Janie Lindemulder, was also ordered to pay restitution.

39 years of community service

Smoke Free Countdown

Oregon Bottle Bill Expands

Adds 5 cents to water containers

Oregon's Bottle Bill expansion goes into effect with the New Year, Jan. 1

The first change is that water and flavored water will be added to the list of containers that can be redeemed for a 5¢ deposit. The containers must be labeled with the OR 5¢ deposit on the label and be purchased in Oregon.

The second change is that larger retail outlets of 5,000 square feet or more will be required to take back bottle and can returns of all brands and sizes if they sell the same type of beverage.

For example, if a large supermarket sells water and soft drinks, they are required to accept bottle returns of all brands and sizes of water and soft drinks - even brands that they don't carry in their stores. However, they would not be required to accept beer containers, if they do not sell beer.

The smaller retailers may continue to accept back only contain-

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New Year law begins at midnight

Starting at midnight on New Year's Eve, Oregon's Smokefree Workplace Law will protect nearly every Oregon employee from the health risks of secondhand smoke.

The new law covers bars, bingo halls and bowling centers, as well as 75 percent of hotel and motel sleeping rooms and all employee breakrooms.

In addition, every Oregon business will be required to maintain a 10-foot smokefree zone around doors, windows and ventilation systems.

"Every Oregonian benefits from this law," said Dr. Bruce Goldberg, director of the Oregon Department of Human Services. "Employees will be able to punch in without endangering their health, businesses will save money on maintenance and sick time costs and the public will have more smokefree choices. Laws like this are proven to help smokers quit. This is a monumental change for Oregonians."

The new law, passed by the 2007 Oregon Legislature, has its supporters and detractors.

Public health officials cite surveys showing that 90 percent of Oregonians, including 76 percent of smokers, prefer smokefree indoor workplaces, and 86 per-

cent say employees should be protected from secondhand smoke.

Many businesses support the new law as well. A recent survey showed that 66 percent of businesses affected by the

egonians benefit from cleaner air, but businesses are likely to reap the rewards of a productive workplace including healthier workers, fewer sick days and reduced cleaning costs.

They also stand to gain customers from among the 80 percent of Oregonians who don't smoke. Many businesses are using the new law as an opportunity to reupholster furniture and install new carpet to get rid of smoke damage.

Monday, two customers at the Moon Star restaurant and lounge on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, lit up a cigarette inside the establishment for one of the last times.

"It's not fair that you can buy a smoke anywhere, but you can't smoke them anywhere," said Felisa Washington-Berry, a sentiment that was echoed by her bar companion Ali Williams.

Business owners are responsible for complying with the law and preventing smoking in and around their property.

Employees and the public can help ensure that the law is followed by report-

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A new smokefree workplace law prohibits smoking in all bars and taverns beginning at midnight on New Year's Eve.

new law are already smokefree. Many other businesses have been preparing for the change all year, including some that opted to go smokefree in advance of the law.

The health officials argue that all Or-



Year in Review

Obama Clinches! - Sen. Barack Obama campaigns during a visit to Oregon just days prior to winning the state's May 20 Primary and clinching the Democratic Party nomination for president. The Portland Observer looks back at some of the top stories from 2008, inside.

Supporters Rescue Local Bookstore

Saving resource for women

BY JAKE THOMAS
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Sebastian Florian has been a regular at In Other Words bookstore for over five years, but more for the events than the books.

She attends aerobics courses and a discussion group that helped her come to terms with her sexual identity. She said that no other place offers anything comparable.

"It's been invaluable," said Florian, of the volunteer-driven bookstore.

Last month, regulars like Florian almost had the door to In Other Words shut on them after a financial crisis rocked the feminist institution.

For many patrons, the store was more than a place to buy books dealing with political, social and economic equality issues, it was a community space where they could take yoga classes, use the job resource center, hear live music, or take a

workshop.

Although supporters mustered enough support to give the store a stay of execution, its path isn't completely free of obstacles.

In Other Words is located on Northeast Killingsworth Street just off North Williams Avenue. Its walls are painted soft-hues. The smell from someone's lunch hints at being cooked from ingredients from a health food store. A small space is cleared in the back for live music. Its wooden shelves house an extensive collection of materials that include zines written by local authors and books on everything from gardening to sexuality. But this serene setting belies its financial tumult.

Like seemingly everything, In Other Words has been hit by the economy and its sales were down \$15,000 from the previous

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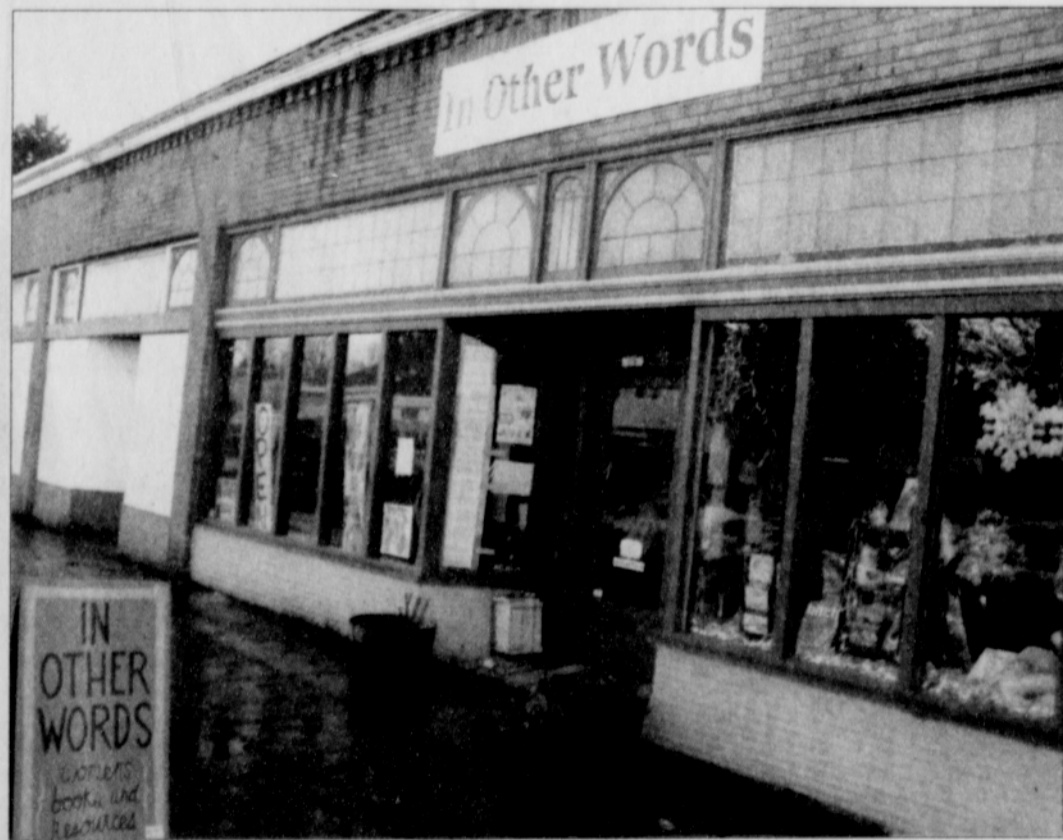


PHOTO BY JAKE THOMAS/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Volunteers and supporters of In Other Words Women's Books and Resources, 88 N.E. Killingsworth St., have raised \$13,000 to cover a debt and keep the community resource alive. However, the feminist bookstore isn't in the clear yet.