

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*

TODAY'S EVENT

Possible traffic and pedestrian improvements to State Street between Pleasant Street and the Memorial Bridge will be discussed at a public meeting tonight (Oct. 1) at 6:30 p.m. in City Hall Conference Room A. The goal is to gather input to help establish design parameters for reconstruction. For more information, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/publicworks/news100108.htm.

VOTER REGISTRATION EXTENDED

Due to increased interest in the Nov. 4 election and anticipated record Election Day turnout, the City Clerk's Office will extend its hours until 6:30 p.m. on four Thursdays in October to accept new voter registrations and address, name and party affiliation changes. City personnel will be in the City Hall lobby until 6:30 p.m. on Oct. 2 (tomorrow), 9, 16 and 23. Registrations and changes also can be made weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at the City Clerk's Office in Room 218 through Oct. 23; on Saturday, Oct. 25, 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. with the Board of Registrars in City Hall Room 211; and at the polls on Nov. 4. Visit www.CityofPortsmouth.com or call 610-7207.

DEPRESSION SCREENING

Free and confidential depression screenings will be offered next week (Oct. 6-10), Monday through Friday, between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., at Portsmouth Regional Hospital. Clinical depression, which affects over 19 million U.S. adults annually, can lead to suicide. Due to an unusually high number of suicides and attempts in the Seacoast area, the Police and Fire Departments are working with other groups on crisis intervention and the establishment of a crisis hotline at 433-5135. Call 433-0600 to make a free depression screening appointment for next week.

WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

The approximately 1,535 students at Portsmouth's middle and elementary schools are being urged to walk to school next Wednesday (Oct. 8) as part of the celebration of International Walk to School Day. The Portsmouth event begins 30 minutes prior to the start of the school day with kids, parents and community leaders walking from a location approximately one-half mile from each school. Walkers will arrive at the school approximately 15 minutes later for a celebration and raffle. The event is sponsored by Portsmouth's Safe Routes to School Committee. Contact: 766-1415.

DIGITAL TV

"Preparing for the Broadcast Digital Television (DTV) Transition" is the subject of an information session hosted by the Portsmouth Cable Commission next Thursday, Oct. 9, at 6:30 p.m. in the Eileen Dondero Foley City Council Chambers. Comcast, which holds the cable television franchise license in Portsmouth, will provide information on the transition scheduled for Feb. 17, 2009. The meeting will give residents an opportunity to ask questions of a Comcast representative regarding the digital conversion, as well as other related digital television questions. Contact: Commission Chair John Gregg at 433-3304.

HAZARDOUS WASTE

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Collection Day at the City's Department of Public Works is Saturday, Oct. 11, from 8 a.m. until noon. Residents of Portsmouth, Greenland and Newington may bring unwanted household chemicals to the DPW at 680 Peverly Hill Rd. Proof of residency is required. To see what to bring, visit www.cityofportsmouth.com/publicworks/solidwaste-recycle-hhw.htm or call 427-1530.

PROPERTY REASSESSMENT

As required by state law, the Assessor's Office has begun the process of inspecting all properties in the city before the state's assessment review in 2011. Property owners will receive a letter advising when a data collector will be in their neighborhood to visit each property. A data collector wearing a City of Portsmouth ID card will ask an adult for permission to inspect the interior of the home and any other buildings. Although

property owners are not required to allow a data collector inside, access is important for the accuracy of the assessment. For more information, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/assessors/index.htm or call 610-7249.

SCHOOL TESTING

Parents of Portsmouth public school students are asked to make sure their children are physically ready for the reading and math testing going on during the first three weeks of October by encouraging them to do their best, get enough sleep, and eat breakfast. Families are asked not to schedule appointments during school or take vacation time during the three-week testing period. Superintendent Robert Lister says it's important to the entire community that the students do their best.

COLUMBUS DAY

City Hall offices and Portsmouth Schools will be closed Monday, Oct. 13, in recognition of Columbus Day. There will be no change to Monday's curbside collection of trash and recyclables. Trash and recycling will be picked up in the business district at 5 p.m. However, yard waste will not be collected on Monday and the Recycling Center is closed. Portsmouth Schools also will be closed Oct. 10, the Friday before Columbus Day, for a Teacher Workshop.

EMERGENCY HEATING ASSISTANCE

With heating costs rising this year, more families and individuals may find themselves unable to pay for their heating needs. Some who have never asked for help before may face tough decisions such as buying fuel rather than medicine or food, or may use dangerous alternatives such as space heaters. If you are in this situation, or have an elderly or disabled neighbor or friend you fear may be at risk, contact the Welfare Department at 610-7246 for information about assistance options.

WINTERIZE NOW

Take steps now to winterize your home and save energy by blocking leaks. Window and door frames, electrical outlets, recessed lighting, the hatch to the attic, and attic plumbing and electrical bypasses are common areas that leak. Use caulk, weather-stripping, door sweeps, and foam to seal these areas. The State of New Hampshire's Office of Energy and Planning offers additional ways to winterize your home now at www.nh.gov/oep/programs/energy/winter_energy_costs.htm. To learn about the City of Portsmouth's sustainability initiatives, visit www.cityofportsmouth.com/sustainability/index.htm.

MORE MOVIES

The next free movie in the Library's Thursday evening series is tomorrow night (Oct. 2). "Young@Heart" is a documentary tracking an elderly choir by the same name as its members rehearse and prepare for a performance. Next week, on Oct. 9, the film is "Valley of Elah" starring Tommy Lee Jones and Charlize Theron. "Recount" featuring an all-star cast in a gripping look at the 2000 presidential election and its aftermath will be shown Oct. 16. All movies begin at 7 p.m. in the Levenson Room. Contact: 427-1540.

NYC TRIP

Registration opens Monday (Oct. 6) at 1 p.m. for the Rec Department's annual fall bus trip to the Big Apple on Saturday, Nov. 8. Children must be accompanied by an adult. The bus leaves Portsmouth at 6 a.m. and returns about 11:45 p.m. Cost is \$50. Contact: 766-1483.

RESIDENTIAL PARKING

Downtown area residents concerned about parking overflow from the city center are invited to an Oct. 14 public input session on whether to establish a residential parking program. The Parking Committee is holding the 6:30 p.m. meeting in the Library's Levenson Room in response to concerns about reduced on-street residential parking. In other cities, residential parking programs are permit-based where residents buy a sticker allowing them to park in areas designated for residential parking only. Contact: 766-1440.

WASTEWATER INFO

The city will hold a public meeting Wednesday, Oct. 22, as part of its ongoing Wastewater Master Planning effort to meet new permit requirements at its Peirce Island Wastewater Treatment Plant. City staff and consultants will discuss the status of the master plan, as well as the types of treatment technologies necessary to

meet current and future permit requirements. The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. in the Library's Levenson Room. Contact: 766-1416.

RECYCLE EYEGLASSES

Residents can now recycle prescription eyeglasses, reading glasses and non-prescription sunglasses at the City's Recycling Center by placing them in specially marked "Lions Recycle for Sight" collection boxes. The Lions Club will prepare the glasses for free distribution in developing countries where eye care is often unaffordable and inaccessible. Other items that can be recycled at the City's facility at 680 Peverly Hill Road are: books, clothing, cooking oil, used motor oil, antifreeze, batteries, bulky waste, computer monitors and TVs, fluorescent light bulbs, propane tanks, yard waste, aluminum and steel cans, glass bottles and jars, No. 1 and No. 2 plastic bottles, fiber/paper waste and tires. See www.cityofportsmouth.com/publicworks/solidwaste-recycle.htm.

BASKETBALL TIME

Registration for the Men's City Basketball League is Monday (Oct. 6) through Thursday at the Spinnaker Point Recreation Center for men 18 and over who want to play in an organized competitive league. The organizational night for first-year players is Oct. 9 at 7 p.m. Registration is Oct. 13-15 for the Men's 35 and Over League, with an organizational night for first-year players on Oct. 15 at 7 p.m. Info on both leagues is at www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/programs-9.htm or call 766-1483. Registration for children's basketball programs begins later this month and in November. See www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/programs-4.htm.

HALLOWEEN INFO

Registration opens Oct. 14 at 6 p.m. at the Connie Bean Community Center for the Rec Department's Halloween Haunted Hayride on Friday, Oct. 24, for 35 children ages 7 to 12. The 14th Annual Halloween Costume Monster Mash Family Dance is Saturday, Oct. 25, from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Connie Bean. See www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/programs-5.htm for more info on both events. Trick or treating in Portsmouth is Thursday, Oct. 30, from 5:30 to 8 p.m.

ELEMENTARY SKIING

The Recreation Department's Elementary School Ski Program holds registration Tuesday, Oct. 14, beginning at 6 p.m. at the Connie Bean Center. Children in Grades 1-5 are eligible to participate in the program, which will be held on five Saturday evenings at Gunstock Ski Area. The program is limited to 40 children. To learn more, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/programs-3.htm or call Barry Foley at 766-1483.

TWO PARKING CHANGES

The west side of Livermore Street is now limited to 4-hour parking from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. The street's east side remains a "No Parking" zone. The City's Parking Committee will evaluate this change for one year. Also, the Meeting House Hill area around the former Children's Museum is now limited to 72-hour parking. Any vehicle parked in the area for 72 hours without moving is subject to a \$50 fine and removal by towing at the owner's expense. Contact: 766-1440.

WALLET BIRTH CARDS

Effective today (Oct. 1), wallet birth cards no longer will be issued by the City Clerk's Office or anywhere else in New Hampshire. The state is ending the practice for a number of reasons, including that other state and federal agencies question the validity of the cards as proof of birth.

WATER METER UPGRADES

Approximately 1,000 residences between Middle Street and the Route One Bypass will have their water meters upgraded or new ones installed beginning this month when the Water Division begins the second phase of its new Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system. Letters will be sent to all customers in the area with information about the process. Contact: 427-1540.

MAINS FLUSHING

The fall program to flush sediment from the City's water mains is continuing. If you see Water Department trucks in your neighborhood between 8 p.m. and midnight, Monday through Thursday, refrain from drawing water as it may have a reddish tint. Let the water run until it becomes clear again. Contact: 427-1552.

COMPUTER CLASSES

The Library is offering free computer classes this fall. To learn more about this new service, visit www.cityofportsmouth.com/library/computerclasses.htm or call 766-1720.

ROADWORK

The City is still working on traffic-calming improvements on the mile-long residential section of Woodbury Avenue between Bartlett and Market Streets. Construction begins each weekday at 7 a.m. through the end of November. The section from Cottage to Bartlett will be closed over the next two weeks to allow for water and gas line installations. Use alternative routes whenever possible. If you are unable to avoid the project area, please use caution and be cognizant of construction crews. Contact: 766-1411.

CITY NEEDS YOU

There are six openings on the City's Recreation Committee, four each on the Library Board of Trustees and Planning Board, as well as several other vacancies on the city's volunteer boards and commissions. To learn more, visit www.cityofportsmouth.com/cityclerk/boardscommissions.htm.

Mark your calendar...

The 2nd Annual "Holiday Express" from the Portsmouth middle and elementary schools to the North Pole to spend the evening with Santa and his elves will be Dec. 13.

School fundraiser...

Join New Franklin and Dondero School parents and friends for their first joint fundraiser--an adult All Decades Dance on Saturday, Oct. 18, at the VFW Hall, 7-11 p.m. Tickets: \$15 or 2 for \$25. Best costume prizes by decade every hour, but costumes aren't necessary for entrance. For tickets and information, contact sirmaian@comcast.net or jmo625@yahoo.com.

Did you know...

October is Handicap Parking Awareness Month. Portsmouth has 54 handicap parking spaces reserved for those who have obtained handicap parking permits or handicap license tags from the state. The state issues handicap parking permits for people with walking disabilities such as those requiring a wheelchair, crutches or a walker, as well as vision, hearing and breathing problems. Parking in handicap spaces without a permit can bring a \$250 fine. The city allows anyone with a handicap placard or plates to park free at any meter. Contact: 766-1440.

MEETINGS: To see a list of upcoming City-related meetings, agendas for future meetings and minutes of past meetings, check www.CityofPortsmouth.com or the Meetings Calendar at www.cityofportsmouth.com/calendar/2008/index.htm.

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT MASTER CALENDAR: www.cityofportsmouth.com/school/allschoolactivitiescalendar.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, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. 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.

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