

This City of Portsmouth Community Newsletter includes information about City-sponsored events, projects and special announcements. Editions are e-mailed every other Wednesday. To join the distribution list, or be removed, go to www.cityofportsmouth.com. – City Manager John P. Bohenko

TREE LIGHTING

Everyone is invited to the annual Christmas Tree lighting ceremony in Market Square on Friday (Dec. 1) beginning at 6 p.m. Mayor Marchand will lead the countdown to the lighting, the Portsmouth Middle School Band will provide music, and the Portsmouth Little League All-Stars New England Champions will be honored guests at the 45-minute event. For more info, see www.proportsmouth.org or call 610-5521.

LIBRARY CLOSING

Saturday (Dec. 2) is the last day to check out or return items from the Library before it closes for two weeks to move the collection to the new facility on Parrott Avenue. All books and films checked out between now and then will not be due until Jan. 2. The Library will be closed Sunday, Dec. 3, through Sunday, Dec. 17. During the move, Library staff will be available via e-mail and telephone. The new library opens at 9 a.m., Dec. 18, and a grand opening celebration will be held in January. For more info, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/library/movingnews.htm or call 427-1540.

HOLIDAY PARADE

The 2006 Annual Illuminated Holiday Parade is Saturday evening (Dec. 2). Bands, floats, equestrian and walking units and Santa Claus will step off from Plaza 800 at 6 p.m. and travel toward downtown via Islington Street to Congress Street to Market Square and then turn right down Pleasant Street to the South Mill Pond area. A list of the streets to be closed to parking and/or traffic between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. is at www.cityofportsmouth.com/police/press112106.htm. Postal patrons are asked to pick up their mail downtown by 4 p.m. Contact: 610-7275.

PARADE NIGHT PARKING

A \$3 flat-rate parking fee will be collected from each vehicle entering the High-Hanover Parking Garage on Saturday, December 2, between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. Payment upon entry to the facility is expected to reduce delays for those leaving after the Holiday Parade and other downtown activities.

FREE METERS DOWNTOWN

The City Council has authorized the traditional two weeks of free holiday parking at downtown meters from Dec. 9 through Dec. 25. However, posted time limits at metered spaces will be enforced. Those wishing to spend more time downtown than the meters allow are encouraged to use the High-Hanover Parking Facility. Downtown merchants displaying a blue sticker with the letter “P” in their storefront windows belong to the Downtown Parking Validation Program and can provide customers with up to four hours of free parking at the parking garage. Contact: 766-1440.

LETTERS TO SANTA

Santa is waiting to hear from your children! If they write him a letter between Dec. 1 and Dec. 20, Santa will send a letter in reply. Send letters to: Santa Claus at the North Pole, 135 Daniel Street, Portsmouth, NH, 03801. Make sure your child’s letter includes a full name and address so that Santa can write back!

HOLIDAY DECORATING

The Citywide Neighborhood Committee is again sponsoring its annual Holiday House Decorating contest in neighborhoods throughout Portsmouth. Individual neighborhood contests will be judged between Dec. 4 and Dec. 8. The citywide judging is Dec. 13. See www.cityofportsmouth.com/mayor/annualdecorating.htm for the list of participating neighborhoods and more info. Even if your neighborhood isn’t listed, you’re welcome to participate by contacting Citywide Neighborhood Chair Robin McIntosh at 433-5923 or via citywideneighborhood@comcast.net.

DUI HUNTER PATROLS

In a joint campaign to deter drunk-driving offenses over the holidays, Portsmouth Police and NH State Police -Troop A are joining forces in an intensified effort to apprehend those Driving Under the Influence (DUI). There will be additional "DUI Hunter" patrols on City streets and highways throughout the holiday season. Please drink responsibly and use a designated driver, or a cab. Contact: Police Lt. Fred Hoysradt, 610-7628.

HELP THE NEEDY

If adopting a less-fortunate Portsmouth family for the holidays seems like more than you can offer but you still would like to help, there are quick, simple things you can purchase for the needy citizens of Portsmouth. Gift cards, in any denomination and from any store, are always appreciated. Hats, gloves, and socks for adults are most welcome. Last year, there were many unmet requests for children's art supplies: finger paints, sketch pads, pastels, watercolors, just to name a few. Contact: 610-7267 or etully@ch.cityofportsmouth.com

BIRTHDAY GIFT

The Welfare Department thanks Miles Onosco, a student at Little Harbour School, for his generosity to needy individuals and families in Portsmouth. For his 10th birthday party, Miles asked guests to bring gift cards to donate to the Welfare Department for distribution, instead of gifts for himself. Miles and his mother, Jane Zill, presented the Welfare Department with almost \$300 worth of gift cards after the party.

RECREATION NEWS

Registration for boys and girls basketball leagues for Grades 7-8 and 9-12 continues through Friday (Dec. 1), 1 p.m. to 7 p.m., at the Connie Bean Community Center. Call 766-1483 or see www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/index.htm for information on these and all Rec Department programs. Also, the Connie Bean is now open on Sundays from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. for open court basketball time. The Indoor Pool is taking registrations for numerous swim programs. Contact 427-1545 or see www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/indoor.htm

WATER TOWER

The City has awarded a contract to an Ohio firm to dismantle the 114-year-old water tower at the corner of Islington Street and Essex Avenue. All-Industrial Services Inc., Youngstown, Ohio, is expected to demolish the tower in January. Meanwhile, City officials are discussing the site's future disposition.

BOARD OPENINGS

Portsmouth residents are urged to apply for the current openings on 10 of the City's volunteer Boards and Commissions. Vacancies are Cable Television and Communications Commission (1 alternate); Conservation Commission (1 alternate); Board of Library Trustees (2); Neighborhood Steering Committee (1); PEDLP Review Committee (1); Planning Board (3 members, 1 alternate); Portsmouth Housing Authority (1); Portsmouth Housing Endowment Fund Advisory Board (1); the Traffic and Safety Committee (1), and Zoning Board of Adjustment (5). For an application and to learn more about the boards, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/cityclerk/boardscommissions.htm or contact: 610-7207.

ROADWORK

Work continues on the Newcastle Avenue seawall replacement and roadway project. The latest information on City road projects is at www.CityofPortsmouth.com/projects/index.htm. Every effort is made to prevent disruption of general traffic flow. Weather and other factors may cause schedule delays. Contact: 427-1530.

HOLIDAY FOOD SAFETY

Don't give Salmonella (or other food-borne illnesses) for Christmas. The Health Department has tips on holiday food safety and keeping young visitors healthy at www.cityofportsmouth.com/health/index.htm.

Did you know...?

The brochure "Preparing for an Emergency: The Smart Thing to Do" is now available at all three Portsmouth Fire Department stations and online at www.cityofportsmouth.com/health/EPBrochure.pdf. It's designed to help citizens prepare for the unexpected and contains such valuable information as that a refrigerator can keep food safe without power for only about four hours. The brochure was printed with State funds managed by the Portsmouth Area Emergency Planning Team. Contact: 427-1515.

MEETINGS: To see a list of upcoming City-related meetings, agendas for future meetings and minutes of past meetings, always check the City's Web site, www.CityofPortsmouth.com, or the Meetings Calendar at www.cityofportsmouth.com/calendar/2006/index.htm.

HOURS: Portsmouth City Hall (431-2000) is open from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. The School Department Central Office (431-5080) is open from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Library hours are: 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday; 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday; and closed Sunday.

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