

The Other Side of the Fence

E-News from ONI ~ March 2005

Enhancing the quality of neighborhoods through community participation

ONIFOLKSONIFOLKSONIFOLKSONI



Kimberly coming in for a landing...

ONI's Kimberly Mark-Villela hangs between an Army helicopter and the Kuwaite desert during training exercises for her medical unit stationed at Camp Doha 10 miles from the Iraqi border.

War experiences, flying medical missions over Iraqi desert changes her life forever

By Nell Wagenaar

After flying missions transporting the war wounded to medical units in Kuwait, experiencing 130-degree heat, and dealing daily with the threat of bombs and chemical warfare, Kimberly Mark-Villela feels she can handle anything.

"I'm a much more positive person now with much more self-confidence. I know that whatever happens, I will be fine, that there's nothing I can't overcome." But her war experiences have also left her more vulnerable..... to low flying aircraft, loud noises and the sound of sirens.



Kimberly, in full gear, helps treat the wounded being transported to medical units.

She's a little embarrassed to admit it but "when I first came home, I would duck and automatically grab for a gas mask." And for at least several months back in Portland, she couldn't adjust to the cold of the Oregon summer.

"The quietness with no aircraft running, generators or tanks was an amazing adjustment. Being able to walk out my front door and see grass and flowers and breathing clean air is nothing I will ever discount. Oregon is the perfect State to call home."

Kimberly, Liquor Licensing Specialist for ONI, was stationed at Camp Doha in Kuwait from August 2002 to June 2003 about 10 miles from the Iraq border. "We flew mission into Iraq to pick up wounded American soldiers, enemy prisoners of war (EPWs), and civilians including children."

As Army Specialist in Flight Operations, she flew a couple of missions in a UH-60L Blackhawk as "security" and was charged with taking the injured from the field to medical treatment centers. "My job on the ground was to identify the injuries via radio and telephone, know where field hospital specific medical specialists were located, and get coordinates for their location." She also had to estimate airtime, patient load by injury, where the fuel stops were, and keep track of equipment while the crew was on a mission.

Flying over enemy territory compounded the stress level. The external tanks of the Blackhawk look like bombs hanging from the helicopter so crews were occasionally shot at. "Medical crews cannot shoot back because they are considered Non Combat medical units. They only carry small arms for personal protection if they have to land in enemy territory. They fly with huge Red Cross signs on the sides and under-belly of the aircraft. In theory, no one is supposed to shoot at you. Fortunately, despite many close calls, none of the Oregon crews were ever injured.

"Your crew is your family and every time they take off on a mission, you worry until they return." Kimberly did cut her hand trying to fix a piece of equipment and was teased by her crew for quite a while.

Heat was overwhelming

"Turn your hairdryer on high and put it an inch from your face...that's what it felt like when we landed and the C5 Aircraft transport was opened. It took your breath away. One day the temperatures reached 141 degrees. It was like living in a sauna. And the wind would just make it hotter. At night it would cool off to about 108."

Kimberly adjusted to the heat after about three weeks. Not uncommon among the troops during that time were bloody noses, headaches, heat exhaustion, dizzy spells. "In heat like that you don't feel sweat because it evaporates immediately. You have to drink water constantly to avoid dehydration."

'It was like living in a sauna. And the wind would just make it hotter...'

Another hardship was always being on call and never having any alone time. You were always with other people. Being asleep was her only real solitude. "Once the war started, we were never off shift and never allowed off base.

"We were initially set to come home the end of January 2003, but had to wait till the end of May. We were one of the first units to be held over. When they don't let you leave, it's not a good sign." War (Operation Iraqi Freedom) started three months later. "I spent my 40th birthday in the air on a 12-hour flight into Iraq."

The food on base was mass-produced and very bland. The scrambled eggs had to be synthetic. We didn't see them cook them." What she craved most from home was pork and seafood pasta. She also missed the energy of Portland, the friendliness of its people and seeing the beautiful skyline every morning when emerging from the tunnel on Hwy 26.

There were some moments of respite amid the chaos of war. The landscape was an endless tan due to the finely powdered desert sand, which, with high winds, often reduced visibility to zero. She hungered for color. One day while flying over the Persian Gulf, she noted six different shades of blue and green. "It was heaven." She saw fish, sharks, flamingos, and reveled in the cooler temperatures over the water.

'My worst day in the Middle East'

Kimberly is very close to her family. She's a single mom with three kids—Nikki, 22, MacKinzie, 19, and Matthew, 17. "They are wonderful, funny, the loves of my life. Not a day goes by that

these kids don't make me laugh with their humor and antics. They are big-hearted and truly good people. A mother could not be more lucky or proud. They are the light in my life."

One day will forever stick in her mind. "I could talk about the awful sand storms or the heat or the lack of color or the work schedule, but the worst day for me was when I was talking to my oldest son, MacKinzie.

Kimberly with her pilots. At right is CW3 Steenson and at left is 1LT Fairchild during a patient drop mission to Tahlil AFB, a former Iragi Airforce base.



"After the war started we were limited on our conversations home. I finally got through on the phone to speak to him. I was only on the phone for a couple minutes when he asked me, "Hey Mom, is that siren going off on TV or is it going off where you are right now?" The TV news people were on the border of Kuwait and Iraq. I was about 10 miles inside Kuwait and hadn't heard anything. As I started to answer him that it must be a repeat of an earlier broadcast, a real siren went off in my sector.

"That was my worst day ... hearing the fear in his voice when I had to get off the phone. He yelled, "I Love You Mom, don't hang up". It was over a month before I got to speak to my son again on the phone. I will never know how badly that affected him. I do know my children hate the war. I also know they respect the people who are sent there to do a job. I retired from the Military in December last year."

She is enjoying for the first time in her children's lives, a space of time without the military. "My parents Bev and Leo, my sisters Linda and Teri, and my children have been supportive and helpful with all of my trainings and deployments for over 22 years. They've allowed me to be a soldier and a mother. They are my heroes!"



Another hero back from war

Matthew Braddock, 24-year old son of ONI's Rhetta Drennan, had to have his left foot amputated from injuries suffered after his humvee drove over an anti-tank mine and exploded near Kirkuk, Iraqi last January.

Rhetta thanks her co-workers for the \$200 in donations that will help defray expenses for family members traveling to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, TX where he is recuperating.

His right foot was saved during a 9-hour reconstructive surgery. His attitude is very positive and he constantly pushes himself during long physical therapy sessions, Rhetta reports. He can't wait to decorate his prosthesis when he gets it.

Matthew, of Vancouver, WA has signed up for sailing lessons, might even try culinary arts but his dream is to return to active duty as a drill instructor.

Samantha Kennedy heads downtown pilot program

By Nell Wagenaar

Samantha Kennedy, who's been working with the homeless, the drug-addicted and mentally ill populations downtown—sometimes on her own dime—is trying to break down the silo culture of the local social service agencies.

She related the story of a mentally ill woman who had been living on the streets of Portland for 18 years. "The agencies kept saying they had done all they could. I found that unacceptable." Kennedy finally got the woman committed and reunited with her family.

As coordinator of the new ACCESS Program, a partnership between ONI and the Police Bureau, Kennedy is trying to get folks hooked up with services—food, clothing, shelter, health services—before they get lost in the system or turn to crime.



Samantha Kennedy likes her front-line job

The program, funded by ONI with the Police contributing \$100,000 is designed to cut down on police, court and jail time. If the program succeeds, she says, it will likely be exported to other parts of the city.

A grandmother and retired psychologist, she reveals a mountain of compassion in discussing the increasing problem of homelessness and related social ills. She'll often hit the streets and go talk to anyone sitting on the sidewalk who looks like they need help. "I'm seeing people in various stages of distress. Some don't qualify for any aid. I find ways to get them help." The most important part of the job, she says, is to coordinate the dozen or so agencies that provide resources so that everyone is on the same page about the needs of a particular individual. She tries to get the agencies to sit down together, compare notes and come up with creative solutions. Even though there's a lack of housing in the community, when housing is most needed, 99 per cent of the cases are fixable, she said.

"It's an incredible jig saw puzzle. We have all these resources. The challenge is to fit people into the puzzle. I love problem-solving." She monitors about 100 individuals and caries an active caseload of two dozen clients at a time. "I go to the Union Gospel, the Rescue Mission, work with people in the parks and under bridges." She talks one-on-one and finds out what a person needs. Since December when Access was instituted, 11 people have been helped. "That's a lot of dollars saved in police and court time."

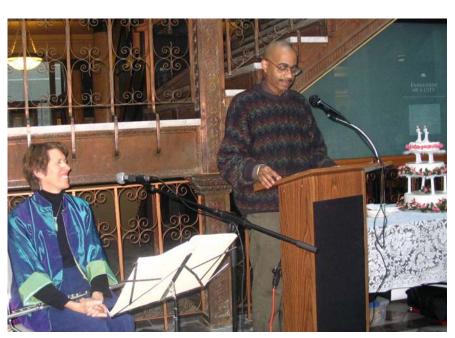
Samantha weaves her magic from a storefront at 202 NW First Ave where people can walk in or be admitted by police. Police appreciate the new program because officers say there is nowhere else to immediately take people with mental illness and substance abuse problems. Early intervention by lending a helpful hand is critical. It's what she does best.

CITYHALLBEATCITYHALLBEATCITYHALLBEAT

Marriage Equality Urged

Music and a wedding cake were part of the festivities at City Hall on Valentine's Day when people gathered to celebrate National Freedom to Marry Week and commit themselves to continue to work for marriage equality for same sex couples. The Equality Coalition, a coalition of organizations and individuals committed to working for full marriage equality that was formed following the passage of Amendment 36 in November, sponsored the event to remind Oregonians that the work for full marriage equality for same sex couples continues.

"We are confident that equal justice for all will ultimately prevail," said Rev. Cecil Prescod.



"We are a hope-filled people," said the Rev. Cecil Charles Prescod, coordinator of Love Makes a Family's Public Voice for Peace and Equality. Music provided by Musica Femina Flute Guitar Duo, with Kristan Aspen, shown, and Janna MacAusian, partners for 25 years and married legally last March.

ONI Administration

Mayor to release proposed Budget decisions April 7

Mayor Tom Potter will be announcing his proposed Bureau decisions for next fiscal year April 7. Bureau budgets are currently being reviewed by two City Council workgroups. Work group A consists of Commissioners Randy Leonard and Dan Saltzman, while Commissioners Erik Sten and Sam Adams are on Workgroup B. ONI's budget is being reviewed by Workgroup B. There have been two work sessions to date. To view online video of these sessions, please visit this website: http://www.portlandonline.com/index.cfm?c=28260.

UPCOMING BUDGET DATES

Tues 3/15	ONI Work session With Workgroup B (Council Chambers, 1-3:30, ONI at 2:55)
Tues 3/22	City Council Hearing Re: Workgroup Budget Recommendations (all day)
Thurs 3/31	Community Forum (6-8pm, Mt Scott Community Center, 5530 SE 72nd)
Thurs 4/7	Mayor's Proposed Budget Decisions Released
Sat 5/14	Community Budget Hearing (location TBA)
Wed 5/18	City Council Meeting/Hearing on Approved Budget (City Hall)

For more on the City's budget process, please visit this website -- -- http://www.portlandonline.com/index.cfm?c=28260>.

Maria Elena
Guerra, Community
Service Aide II,
Office of
Neighborhood
Involvement,
shares information
with a group of
minority students
at Portland
Community
College.





eVolvement Project reaches minorities in N. Portland By Maria Elena Guerra

Coming from a country where public participation is not encouraged, neither by the government nor throughout our educational system, it has been a great experience being part

of the eVolvement project. There are two experiences that have made me change my opinion about how minorities use and know about the Internet and its use. It is true that the word egovernment does not mean much for them but when we talk about "online public services", "website", and "online forums," they are aware of them and open to giving us feedback as to what they find interesting, challenging and even boring.

My first experience was with a group of low-income and immigrant tenants. My co-worker Doretta and I initially met with them to find out what they look for when navigating the Internet. I first thought "they do not have computers therefore, how can they know what to look for." I changed my mind in the next fifteen minutes, when one of the 12 participants starts talking and gives us a list of things they are interested in.

They are interested in links to parks and pools; events and activities, particularly in events for kids; who's who in government, especially who represents them; better search tools: want to search for things like classes, holiday parties for kids, library events, family nights; phone numbers to state, county and city services, contacts in schools. Yes, it is true that most of them do not own a computer but they have access to computers through libraries and community centers and "they use them"

My second experience was during a presentation at Ms. Ginny Rose's English as a Second Language class at PCC Cascade (see picture). I myself am a second-language learner and I share the same interest and confusions from the students in this class. The 20 students come from different countries and share the same barriers—lack of English language knowledge. They come from Haiti, Cuba, Argentina, Mexico and many other places.

They are aware that in order to survive and become good citizens, they must be able not only to learn the language but also understand their new home rules and government. During the presentation, four students asked me if they could open an account and participate on the online forum. They were also interested in posting their resumes and their business information. One student also posted a small message sharing his language by writing his message in Chinese.

Some were professionals in their countries. Not being able to communicate in a professional way is frustrating and can be embarrassing. It will take time for the students and immigrants to feel confident they can interact with neighbors and with city employees. But the bottom line: they are not computer illiterate and definitely willing to participate if they have the opportunity.

Neighborhood Inspections

Stakeholder Advisory Committee holds first meeting By Ed Marihart

Our Stakeholder Advisory Committee is made up of nine representatives of the people and agencies directly affected by our services that we provide. The charge of the committee is to provide policy and procedure advice and feedback, assist with information sharing, education and advocacy of the program to the general public. Committee members include: Nick Sauvie - Rose CDC, Ian Slingerland - Community Alliance of Tenants, Peter Deyoe - ONI - Budget Advisory Committee & East Portland Neighborhoods, Deborah Imse - Executive Director of Metro Multi-Family Assn., Kathleen McHarg - Gatekeepers with County Aging & Disability

Services, Connie Buckley - PDC Housing, Susan Landauer - North Portland Neighborhoods, Raina Beavers - Portland Housing Center, Trell Anderson - BHCD-Single Family Rehab.

The committee's first meeting was held on Feb. 11 with five members attending at our offices. The Agenda included: - Introductions, - Purpose & Charge of the Committee, - Overview of Current Programs, - Handouts, - Budget & Program Proposals for next Fiscal Year, - Next meeting/Future Schedule. The committee agreed to meet every other month to begin with and the next meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 8 at 8:30 AM at our office. The committee members expressed strong support for both proposed fee increase that were discussed: 1) A new Code Enforcement fee category of \$560 for 20+ units and 2) a fee of \$150 for the Work Order/Final Inspection for nuisance cases. Much information was provided and questions asked. Four of the five members were interested in doing a ride-along with our inspectors.

New Housing Inspector hired

A Big welcome to Jeff Strang, our newest Housing Inspector. He filled our vacant Housing Inspector position on Monday, March 7th. He comes from the private sector with a construction contractor background. He will be in training for the next 4-6 weeks and will eventually be the Housing Inspector for District 3 in lower NE Portland.

Landlord Training Program coming in late spring

Neighborhood Inspections is pulling together this year's Landlord Training program set for April, May and June. In the past other Bureaus have provided information and/or representatives during the trainings to get their specific programs to landlords/property managers. This a great opportunity for outreach. The locations and dates haven't been finalized yet, so more to come on this topic. Any questions call Crystle Cowen at x 3-7527 or if you are interested in being added to the mailing please call 503-823-7955 and leave your email or postal address.

Neighborhood Livability Center

Camera in place to identify taggers in the act

Tracking system records 4,189 graffiti reports By Marcia Dennis

As of March 8, 2003, the online reporting system (Track It) has received 4189 reports of graffiti from 1037 *unique* users. Of that total, 68 have been identified as "duplicate" entries (referring to the same incident of vandalism). Many of those reports are repeat incidents at the same location, as there are sites around town that seem to be especially vulnerable to graffiti.

To address these "repeat customers," the Graffiti Abatement Program and Task Force obtained the loan of a Q-Star Flash Cam, from Q-Star Technologies (a partner in the No-Graf Network). We have the camera system for a 4-week trial period, during which we will coordinate with Portland Police to determine which locations will benefit from this increased surveillance tool.

The camera was in place over the past weekend in a park which has been hit repeatedly with gang graffiti. It will be moved to other areas in the City over the next 3-4 weeks to deter tagging and try to identify taggers "in the act".

We are pleased to announce the expansion of the graffiti task force to include representatives from Beaverton, Tigard and Gresham Police Departments. Members of the Portland Police Bureau are again attending our monthly meetings. The partnership with police and the district attorney's office is extremely important as we focus on increased enforcement and prosecution. Police and district attorneys all have access to the Track It database, and are able to query tags, locations, and other pertinent information in the system.

In the past month, Crime-stoppers notices were put out on four prolific taggers: DELK, TORMENT, KILLAHOE and CAVEMAN. While it has not resulted in any arrests, the media responded with increased publicity for the program, as well as more information to raise public awareness about the negative effects of graffiti on neighborhood livability.

The graffiti removal kits for volunteers were re-instituted at nine fire stations. The response to this program has been very good. Thanks to Portland Fire Bureau, Logistics Capt. Marco Benetti and Lt. Dave Centers, and the staff at all nine stations, for being so cooperative (and for providing the supplies). This program also benefited from increased media attention...Channels 2, 6, 8 and 12 all responded to the press release and promoted the kits and the anti-graffiti message on their evening broadcasts.

Crime Prevention

'Graffiti Wipeout' set for NE neighborhoods

By Preston Wong

A recent survey of neighborhoods indicated that graffiti was among the top three problems or crimes that citizens were most concerned about.

As a result the Central Northeast Neighbors staff, Board, and ONI Crime Prevention has decided to repeat a graffiti removal effort conducted earlier this year in the Eastside Industrial area aimed at removing unsightly graffiti.

Central Northeast Neighbors along with ONI Crime Prevention and several neighborhood associations will be conducting a "Graffiti Wipeout" campaign on Saturday, March 26 from 10 a.m to 1 p.m. The campaign will focus on cleaning graffiti in the Hollywood, Beaumont Wilshire and Cully neighborhoods. We are hoping to send the message that graffiti will not be tolerated. Other neighborhoods in CNN will be targeted later in the year.

Volunteers are still needed for this campaign. For additional info, contact Preston Wong, Crime Prevention Coordinator.

Personal safety, identity theft workshops scheduled By Galina Grigoryan

The Crime Prevention Program in SE Portland is moving forward with the 2005 Community Crime Prevention Training and Major Events Plan implementation and has scheduled the following community trainings to meet our training goals:

Identity Theft Prevention Training, which will focus on ways criminals, can steal someone's identity and what one should do to prevent this crime, is scheduled for March 29, from 6 to 8

p.m. at SEUL, 3534 SE Main St. Walter Garcia, who will present this training, is a Crime Prevention Program Administrator in North Portland. Walter has a vast experience on the ID theft topic and has also worked as a patrol police officer for the City of McMinnville and the City of Warrenton. In addition, he has an extensive experience in physical security, individual protection as well as property protection and alarm response. Walter is bi-lingual (English Spanish) and bi-cultural (American - Mexican) and is incredibly knowledgeable in the crime prevention field.

The Personal Safety training, which will focus on personal safety techniques through a variety of self-protective non-physical options, is scheduled for 06/23, 6-8 p.m., at SEUL, 3534 SE Main St. Stephanie Reynolds, who will present this training, is a Crime Prevention Program Administrator in Southwest Portland. Stephanie Reynolds has been the City of Portland's crime prevention program coordinator for Southwest Portland since April 2002. She works with police and citizens to solve crime problems in Southwest. From 1997 to 2002, she was the director of the Portland Police Bureau's self-defense program for women, and she has been a self-defense instructor since 1991. Stephanie's knowledge in the personal safety and crime prevention area is impressive, and we are excited to have her as our speaker at this event.

These trainings are open to the public, but registration priority will be offered to residents of SE Portland. Registration for both trainings is required. Please RSVP to Galina Grigoryan, SE Portland, Crime Prevention Office at 503-232-0010 x23 or ggrigoryan@ci.portland.or.us

The SE Crime Prevention program staff would like to encourage Neighborhood Watch, Foot Patrol, and other community organizers to take both trainings. The Personal Safety training, however, is a course that all of the Block Captains and Foot Patrol volunteers should take. "If there was just one training required for our Foot patrol volunteers and Block Captains, after their groups are formed, it would have to be the Personal Safety Training." said Galina Grigoryan, Crime Prevention Program Administrator for SE Portland. "This training will help them be more prepared in dealing with difficult situations that may come up on their foot patrol or at a block meeting where personal safety might become an issue and a safety plan might be needed."

Piedmont panel discusses Peninsula Park safety issues By Celeste Carey and Tom Peavey

The Committee for Safety and Livability (CSAL) is a committee under the umbrella of the Northeast Neighborhood Coalition (NECN) Board which provides the opportunity for neighborhood representatives to address coalition area crime issues with county and city service providers. CSAL December 2004 and January 2005 meetings hosted representatives discussing coalition wide issues from the following agencies: Portland Police NE Precinct Command Staff, Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, Resolutions Northwest, NECN (Livability Coordinator) and ONI Crime Prevention. CSAL meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, at 5:45 pm, at the King Neighborhood Facility (4815 NE 7th Av.).

On February 23, 2005 the Piedmont Neighborhood Association hosted a panel discussion community meeting which addressed youth involved public safety issues associated with Peninsula Park. Panel consisted of Mark Warrington (Public Safety Director for the Bureau of Parks and Recreation), Amy Massier (Recreation Supervisor and Director of Peninsula Park), Commander Bret Smith (Commander of NE Precinct), ONI Crime Prevention staff and Portland Police Neighborhood Liaison Officers assigned the Piedmont Neighborhood

Association. The Piedmont Neighborhood Association along with the Bureau of Parks and Recreation and ONI Crime Prevention are also involved in sponsoring a Job Fair event on April 22nd, at Peninsula Park Recreation Center, 5pm to 7pm. The Job Fair is being offered in an effort to offer job-seeking skills to youth/adults ages 17 to 23.

Multiple Neighborhood Watch meetings were held in the area of NE 26th and Alameda and NE 32nd Av. near Siskiyou. The major topic of those meetings was the numerous vehicle vandalisms occurring in those neighborhoods since August 2004. These meetings have stimulated the need for a broader problem solving effort. The Alameda Neighborhood Association is sponsoring a neighborhood association wide meeting to address crime information and area crime prevention through environmental design issues connected to vehicle vandalism, tentatively scheduled for April 5, 2005. NE Precinct and ONI Crime Prevention will be participating.

'Tired of Tweakers' burglary prevention project begun By Katherine Anderson

Residential burglary crime rates increased in East Portland by 29% from 2003 to 2004. Crime Prevention Coordinators Katherine Anderson, Preston Wong and Teri Poppino are working with East Precinct to assist in 90 day a targeted effort to reverse the trend. The precinct mission "Tired of Tweakers" runs from mid February to mid May. The precinct selected the Powellhurst-Gilbert Neighborhood Association (which holds the dubious distinction of having the most burglaries in the precinct) as the focus of the initial prevention, education and enforcement efforts.

Teri and Katherine, along with neighborhood volunteers, police cadets and East precinct officers including the Neighborhood Response Team officers distributed burglary prevention packets to 700 households on Saturday, February 19th. The packets included crime prevention information developed by the East Portland Neighborhood Office Crime Prevention Coordinators and Rosanne Lee from Southeast Uplift.

Preston and Katherine presented 2 hour burglary prevention training to 30 neighbors at a standing room only crowd on Thursday, February 24th from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the Powell Valley Water Road District headquarters at 12350 SE Powell Boulevard. Teri and Katherine have scheduled a Neighborhood Watch training for Thursday, March 10th at the same location and many of the participants at the first training will be attending the second one as well.

Lents Resource Fair a Huge Success

More than 20 City, County and community based-organizations staffed tables at the February 12th Lents Resource Fair. The Portland Development Commission planned, organized and supported the successful event. About 400 community members filed through the doors of Lents School on a rainy Saturday morning to learn more about potential programs and opportunities in their neighborhood.

In addition to the East Portland Neighborhood Office table, Crime Prevention Coordinator Katherine Anderson presented a burglary training to crowd that filled nearly every seat in the room. City Commissioners Randy Leonard, Dan Saltzman and Sam Adams, as well as Metro Counselor Bob Liberty attended the event and devoted a considerable amount of time talking to resident. It was team building for the government agencies as well as the community!

Elders in Action

RideWise volunteer Mary Mackenzie:

"My husband was the driver in the family. Since losing him in 1999, I have gained mobility through Tri-Met and Ride Connection. I use Tri-Met to get to the Elders in Action office where I volunteer on Friday afternoons and I use the Tri-Met website to plan other trips for shopping and other excursions. Tri-Met has been a great help and most of the drivers I have met are sensitive to the needs of seniors. Ride Connection has helped me since I hurt my knee and has taken me to medical appointments and to the Hollywood Senior Center. I recommend both Tri-Met and Ride Connection to seniors who need transportation."



Seniors remain mobile with RideWise option

For those who can no longer drive, now there is RideWise. To sustain an active and healthy lifestyle for seniors who no longer drive, Elders in Action has partnered with Tri-Met and Ride Connection to promote transportation options. Mobility is the critical element in remaining independent and involved in the community.

Elders in Action volunteers will team up with Tri-Met to educate and familiarize seniors with a variety of existing transportation options. To take the mystery out of using public transportation, RideWise will feature demonstrations by trained volunteers and Tri-Met staff at senior sites throughout the community. RideWise will inform elders about transportation choices and provide cost saving options to taking a taxi. RideWise will spotlight:

- **Personalized trip planning** Easy to access and responsive to individual needs of each customer, service representatives will guide individuals through resources available to choose the best option for each trip;
- Special Bus Features Designed for individuals who need special help and practice boarding TriMet buses and MAX;
- One-on-one travel training An individualized course to teach older adults and people with disabilities to travel safely when traveling alone on public transportation.

Elders in Action will sponsor an interactive RideWise training for volunteers on March 14 from 9:30 am to12 noon. Training will include a trip to the Tri-Met garage and hands-on demonstration of the bus accessible features. If you are an avid user of public transportation and want to share your experience with other seniors, call Elders in Action at 503-823-5269 for details. If you are an older adult or person with a disability and live in Multnomah, Clackamas or Washington County, contact *Ride Connection* at 503-226-0700 to learn more about RideWise transportation options.

Do you know your city?

'Portland's Living Room,' Pioneer Courthouse Square, has a very interesting history. What was the elegant building that once stood on this block serving as Portland's social center from 1890-1951?

The first person to correctly respond by emailing the Trivia Guru at jdutt@ci.portland.or.us will be crowned our monthly winner. At the end of the fiscal year in June, we will have a final showdown of our monthly winners to determine the grand prizewinner and the ONI Portland Trivia champ for 2004/2005.

Congratulations to Dan Collins, our second two-time winner, tying Joleen Jensen-Classen, his boss. He correctly answered that the only state-sponsored rock festival in American history was called Vortex 1: a Biodegradable Festival of Life. It took place at Milo McIver State Park near Estacada. In the summer of 1970, to keep the peace in Portland, then Republican Gov. Tom McCall and a group of hippies collaborated to stage this historic event. We received several responses from folks who attended the event and thanked us for taking them back.



The Other Side of the Fence

The Other side of the Fence is a monthly newsletter published by the City of Portland's Office of Neighborhood Involvement. If you have questions or story ideas, please contact Nell Wagenaar, editor, at 503-823-2569 or email nwagenaar@ci.portland.or.us