

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*

SCHOOL SUPPLIES NEEDED

It's not too late to make a donation to the Welfare Department's annual back-to-school drive. Last year the department assisted over 100 students with back-to-school needs. Considering recent economic pressures, the department anticipates an even greater number of requests for school-related assistance this year. All school supplies or gift cards are welcome. Especially needed are backpacks, new or gently used. Drop off donations at the Welfare Department in City Hall Room 204. Contact: etully@ch.cityofportsmouth.com or 610-7267.

RAIN, RAIN GO AWAY

Portsmouth already has seen more than seven inches of rain above last year's totals from May through August, delaying traditional City of Portsmouth summer projects such as roadway paving, new striping and city facility roof repairs. As of last week, we were at 21 inches of rain in May, June, July and just the first two weeks of August. That compares to only about 14 inches between May and all of August last year. The Public Works Department is hoping the weather will start cooperating so these projects can be completed before winter.

ZERO-EMISSIONS VEHICLE

The City has purchased its first zero-gasoline truck, an electric no-emissions vehicle that replaces the outdated Parking Enforcement van as part of the City's continuing commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Miles ZX40ST Work Truck requires no gasoline, has an estimated range of 50 miles and operates at a maximum speed of 25 mph. Charging the vehicle from 50% battery capacity takes approximately four hours from a 110-volt receptacle. The cost to drive and maintain it will be about one-tenth of a gasoline-powered vehicle. To learn more, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/transportation/zergastruck-081908.htm.

HISTORIC MARKER FOUND

The historic 1795 octagonal granite post that once marked the corner of Islington and Brewster Streets recently was discovered in a pile of surplus granite pieces obtained from Strawberry Banke by Thomas Berger of Kittery's Green Art for use in his landscape design/installation and stone sculpting business. The post, which weighs approximately 1 ton, is believed to have been in the pile of granite pieces for several decades. Berger and Strawberry Banke worked together to make sure it was returned to the City of Portsmouth, which plans to take steps to return it to public view.

VOTING INFO

Absentee ballot applications for the September 9 primary and Nov. 4 general elections are now available online via a link at www.cityofportsmouth.com/cityclerk/voteinfo.htm#elect and weekdays at the City Clerk's Office between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Registered voters can apply for absentee ballots if they will be unable to vote in person between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Sept. 9 and/or Nov. 4 because they will be working during those hours, out of town or request them due to religious observance or physical disability. Ballots must be returned by 5 p.m. on Election Day to be counted. Contact 610-7207 or see www.cityofportsmouth.com/cityclerk/voteinfo.htm for all election information.

VOTING DEADLINE

Tuesday, Sept. 2, is the final day to register to vote before the Sept. 9 primary, although voters may register at their polling locations on Election Day. The City Clerk's Office at City Hall will accept voter registrations and corrections until 4:30 p.m. on Sept. 2 and the Board of Registrars will be available for registrations and corrections to the checklist from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m. that day in City Hall Room 211. To learn more, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/cityclerk/voteinfo.htm or call 610-7207.

BACK TO SCHOOL

The first day of school for students in Grades 1-12 is next Tuesday, August 26. Schools are closed Friday, Aug. 29, and Monday, Sept. 1 for the Labor Day holiday. The School Department's Central Office returns to full hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. next Monday (Aug. 25). A link to the 2008-2009 school calendar is at www.cityofportsmouth.com/school/index.htm.

SCHOOL ORIENTATIONS

Portsmouth High School freshman orientation is tomorrow (Thursday, Aug. 21) at 8:30 a.m. Kindergarten orientations are next Wednesday, Aug. 27. School buses will pick up the kindergarten children, bring them to the school for the 1.5-hour orientation and then bring them home. Parents are encouraged to attend orientation, but are not allowed to ride the buses. Orientation begins at 9 a.m. at New Franklin, 9:30 a.m. at Dondero and 10 a.m. at Little Harbour. The first full day of kindergarten is Tuesday, September 2. Contact: 431-5080.

BUS ROUTES

Once they are available from the School Department, morning bus routes for Portsmouth schools will be at www.cityofportsmouth.com/school/busroute0203am.htm. The afternoon routes will be listed at www.cityofportsmouth.com/school/busroute0203pm.htm.

PHOTO DISPLAY

"FOCUS," a collaborative photography project of the Citywide Neighborhood Committee and Portsmouth Middle School, is now on display in the first-floor hallways of City Hall. The 160 photographs of Portsmouth and Newington, taken by last year's eighth-grade class, were displayed earlier this summer in downtown storefront windows and can also be seen in the book, "FOCUS: A Photojournal of Seacoast NH" which is on sale at River Run Books (all proceeds go to the school for future arts programming). Additional photos can be viewed at focusportsmouth.org.

LABOR DAY

City offices, the Library, Schools and the Recycling Center will be closed Monday, September 1, for Labor Day. Monday's residential and downtown business district trash collection will be Tuesday. Yard waste normally collected on Monday and Tuesday will be collected the following week, or residents may take it to the Recycling Center. The Library also will be closed Saturday, Aug. 30, for the Labor Day holiday.

WOODBURY AVE. ROADWORK

Work is expected to begin within the next two weeks on the traffic calming improvements on Woodbury Avenue between Bartlett Street and Market Street Extension. Drivers are urged to find alternative routes whenever possible. The extensive project is expected to continue through the end of November. City road project information is online at www.cityofportsmouth.com/projects/index.htm. Weather and other factors may cause schedule delays. Contact: 766-1411.

MEET THE ARTISTS

There are just two weeks left to see the six pieces of temporary outdoor art scattered throughout downtown as part of the "Overnight Art" exhibition. Don't miss the "Meet the Artist" event Saturday, Sept. 6, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., when the artists will be stationed near the artwork to answer questions from the public. There also will be a scavenger hunt for children to earn a free ice cream cone. The public artwork will be "de-installed" the week of Sept. 8. See www.art-speak.org for more information.

AUTHOR READING

Novelist Kate Christensen, recent winner of the 2008 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction for "*The Great Man*," will give a reading at the Library's Levenson Room Sept. 10 at 7 p.m. Prior to the event co-sponsored with RiverRun Bookstore, the author will meet at 6 p.m. with those who want to discuss the novel in a book group format. Both events are free and open to the public. RSVP to riverrunevents@gmail.com for the group discussion. More information about Christensen, whose novels include "The Epicure's Lament" and "In the Drink," is at www.cityofportsmouth.com/library/lib-programs.htm. Contact: 427-1540.

PUBLIC POOL INFO

The Indoor Pool is closed for maintenance this week and the Peirce Island Outdoor Pool closes for the season Sunday (Aug. 24). The Indoor Pool reopens Monday (Aug. 25) and remains on summer hours through Aug 31 (closed 12:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.). It will be closed Monday (Sept 1) for Labor Day and reopens with normal hours Tuesday, Sept 2. Registration begins soon for fall swim lessons. Call the pool at 427-1546 or see www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/programs-11.htm.

FALL REC PROGRAMS

The Recreation Department has a full slate of new youth and adult programs for fall. Pick up a brochure at any Recreation Department facility or view it online at www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/programs.htm. It includes schedules for fall sports, adult trips, the Indoor Pool, Spinnaker Point Adult Center and the Connie Bean Community Center. Contact: 766-1483.

ADULT DAY TRIPS

Registration for fall and winter adult day trips begins Monday (Aug. 25) at the Spinnaker Point Adult Recreation Center. Trips to LL Bean and Freeport, historic Cape Ann and Rockport, scenic Maine coast, and Salem, Mass., are planned in September and October. Call 766-1483 or see www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/programs-6.htm.

KEEPING COOL

Save electricity by taking steps to cool your house without air conditioning. Ceiling fans use only about as much electricity as a light bulb—or 2 percent of the amount of electricity of a central air system. You can cover south-facing windows with light-colored shades or blinds to reduce solar heat gain. If it's cooler than 80 degrees outside, try opening a window at the highest point of your house and another on the shady side of the ground floor to create a natural air flow through your house. To learn about the City of Portsmouth's sustainability initiatives, visit www.cityofportsmouth.com/sustainability/index.htm.

FALL SOCCER

Registration for grades K-4 youth soccer is Sept. 2-5 from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Greenleaf Recreation Center. There will be separate divisions for boys and girls if enough children register. The six weeks of games beginning Sept. 9 are scheduled Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning at 4 p.m., and Saturdays beginning at 9 a.m. Resident cost is \$25 for shirt, socks and shin guards. Eligible non-resident cost is \$45. Contact: 766-1483.

POLICE PROMOTIONS

Two Portsmouth Police lieutenants have been promoted to the rank of captain. They are Stephen Dubois, a 17-year law enforcement veteran who becomes a captain in the Patrol Division, and 26-year law enforcement veteran Tim Brownell, who becomes captain of the Bureau of Investigative Services. Each has held several positions with the Portsmouth Police Department over the years. To learn more about these promotions, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/police/news081508a.htm and www.cityofportsmouth.com/police/news081508.htm.

FALL GOLF

Adult golf lessons sponsored through the Rec Department begin Sept. 10 at Pease Golf Course. Get rid of your bad swing or learn how to play for the first time. Classes begin at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesdays and the fee is \$120 for five lessons. Register at Spinnaker Point Adult Recreation Center. Contact: 766-1483.

PORTSMOUTH CRITERIUM

Several downtown streets will be closed for part of the day on Sunday, Sept. 21, for the Portsmouth Criterium high-speed bicycle race. Streets will close from approximately 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. The High-Hanover Parking Facility will offer a flat rate of \$3 during those hours. Portsmouth Police will list all street closures on www.CityofPortsmouth.com a few days before the event. For race information, see www.Portsmouthcrit.com.

BOARD VACANCIES

The Recreation Board currently has six vacancies. They are among a number of openings on the City's volunteer boards and commissions. For a list of the openings, the duties of the boards and commissions, and how to apply, visit www.cityofportsmouth.com/cityclerk/boardscommissions.htm.

Mark your calendar... (4 items)

The Library resumes Sunday afternoon hours on Sept. 7. Free movie nights resume at the Library on Sept. 18. The Peirce Island Boat Launch closes for the season Sept. 21. The city's Safe Routes to Schools Committee will be sponsoring "National Walk to School" activities in October, with additional information to be provided at a later date.

Did you know...

The City's emergency communications center dispatches about 50,000 Police, Fire, ambulance and Public Works calls annually. The Police Department received 38,248 calls for service and there were 1,599 arrests last year, a 5% increase, but the number of vehicle accidents with property damage decreased 22% to 1,235. Meanwhile, the number of Fire Department calls declined in Fiscal Year 2008 that ended June 30 (from 2,595 to 2,287) while the total number of Emergency Medical Service (EMS) calls inched up from 2,332 to 2,338. To learn more facts about your city government, visit www.cityofportsmouth.com/annualreport/index.htm.

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 Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m.-3:30 p.m., and on Fridays from 7 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., through Friday, Aug. 22. Regular hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. resume Monday, Aug. 25. Library hours are: 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday, and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday.

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 Channel 22. To join the distribution list, or be removed, go to www.cityofportsmouth.com.