

The



Happy Thanksgiving



The Portland Observer 42

'City of Roses'



Read back issues of the Portland Observer at www.portlandobserver.com

Volume XXXXI, Number 47

Wednesday • November 23, 2011

Established in 1970

Committed to Cultural Diversity

42 years of community service

Grumbling over Garbage

Some residents have trouble adjusting to service changes

BY CARI HACHMANN
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A full trash bag sits on Hannah Mwolo's front porch outside her Northeast Roselawn Street home. Her garbage bin is overflowing on the curb, waiting for the next garbage pick-up.

Three weeks after Portland implemented a food composting program to reduce landfill waste by encouraging people to recycle food scraps, some residents are having problems adjusting to the change.

Though many residents are transitioning just fine and enthused about the environmental benefits, the new program that requires residential households to dump food scraps from a city-provided container into their yard debris roll cart has caused some confusion and grumbling among a fraction of Portlanders.

City officials and garbage haulers are responding to questions about garbage route and schedule changes and compost particulars, but Waste Management worker Sean Penny said the most common complaint was the reversal of garbage and compost pick-up days.

Now, compost is hauled every week, emphasizing the program's incentive that if people recycle more, they will accumu-

late less garbage, which has been pushed back to every other week.

"If you do it correctly, you shouldn't have garbage at all," said Penny.

to be hauled away.

"Large households naturally produce more garbage," said Edgar Gayheart III, 42, who lives with four other roommates.



PHOTO BY CARI HACHMANN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

A garbage bin is filled past capacity as area residents adjust from once a week pickups to every other week. At the same time, pickups for food composting are now every week, and city officials hope residents will adjust to the changes.

Yet larger households or those with infants or children still produce high-volumes of garbage that is not being composted and can't wait an extra week

He said the garbage for his five person household is overflowing, even with recycling.

A day before garbage pick-up, you can

count at least one in 10 curbside cans brimming with trash in one northeast Portland neighborhood, or worse, see plastic bags dumped on the sidewalk or on side of the road.

"Every two weeks is not enough," said Mwolo, a native of Liberia who lives with her three young children and keeps bags packed with trash outside her home. The northeast Portland resident said that because her family does not produce a great deal of food scraps, they cannot fit two weeks of garbage in one can.

"It's terrible," said another local resident Dorothy Hart.

"I am used to them picking it up every week," she said.

As Thanksgiving approaches, leaves are falling like rain and some households worry about extra fees to cover garbage excess.

As few as 15 percent of Portlanders opted to upsize their cans from typical-sized 32 or 35 gallon carts to 60 or more gallons. In a money-tight economy, however, most people can't afford additional monthly costs.

Jack and Karen Lewis, a retired couple whose household grew from 3 to 6 people within the last year, upsized both garbage and composting bins from 35 gallons to 60 gallon carts. After two weeks of raking and consuming, Jack Lewis, 75, said their cans are full, but it varies depending on the amount of debris.

"I think they should lower the price," said Johnny Warren, a senior who lives with his wife.

Gayheart said he and his roommates

continued ▼ on page 5

In the Neighborhood What are you thankful for this holiday season?



Family. Friends. The holiday brings people together. I just like to give back this time of year.
Cody Carlberg, 20
Northeast Portland



I am thankful for my family, my daughter, my grandchildren, and to be healthy.
Earnestine Mitchell, 72
Northeast Portland



I just moved here, so I'm thankful for a place to live. I'm sharing a home with good friends.
Erin Sweeny, 34
Northeast Portland

I'm thankful that I've got a family, a job and a house, and I'm thankful I have my health because in today's market if you don't have your health then you're not staying working.
Hugh Watson, 50
Northeast Portland

