

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

MUSIC TONIGHT

Portsmouth celebrates Music in our Schools Month tonight (March 19) with a 7 p.m. concert featuring the Middle School choral and band groups performing at Portsmouth High School. The concert will be broadcast Saturday (March 22) at 7 p.m. on local government cable Channel 22. Contact: 431-5080.

MARCH MOVIES

March Movie Madness at the Library concludes tomorrow night (March 20) with “Michael Clayton” starring George Clooney and Tilda Swinton, who won an Academy Award for best supporting actress. The film received seven Oscar nominations. For more info, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/library/lib-programs.htm.

GOOD FRIDAY

City Hall and the Library close at noon Friday (March 21) in observance of Good Friday. However, there will be no change to curbside collection of rubbish and recyclables, or to the public schools schedule.

EASTER EGG HUNT

The City’s annual Easter egg hunt is Saturday (March 22). Preschool children hunt at 10:30 a.m. at Langdon Park located across from Portsmouth City Hall, followed by the K-Grade 2 crowd at 11:30 a.m. If it rains, the fun moves to the Middle School gym. There will be eggs and prizes for everyone, along with other special activities and a visit from the Easter Bunny. Contact: 766-1483.

VEHICLE & EQUIPMENT SALE

The City of Portsmouth is selling 18 surplus vehicles and pieces of equipment, including police and fire vehicles, through a sealed bid process open to the public. Interested bidders may view the Public Works vehicles/equipment between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. on March 25 at the Public Works Facility. A description of all vehicles and information on how to submit a written bid by the April 2 deadline is at www.cityofportsmouth.com/finance/purchasing.htm. Contact: 610-7227.

ISLINGTON STREET

The public is invited to give feedback on three conceptual plan options for the Islington Street Improvement Action Plan at a March 27 meeting from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Library’s Levenson Room. Representatives from Richardson and Associates will present the options, which were developed as a result of stakeholder input sessions held in the fall and early winter of 2007 and on previous streetscape, transportation, and safety studies of the corridor. Contact: 610-7220.

HODGSON BROOK

New Franklin fifth-graders, Advocates for the North Mill Pond and the Hodgson Brook Restoration Project invite everyone to join them Tuesday, April 1, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. to celebrate efforts to protect the pond. There will be student presentations, including their new public service announcements that will air on the Portsmouth Community radio station WSCA-LP 106.1. The 2008 Friend of the North Mill Pond Award will be presented and a final draft of the new interpretative sign to be erected at the mouth of Hodgson Brook will be on display.

POLICE PROMOTIONS

The Police Department has two new sergeants, Kim SIRR and Mike Maloney. Sergeant SIRR joined the Department in 1994 and has served as a detective, a school resource officer and started a summer basketball league for adolescent girls. Sergeant Maloney was hired in 1998 and has been a team leader for the regional Seacoast Emergency Response Team. He received the 2004 Red Cross Heroes Award for stopping an elderly man driving the wrong way on the Spaulding Turnpike.

SPRING/SUMMER RECREATION

Copies of the Spring/Summer brochure will be available in all Recreation facilities next Monday (March 24). It also will be available online soon afterward at www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/index.htm.

NEW FRANKLIN CIRCUS

Students at New Franklin School may get to clown around beginning Monday (March 24) when Gary Girouard, aka Gary the Silent Clown, begins a two-week Artist-in-Residence program. He'll be teaching traditional circus skills to the students in Grades K-5, culminating with student circus performances on April 4. The residency is sponsored by the Title 1 Program. Contact: 431-8721.

1981 FILM REUNION

In June 1981, a Japanese television crew filmed a mini-series about the Portsmouth Peace Treaty in Portsmouth that featured many local "extras," including schoolchildren invited via notes sent home from their school principals to be part of the re-enactment of the 1905 Welcoming Parade. The Portsmouth Peace Treaty Forum is seeking those who participated in the production and will schedule a showing of the film. Contact cdoleac@nhlawfirm.com or Stephanie Seacord, sseacord@lemd.com, 603-772-1835.

SPRING REMINDER

Police Chief Michael Magnant would like to remind all motorists that spring weather will lead to an increase in activity such as children playing outdoors, bicyclists and joggers on the streets and a larger volume of traffic. It's important that motorists drive with caution and regard for the safety of themselves and others. The Portsmouth Police, in a continuing effort to keep the city streets safe from drunk drivers and speeders, are planning a series of saturation patrols and DWI roadblocks over the spring and summer months.

REC REGISTRATIONS

Registration for the girls' field hockey program for grades 3-5 continues through Friday (March 21) from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Spinnaker Point Rec Center. The eight-week program begins April 2. The weeklong registration for the eight-week baseball instructional league for boys and girls ages 8-12 (as of July 31) opens Monday (March 24) at Spinnaker Point from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Contact: 766-1483.

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 so you can be sent paperwork that should be completed prior to registration. Registration is April 16 at New Franklin Elementary School (436-0910), April 17 at Dondero (436-2231) and May 13 at Little Harbour (436-1708). Kindergarten students must be 5 years old by September 30 and must reside in Portsmouth.

NEW METER SYSTEM

The City's Water Division has begun installing a water meter reading system that will allow the City to send monthly bills to customers, rather than every four months. The first phase will take two months to complete and involves 1,250 meters downtown in the central business district and in the residential area between Richards Avenue and the Piscataqua River. It eventually will be expanded to all the nearly 8,000 water meters in the Portsmouth water system serving Portsmouth, Newington, New Castle, and Rye, as well as locations in Greenland, Madbury, Dover and Durham. See www.cityofportsmouth.com/publicworks/news031308.htm.

OVERNIGHT ART

Art-Speak, the City's Cultural Commission, has announced six artists were selected from a field of 30 to exhibit temporary outdoor art in Portsmouth from mid-May through the summer. The "overnight art" locations will be named later. The winning artists are: Jamie Calderwood of Durham; Jeanne Givens of Rye; Roger Goldenberg of Portsmouth; Jason Probert of Portsmouth; Nathan Walker of Stratham, and Susan Schwake of Rochester. Overnight Art is funded in part by the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts, local businesses and individual donors. See www.art-speak.org, or call 610-7222.

TAX EXEMPTIONS

There is an April 15 deadline to apply for elderly and disabled exemptions for the December 2008 tax bill. The City Council recently increased income limits from \$30,600 to \$31,640 for single taxpayers and from \$37,740 to

\$39,030 for married couples. Total assets for the exemptions increased from \$102,000 to \$105,470, whether single or married. See www.cityofportsmouth.com/assessors/news030708.htm or call 610-7249.

LIBRARY SUNDAYS

The Portsmouth Library is now open Sunday afternoons from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. through May 18. During the summer months of June, July and August, the Library will return to six-day-per week service. Sunday hours will resume the Sunday after Labor Day. Contact: 427-1540.

BOARD VACANCIES

There are a number of vacancies on the City's volunteer boards and commissions. They include the Building Code Board of Appeals (2); Economic Development Commission (1); Taxi Commission (3); Board of Library Trustees (1), and the Recreation Board (1). Information on the City's volunteer boards and how to apply is at www.cityofportsmouth.com/cityclerk/boardscommissions.htm.

Mark your calendar (2 items)

- A free comedic puppet show for adults entitled "We Stayed Together for the Puppets" will be performed at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 17, at the Library's Levenson Room.
- Household Hazardous Waste Day in Portsmouth will be Saturday, May 10, from 8 a.m. until noon.

Did you know...?

Portsmouth is New Hampshire's "best walking" city and one of the nation's top 50, according to a new survey by Prevention magazine and the American Podiatric Medical Association. The survey cites Portsmouth's wide sidewalks and safe streets for pedestrians. It says Portsmouth has a high percentage of people who walk to work. In addition, the magazine said, Portsmouth is the second most park-dense city in the state, and we have the highest percentage of mass transit riders and also one of the lowest cars-to-household ratings.

(Note: Booster Club fundraisers are listed below.)

Booster Club Fundraisers (6)

Pasta Dinner tonight (March 19) to raise funds at Dondero School from 5 p.m.-7 p.m. Tickets: \$5 each or \$20 per family; children under 3 eat free.

Order a custom-made ice cream cake between now and April 25 to benefit the Portsmouth Alternative Secondary School (PASS) senior trip. The \$30, 10-inch cakes will feed 15-20 people. Order at least one week in advance. Email bmascio@portsmouth.k12.nh.us or call Bryan or Erika at 427-2901.

"Are You Smarter than a Dondero Fifth Grader?" game show fundraiser March 28 features Mayor Tom Ferrini, City Councilor Nancy Novelline Clayburgh and several others to raise funds to help Dondero Fifth Graders attend environmental school. It will be at the Portsmouth High auditorium from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tickets at the door: \$3 adults, \$2 seniors, \$1 students, \$10 family. Contact: 431-7894, ext. 1154, or elizabeth.valway@heinemann.com.

Portsmouth High School Baseball Boosters host a Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser Saturday, March 29, 4 to 7 p.m., at the North Church Parish House. Tickets can be purchased in advance (adults \$7, seniors and children 12 & under \$4.50) at the High School, Middle School, Dondero, Crown Trophy, Seaport Fish, and The Golden Egg. Tickets at the door are adults \$8, seniors and children 12 & under \$5. Contact: 436-2015.

A Yard Sale April 5 will benefit the Portsmouth Alternative Secondary School (PASS) senior trip. It's from 7 a.m. until 2 p.m. and there will be breakfast and lunch items available. To donate to the yard sale, email bmascio@portsmouth.k12.nh.us or call Bryan or Erika at 427-2901.

A Decade Dance -The '80s will be held by the New Franklin School PTO on Saturday, April 19, at VFW Post 168 to help students attend environmental school. Tickets are \$15, or 2 for \$25, and can be purchased at New Franklin School or by calling 373-0494. Space is limited. Prizes for best costumes.

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/2008/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 1 p.m.-5 p.m. Sunday.

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