

This City of Portsmouth Community Newsletter includes information about City-sponsored events, projects and special announcements. Visit www.cityofportsmouth.com to join the distribution list, or be removed. – *City Manager John P. Bohenko*

MUSICAL CONVERSATIONS -- TONIGHT

The next event in a series of “Musical Conversations with Chris” featuring Portsmouth Symphony Orchestra Musical Director Christopher Hill is tonight (Wednesday, March 3) from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Library’s Levenson Room. Hill will discuss “Musical Expression in the 20th and 21st Centuries.” The next event is April 7. The series continues through May. Contact: 427-1540.

TREE LIMB DISPOSAL

Department of Public Works crews will pick up tree limbs felled by the recent storm curbside through the remainder of the week if they are cut into four-foot lengths. In addition, city residents may bring storm debris to the Recycling Center for disposal. The facility, located behind the DPW building at 680 Peverly Hill Road, is open from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, and from 8:30 a.m. until noon on Saturdays. Contact: 427-1530.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

The City Council has increased the income and asset limits for both the elderly and disabled exemptions to \$33,182 for single taxpayers and \$40,933 for married couples. Total assets for both exemptions have increased from \$110,611 whether single or married. Applications are due at the City Assessor’s Office no later than April 15 to receive the exemptions on the December 2010 tax bill. For an application, contact the Assessor’s Office at 610-7214 or 610-7249, or download the form from www.cityofportsmouth.com/assessors/index.htm.

ONLINE PAYMENTS

The City is implementing a convenient system allowing citizens to pay fees online, beginning with parking tickets and soon expanding to include water and sewer bills and other charges. The City recently signed an agreement with online payment service provider Metropolitan Communications, LLC (MCC) to collect and process MasterCard, American Express and Discover credit/debit cards, as well as electronic check (ACH) payments over the Internet using a secure website. A convenience fee is added by the online service provider for the online payments.

CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY

Apply now if you want to be part of the 3rd Annual Citizens Police Academy hosted by the Portsmouth Police Department in collaboration with departments in Greenland, Rye, Newington, New Castle and York, Maine. The free, eight-week academy, scheduled on Wednesday evenings from March 24 through May 12, offers local citizens and business owners a behind-the-scenes look at police work. Application forms are available online at www.seacoastcrimestoppers.org. For more info: contact 610-7612, e-mail Citizenspoliceacademy@cityofportsmouth.com, or visit www.seacoastcrimestoppers.org.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT

The Joint Building Committee for the new Portsmouth Middle School recently gave its approval to one of New England’s largest providers of construction management services, Gilbane Building Company, to lead the building team for the \$37.5 million expansion and renovation project expected to be completed by September 2013. The firm was among 11 that expressed interest in overseeing the Middle School project scheduled to break ground in December following traffic studies, geotechnical work, approval of a schematic design, and a series of land use and other public hearings. The JBC is comprised of members of the City Council, School Board, local residents and four ex-officio members from the City and School Departments.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG CAUTION

The Police Department is urging citizens to keep track of prescription and over-the-counter medication, noting there has been a recent increase in the number of teenagers ingesting large amounts of cough suppressants and over-the-counter anti-nausea medication, such as Dramamine, for a hallucinogenic effect. Drop off unwanted or

outdated medication at the Portsmouth Police Department. If you prefer to have an officer pick it up at your home, call Captain Mike Schwartz at 610-7408.

“WORDS OF FIRE”

You can hear storyteller Gwendolyn Quezairé-Presutti perform as Maria W. Stewart, who was a pioneer black abolitionist, a woman of profound religious faith, and a champion of women's rights, tomorrow (Thursday, March 4) at 7 p.m. in the Library's Levenson Room. Quezairé-Presutti will perform “Words of Fire: Rhetoric of Survival,” delivering Stewart's famous speech given at Boston's Franklin Hall on September 21, 1832. The program is co-sponsored with the NH Humanities Council. Contact: 427-1540.

MIDDLE SCHOOL DANCE

The next Middle School dance is Friday (March 5) at the Connie Bean Center from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. It costs \$4, \$3 with Merit Card. Open to all PMS students/Portsmouth residents. Contact: 766-1483.

BASKETBALL ON TV

The Portsmouth High School girls' basketball Class I playoff game with Kearsarge Regional High School tomorrow night (Thursday, March 4) will be broadcast Saturday, March 6, at 7 p.m. on local government access cable channel 22.

FAMILY CHESS

There will be a Family Chess Event open to all ages and abilities for coaching and playing Saturday (March 6) from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the Library's Levenson Room. The Portsmouth Rotary is hosting the event sponsored by the Jeremy Alex Fund. Contact: 766-1740.

“HISTORY INTO FICTION”

Vermont author Howard Frank Mosher will discuss his new Civil War thriller “Walking to Gatlinburg” and present an original slideshow called “Transforming History into Fiction: the Story of a Born Liar” at the Library on Sunday (March 7) at 2 p.m. in the Levenson Room. Books will be available for sale. The Library event is co-sponsored with RiverRun Bookstore. Mosher has authored 10 novels and a travel memoir. Contact the Library at 427-1540.

MARCH MOVIE MADNESS

The Library's 5th annual “March Movie Madness” program begins next Thursday (March 11) with the PG-13 film “Julie & Julia” starring Meryl Streep, who was nominated for an Academy Award for her role as Julia Child. It will be followed March 18 with the R-rated “Up in the Air” nominated for six Oscars, including “Best Picture” and George Clooney for “Best Actor.” The final movie in the series will be another Best Picture nominee, “The Blind Side,” starring Sandra Bullock and shown on March 25. All movies begin at 7 p.m. in the Levenson Room. Contact: 427-1540.

YOUTH ART EXHIBIT, RECEPTION

Everyone is invited to the young artists' reception Sunday, March 14, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Library's Levenson Room, as well as the Library's month-long “Splash! Youth Art Show” featuring the work of dozens of young people in Portsmouth elementary schools through high school. The exhibit, which is coordinated by the Friends of the Portsmouth Library, is on display throughout the Library during the month of March. Contact: 427-1540.

SCHOOL MUSIC

Portsmouth will celebrate Music in our Schools Month on Wednesday, March 17, with a 7 p.m. concert at Portsmouth High School for the Middle School choral and band groups. The snow date is Friday, March 19. (Also, see music scholarship fundraiser info at bottom of this newsletter.) Contact: 436-5781.

INDOOR POOL PROGRAMS

Registration is now open for weekday or Saturday swimming lessons at the Indoor Pool. Weekday classes run from March 22 through April 15, while Saturday classes run March 20 to May 15. Information on lessons and other Indoor Pool programs can be found at www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/indoor.htm.

POLICE HONORS

Five members of the Portsmouth Police Department were recently honored by the U.S. Attorney's Office for Maine for their part in capturing convicted felon Everett Stickney of Portsmouth after a series of local burglaries, which led to him being named in several burglary and arson cases in Maine. Stickney is serving 11.5 years in prison and was ordered to pay \$3.7 million in restitution to 27 victims and 14 insurance companies. The PPD members receiving awards were Detective Captain Corey MacDonald, Detectives John Peracchi and Timothy Cashman, and Officers Christopher Kiberd and Charlie Raizes.

BASKETBALL BOOK EVENT

Sportswriter Jackie McMullan will discuss and sign her latest book "When the Game was Ours," written in collaboration with Earvin "Magic" Johnson and Larry Bird, on March 22 at 7 p.m. in the Library's Levenson Room. McMullen captained the women's basketball team at UNH, worked for the Boston Globe, covered the NBA for Sports Illustrated, and has been a correspondent for several cable television programs. She is currently a freelance sportswriter, NBA columnist for ESPN.com and a regular panelist on ESPN's "Around the Horn." In 1999, she collaborated with Bird on his autobiography "Bird Watching; on Playing and Coaching the Game I Love." The event is co-sponsored with RiverRun Bookstore. Contact the Library at 427-1540.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

As part of the Bartlett & Islington Area Sewer Improvements project, construction crews will begin installing a new water line on Jewell Court, which will be closed to through traffic during daytime hours. Next on the schedule will be sewer and drainage work. Detour signs will be posted. The work is expected to take about six weeks to complete unless there are interruptions due to weather or other unforeseen problems. Work also is continuing on the State Street Reconstruction Project. For the latest updates on that project, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/projects/9.htm.

TAX PREPARATION

AARP Tax Aide volunteers trained by the Internal Revenue Service will provide free tax preparation help at the Library on Tuesdays from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. and on Sundays from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. in the Hilton Garden Room. No appointments. Contact: Jennifer Kimball, 607-342-1243, or jenniferakimball@gmail.com.

BOARD VACANCIES

The most recent list of openings on the City's volunteer boards and commissions, along with information on how to apply, can be found at www.cityofportsmouth.com/cityclerk/boardscommissions.htm.

Fundraisers....

"WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS"

Dondero Elementary School is hosting a "Wildlife Encounters" interactive family show that introduces young children to friendly and unique live animals on Saturday, March 20, at the Community Campus Gymnasium, 100 Campus Drive. The first show is at 10 a.m. and the second at 1 p.m. Tickets are \$5 in advance (call 433-6763) and \$6 at the door. There also will be a raffle, face painting and a concession stand.

CHOCOLATE EXTRAVAGANZA

Indulge your love for chocolate while benefiting Portsmouth High Music Program Scholarships with an evening of "A Decade of Decadence" on Wednesday, March 24, from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., in the PHS cafeteria. Enjoy exquisite desserts and student vocal and instrumental performances. Tickets are \$5 in advance and \$7 at the door. Send cash or a check by Friday, March 19, to PHS Music Department, PHS, 50 Alumni Circle, Portsmouth, NH 03801. Snow date is Thursday, March 25. Contact: dwlampert@comcast.net.

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/2010/index.htm.

SCHOOL CALENDARS: The School Department's Activities Calendar for all schools is at www.cityofportsmouth.com/school/allschoolactivitiescalendar.htm. A link to the Portsmouth High sports schedule is at www.cityofportsmouth.com/school/phs/athlsch.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 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 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 Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The City of Portsmouth Community Newsletter is published by the City of Portsmouth. It is not intended to provide legal advice. It is a compilation of the best available information at the time of publication. Events may be subject to change without notice in the time between publication of this e-newsletter and the actual event. Whenever possible, changes will be posted on www.cityofportsmouth.com or on the local government cable Channel 22. To join the distribution list, or be removed, go to www.cityofportsmouth.com.