

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 18) Portsmouth Middle School concert by choral and band groups at 7 p.m. at Portsmouth High School. Contact: 431-5080.

NO SCHOOL FRIDAY

Portsmouth Public Schools will be closed Friday (March 20) for a teachers’ workshop. The Portsmouth Rec Department is sponsoring a field trip for Grades K-5 to Funspot at Weirs Beach that day. The cost is \$25 and includes admission, 100 tokens and bus transportation. Register at the Connie Bean Center. Contact: 766-1483.

LOCK YOUR CAR

Portsmouth Police remind residents to remove valuables and to lock their vehicles. There has been a marked increase in thefts from motor vehicles in the city, most involving unlocked vehicles. In many cases, valuable items such as wallets and computers were left in plain sight in unlocked vehicles. Residents also are reminded that leaving a vehicle’s keys in the unlocked car is like issuing an open invitation to steal it. Contact: 427-1500.

MORE MOVIE MADNESS

The second offering in the Library’s annual “March Movie Madness,” the 2008 R-rated thriller “Transsiberian,” will be shown tomorrow night (March 19) at 7 p.m. in the Library’s Levenson Room. The final movie in the series is “Happy-Go-Lucky” next Thursday (March 26) at 7 p.m. See www.cityofportsmouth.com/library/lib-programs-movie.htm for more information or contact 427-1540.

PHS CHAMPIONSHIP

The Portsmouth High School boys basketball State Championship game against Pelham will be shown at 7 p.m. both this Saturday (March 21) and next Saturday, March 28, on Cable Channel 22.

REC BROCHURE

The Recreation Department’s Spring/Summer brochure will be out Monday (March 23). 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.

WORLD WAR II

The Library will host a discussion next Tuesday (March 24) by two World War II veterans about the liberation of Dachau, and a reading and signing of the book “Unknown Soldiers: Reliving World War II in Europe” about the experiences of their close-knit infantry platoon. Join acclaimed author Joseph E. Garland and local attorney Jeremy Waldron at 7 p.m. in the Levenson Room for this event co-sponsored by RiverRun Books. Contact: 427-1540.

ISLINGTON STREET PLAN

There will be a joint work session on the Islington Street Improvement Action Plan Project next Wednesday (March 25) at 7 p.m. in the Library’s Levenson Room to discuss the consultants’ latest draft plan. Participating will be the City Council, Economic Development Commission, Planning Board, Historic District Commission, and the Art-Speak Board. Although no public testimony is taken at work sessions, the public is welcome to observe. Contact: 610-7220.

FIREFIGHTING HISTORY

The new book “Portsmouth Firefighting” by Assistant Fire Chief Steven Achilles will be the subject of discussion Wednesday, April 1, at 7 p.m. in the Library’s Levenson Room. Achilles will share bits of history, along with images of firefighters and their work in Portsmouth. He also will talk about his experience researching local history and writing his book. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing in this event co-sponsored by RiverRun Bookstore. Contact: 427-1540.

TAX EXEMPTIONS

There is an April 15 deadline to apply for elderly and disabled exemptions for the December 2009 tax bill. The City Council recently increased the income and asset limits for both the elderly and disabled exemptions to \$32,589 for single taxpayers and \$40,201 for married couples. Total assets for both exemptions are \$108,634, whether single or married. Applications are online at www.cityofportsmouth.com/assessors/index.htm or contact the Assessor's Office at 610-7214 or 610-7249.

HANDICAPPED PARKING MAP

A map showing the on-street parking spaces reserved for people with temporary or permanent disabilities can now be found online via a link at www.cityofportsmouth.com/transportation/index.htm. If no designated accessible spaces are available, anyone with a state-issued handicap license plate or parking placard can park free at any meter within the city, as well as up to 24 hours at the High-Hanover Parking Facility. Handicap parking spaces are intended for use by those with a handicap plate or placard who get in/out of their vehicles to conduct business within the area. The NH Department of Motor Vehicles issues them to people with doctor-certified walking disabilities such as those requiring a wheelchair, crutches or a walker, as well as vision, hearing and breathing problems. Contact: 766-1440.

CITYWIDE PROJECTS

Information on the City's 16 major Public Works construction projects planned for 2009 can now be found online at www.cityofportsmouth.com/projects/index.htm.

YOUTH ARTS MONTH

March is "Youth Arts Month" and original works of art by Portsmouth students can be viewed at the Library and at 20 downtown businesses. The "Splash! Youth Art Show" coordinated by the Friends of the Portsmouth Library is on exhibit at the Library's Levenson Room during normal business hours. Art-Speak, the City's Cultural Commission, and Portsmouth Public Schools also have partnered with local businesses to display approximately 30 original works of art by Portsmouth K-12 students through the end of the month.

IMMUNIZATION CHANGES

The State of New Hampshire recently announced changes to the vaccination requirements for schoolchildren. They begin in the fall and will affect children entering elementary school, sixth-graders and those turning 11. Parents are urged to contact their children's physician to make sure all immunizations are up to date before the first day of school. The changes involve the chickenpox, and the tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap) vaccines. To learn more, contact the nurse at your child's school or see www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/PIO/LIBRARY/Press+Release/immunization_changes.htm.

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 7 at Little Harbour Elementary (436-1708), and April 15 at both Dondero (436-2231) and New Franklin (436-0910) Elementary Schools. Kindergarten students must be 5 years old by September 30 and reside in Portsmouth.

AQUACIZE CLASSES

The Portsmouth Rec Department is once again offering a series of drop-in aquacize classes at the Spinnaker Point Pool on Saturdays from 8:15 to 9 a.m., beginning this Saturday (March 21). Come burn calories and get ready for swimsuit season on any or all of these Saturdays: March 21 & 28; April 4, 11 & 25; and May 2 & 9. The classes are free to Spinnaker Point and Indoor Pool members, all others pay a \$5 fee. Contact: 427-1546.

MORE REC NEWS

Registration is underway at the Indoor Pool for a variety of children's and adult swimming lessons, as well as Red Cross lifeguarding and water safety instructor courses. For more information, see

www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/indoor.htm or call 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 23) or call 766-1483 to learn more.

READY FOR RETIREMENT?

The Friends RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program), in partnership with the Library, will present a series of facilitated discussions about the when's and how's of retirement for those beginning to think about retirement, as well as the soon to be, or recently, retired. A variety of topics will be discussed. The group meets on the fourth Tuesday of the month, beginning next Tuesday (March 24), from 7 to 8 p.m., in the Library's Hilton Garden Room. To register, contact The Friends RSVP at 373-6144. Space is limited.

KIDS' LIBRARY EVENTS

The Library's spring drop-in series of "Lap Time" and "Preschool Story Time" events for young children and their grownups have begun and continue through the first full week of May, although there are no sessions next Tuesday (March 24). For details on the programs, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/library/childrens-pms.htm. The next kids' drop-in craft program will involve making spring tissue paper bouquets Saturday, March 28, from 10 a.m. to noon. Children under 10 must be accompanied by an adult. These events are free for Portsmouth Library cardholders. Contact: 766-1740.

Mark your calendar... (7 items)

- Portland, Maine, author Colin Sargent will read and sign his new historical fiction book "Museum of Human Beings" at 1 p.m. Saturday, April 4, at the Library's Levenson Room.
- Wednesday, April 8, is an early release day for Portsmouth Public Schools.
- City Hall and the Library will close at noon Friday, April 10, in observance of Good Friday. The Library will be closed Sunday, April 12, for Easter.
- The Rec Department's annual Easter Egg hunt for kids from preschool age through Grade 2 is the morning of April 11 at Langdon Park across from City Hall on Junkins Avenue.
- The Second Annual Portsmouth Sustainability Fair will be Saturday, May 9.
- The City's annual Spring Household Hazardous Waste Day will be Saturday, May 16, from 8 a.m. to noon, at the Department of Public Works on Peverly Hill Road.
- Free income tax preparation is available every Tuesday through April 24 at the Library's MacLeod Room from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Did you know...

The Library has launched a program for kids 9-12 and their adults to play games, swap them and even see new games. Children may bring old games they no longer want and would like to trade with others. They also may bring new games they love, and portable game systems to play with others. No M (Mature)-rated games allowed. Light refreshments provided. The program, held on Sundays from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Hilton Garden Room, is free to Library cardholders. Contact: 427-1540.

BOARD VACANCIES

The most recent openings on the City's volunteer boards and commissions include one parent each from New Franklin and the Middle School to serve on the Safe Routes to School Committee. All the vacancies and board descriptions can be found at www.cityofportsmouth.com/cityclerk/boardscommissions.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/2009/index.htm.

SCHOOL CALENDAR: The School Department's Activities Calendar for all schools is at 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; 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday; and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

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