

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*

EVENT TONIGHT

Join in celebrating “Music in Our Schools Month” at tonight’s (March 17) concert by the Portsmouth Middle School choral and band groups at 7 p.m. at the Portsmouth High School auditorium. Contact: 436-5781.

REPORT WINDSTORM DAMAGE

Portsmouth Emergency Management is seeking information about privately owned primary residences and any businesses damaged as a result of the recent windstorm in order to determine if Portsmouth meets the federal disaster guidelines that would trigger federal assistance for repairs and economic losses not covered by insurance. See www.cityofportsmouth.com/stormfeb2010.htm for more info, including how to submit a storm damage report.

POLICE WARNING

Noting that improved weather often brings with it interest in home repair projects, Portsmouth police are reporting that several local residents have recently reported home repair scam attempts, including men who show up at residences with offers to clean chimneys. Police are urging everyone to research businesses before allowing workers into their homes or handing over money. Contact: 427-1500.

FREE LANGUAGE CLASSES

The Library is now offering cardholders free access to an online language-learning system that teaches conversation skills for a number of languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Dari, Farsi, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Pashto, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Thai, Turkish, Urdu and Vietnamese. The Mango Languages system uses real-life situations and actual conversations to more effectively teach a new language. A number of English as a Second Language (ESL) options also are available. See www.cityofportsmouth.com/library/mango.htm or call 427-1540.

CITYWIDE PROJECTS

Information on the City’s 19 major Public Works construction projects planned for 2010 can now be found online at www.cityofportsmouth.com/projects/index.htm.

REC BROCHURE

The Recreation Department’s Spring/Summer brochure will be out Monday (March 22). There will be a full list of spring and summer program offerings for all ages and interests, as well as the complete list of ongoing programs. Contact: 766-1483.

PUBLIC ACCESS BOARD

The City Council has approved a Board of Directors for the newly formed Portsmouth Public Media, the nonprofit organization that will introduce public access television to Portsmouth. The new board will join the Cable Commission at its meeting next Thursday (March 25) at 4 p.m. in City Hall Conference Room A. New board members are film producer Chase Bailey, journalist Frank Cook, internet media producer Daniel Freund, film producer Glenn Gardner, marketing director Sara Hamilton, internet media producer John Herman, systems project manager Christopher Ostrom, operations center technician Samuel Peret, lawyer Sharon Cuddy Somers, technology management executive Jack Thorsen, and news media consultant David Underhill.

PARAMEDIC GRADUATIONS

Three Fire Department firefighters recently graduated from the New England Health Solutions’ regional paramedic education program after 14 months of advanced pre-hospital training. Firefighters Garrett Miller, Brian Ryll and Phil Sutton will take their national exams in the coming months. Currently, there are 14 firefighter-paramedics serving the city. Contact: 427-1515.

BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE OPENING

The mayor is seeking two members of the public to serve on the new Blue Ribbon Committee on Operational Efficiencies. The application deadline is next Friday, March 26. The entire 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.

"OVERNIGHT ART" NEWS

Longtime resident and former state senator Elaine Krasker has been named honorary chair of Art-Speak's 2010 Overnight Art show that will feature the commissioned works of six artists displayed at various locations from June through October. The artists, whose works revolve around the "bridges" theme, were chosen from among 21 who entered the competition. Artists selected are Donna Dobson and Andy Moerlein, Bow; Jeanne Givens, Rye; Carly Glovinski and Matt Wajda, Dover; Sarah Haskell, York; Ironwood Design Group, Exeter; and Anna Wisswaesser, Kittery. Krasker was the lead sponsor of a bill that allocates a percentage of NH building funds for the arts. Art-Speak is the city's cultural commission. Contact: 610-7222 or scobler@cityofportsmouth.com.

PARKING INPUT

The City's Parking Committee will host a March 31 public input session on whether to meter the Parrott Avenue parking lot. The session begins at 7 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers. The City Council requested that the committee evaluate metering the lot and the first step in the evaluation is taking public input. Contact: 766-1440.

SCHOOL REGISTRATION

It soon will be time to register kindergarten and new students for the next school year. Make an appointment now at the school your child will be attending and you will receive information about the paperwork to be completed prior to registration. Forms can be found at www.cityofportsmouth.com/school. Registration is April 1 at Dondero Elementary (436-2231); April 8 at New Franklin Elementary (436-0910); and April 14 at Little Harbour Elementary (436-1708). Kindergarten students must be 5 years old by September 30 and reside in Portsmouth.

"UP IN THE AIR"

The Oscar-nominated film "Up in the Air" starring George Clooney will be shown free tomorrow night (Thursday, March 18) in the Library's Levenson Room, which has a state-of-the-art sound system. The R-rated film is 109 minutes long. The Library's "March Movie Madness" series concludes next Thursday, March 25, with "The Blind Side" starring Sandra Bullock, who won the Academy Award for "Best Actress" for her role. Both movies begin at 7 p.m. Contact: 427-1540.

NO SCHOOL FRIDAY

Portsmouth Public Schools will be closed Friday (March 19) for a teachers' workshop.

LEGO EVENT

The Library is hosting another Lego Engineering Event on Saturday (March 20) from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. for ages 6 and up in the Youth Program Room. Legos will be provided. The program is free for Library cardholders. Registration is preferred but not required. Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult in the Library at all times. Contact: 766-1740.

"WHEN THE GAME WAS OURS"

Sportswriter Jackie MacMullan will discuss her journalistic challenges covering Boston sports for 25 years, take questions and sign copies of her new book "When the Game was Ours," written in collaboration with Earvin "Magic" Johnson and Larry Bird, next Monday (March 22) at 7 p.m. in the Library's Levenson Room. The book is said to transport readers to "an electric era of basketball" and reveal for the first time "the inner workings of two players dead set on besting one another." The event is co-sponsored with RiverRun Bookstore. Contact the Library at 427-1540.

MASK AND DAGGER SOCIETY

The UNH Mask and Dagger Dramatic Society will bring the story of “The Fiddler of the Northern Lights” to life on Saturday, March 27, beginning at 2:45 p.m. in the Levenson Room of the Library. Children ages 4 to 9 will especially enjoy the presentation using songs, props, puppets, role play and other expressive techniques. Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult in the Library at all times. Contact: 766-1740.

DRUG DETECTION CANINE CERTIFICATION

Portsmouth Patrol Officer Scott Pearl and Police Canine Wess completed a five-week drug detection certification course sponsored by the Boston Police Department. Pearl and the dog comprised one of 12 teams completing the 200-hour course. They are now trained in detecting a wide variety of illegal drugs.

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

There is an April 15 deadline to apply for elderly and disabled exemptions for the December 2010 tax bill. The City Council recently 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 to \$110,611 whether single or married. 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 NEWSSTAND ADDITIONS

The Library's Online Newsstand now includes coverage of The Economist, U.S. News & World Report and Kiplinger's Personal Finance. Also, the March issues of Harvard Business Review and Scientific American, and new weekly issues of the New Yorker and Newsweek are now available. To learn more, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/library/newsstand.htm. If you have suggestions for future additions to the Online Newsstand, call 766-1720.

CAMERA CLASS

The Library is offering a new class on how to import photographs from your digital camera onto a computer and then edit them. The class meets next Friday (March 26) from 10 to 11:30 a.m. The complete schedule of March computer classes is at www.cityofportsmouth.com/library/computerclasses.htm. Call 766-1720 to register for any of the free, onetime workshops.

YOUTH ARTS MONTH

March is “Youth Arts Month” and original works of art by Portsmouth students can be viewed at the Library and some downtown businesses throughout the month. The “Splash! Youth Art Show” coordinated by the Friends of the Portsmouth Library includes original works of art by young people in Portsmouth elementary schools through high school, as well as St. Patrick School, Birchtree Center, and the Portsmouth Music and Art Center. Art-Speak, the City’s Cultural Commission, and Portsmouth Public Schools also have partnered with 20 local businesses to display more than 35 original works of art by Portsmouth K-12 students.

REC NEWS

A new round of swim lessons begins next week 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, Red Cross lifeguarding and water safety instructor programs can be found at www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/indoor.htm or by calling 427-1546. Spinnaker Point Adult Recreation Center continues to offer a great number of adult programs. See the new Rec Department Brochure coming out next Monday (March 22) or call 766-1483 to learn more.

BRITISH FILM SERIES

The Library is launching a “British Realism in Film” series Wednesday, March 31, with “This Sporting Life” shown at 7 p.m. in the Library’s Levenson Room. A brief discussion will precede each film. Social realism in British films peaked during the 1960s. Typically, the films are gritty, urban dramas about the struggle to survive the daily grind. The film “A Taste of Honey” will be shown on April 14 while the April 28 offering is “The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner.” Contact: 427-1540.

ROADWORK

The Peirce Island bridge rail replacement project has begun and will result in one-way reversible traffic controlled by police during work hours. The project is expected to be completed by the end of May. Anyone

with questions should contact Tom Richter at 766-1412. Meanwhile, the Ceres Street project is continuing, with work on the seawall and the park next on the schedule. Contact: 766-1411. The latest updates on the State Street Reconstruction Project are at www.cityofportsmouth.com/projects/9.htm and information on the Bartlett and Islington area sewer improvements work is updated at www.cityofportsmouth.com/projects/6.htm.

Mark your calendar... (6 items)

- City Hall and the Library will close at noon Friday, April 2, in observance of Good Friday. The Library will be closed Sunday, April 4, for Easter.
- The Rec Department's annual Easter Egg hunt for kids from preschool age through Grade 2 is scheduled for the morning of April 3 at Langdon Park across from City Hall on Junkins Avenue.
- Weekly curbside collection of yard waste resumes the week of April 5 on the same day as trash collection, but yard waste may be brought to the Recycling Center year-round.
- The Second Annual Portsmouth Sustainability Fair will be Saturday, May 8.
- The City's annual Spring Household Hazardous Waste Day will be Saturday, May 22, from 8 a.m. to noon, at the Department of Public Works on Peverly Hill Road.
- Free income tax preparation is available every Tuesday from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. and on Sundays from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Library's Hilton Garden Room.

Fundraisers....

CINDERELLA'S CLOSET

The Friends of Rachel group at Portsmouth High School is collecting clean, gently used prom and cocktail dresses appropriate for Junior Prom, Senior Prom and Senior Banquet. Items may be dropped off at the PHS main office through April 9. The group also will accept shoes, costume jewelry, gloves and any other suitable accessories for these events. The school's Guidance Department will make referrals for girls to "shop" on April 10. Unused items will be donated to the Cinderella Project of NH. Contact dbarlow@portsmouth.k12.nh.us or call 436-7100, extension 2145.

"WILDLIFE ENCOUNTERS"

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

CHOCOLATE EXTRAVAGANZA

Enjoy exquisite desserts and Portsmouth High student vocal and instrumental performances next Wednesday (March 24) from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at "A Decade of Decadence" event in the PHS cafeteria. The fundraiser benefits PHS Music Program Scholarships. 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.

CLIPPER FOUNDATION CONCERT

The Portsmouth High School Student Council is presenting a concert by Entrain, an eclectic six-piece band based in Martha's Vineyard, on Saturday, March 27, to benefit the non-profit CLIPPER (Community Leaders Invested in Portsmouth, Philanthropy, Education and Respect) Foundation that raises money for the school, scholarships and charity. Entrain has recorded seven albums and performs rock, blues, calypso, ska, zydeco, jazz and funk. Tickets for the 7:30 p.m. event in the PHS Auditorium are \$20 for adults, \$15 for children 12 and under. Tickets may be purchased at <http://phsentrain.eventbrite.com>. Contact: rducharme@portsmouth.k12.nh.us.

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.

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