

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

HOLIDAY HOURS

The School Department's Central Office is closed today but open tomorrow (Dec. 27) and Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. On New Year's Eve (Monday, Dec. 31), the Indoor Pool closes at 2:30 p.m. and the Library closes at 5:30 p.m. Spinnaker Point will be open from 6 a.m. until 8 p.m. Rubbish and recyclables will be collected as regularly scheduled. However, City offices, the Library, Indoor Pool and Connie Bean Center are closed on New Year's Day. Spinnaker Point is open New Year's Day from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Portsmouth schools are currently closed but reopen Wednesday, Jan. 2.

FREE PARKING ENDS

Today (Dec. 26) is the last day of free holiday parking at downtown meters. This year the Council extended the traditional free holiday parking period to the day after Christmas for the benefit of residents and merchants. As always, if you need more time downtown than the meters allow, consider the High-Hanover Parking Facility. Many merchants offer up to four hours of free parking at the High-Hanover garage as part of the Downtown Parking Validation Program. These merchants display a blue sticker with a "P" in their storefront windows. Contact: 766-1440.

PRIMARY DEADLINE

This is the last week to register to vote before the Jan. 8 Presidential Primary. The City Clerk's Office will accept registrations from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. through Friday (Dec. 28). The Board of Registrars will take registrations Saturday from 10 a.m. until noon in City Hall Room 211. You also can register to vote on Election Day when the polls will be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. The final day to change party affiliation for the primary was Oct. 12. Registered undeclared voters must choose a Democratic or Republican ballot Jan. 8 and are locked into that party for future primary elections unless they change their status back to "undeclared" after voting. Contact: 610-7245 or cityclerk@ch.cityofportsmouth.com.

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Contact the City Clerk's office now for an absentee ballot if you will be unable to vote in the Presidential Primary between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m. on Jan. 8 due to work or being otherwise absent from the city, religious observance or physical disability. Ballots must be returned to the City Clerk's Office by 5 p.m. on Election Day (Jan. 8) to be counted. Contact: 610-7245 or cityclerk@ch.cityofportsmouth.com.

CITY INAUGURATION

The nine newly elected members of the City Council, four School Board members, and one new member each for the Police and Fire Commissions will take the oath of office at an inauguration ceremony Thursday evening, Jan. 3, in the Eileen Dondero Foley Council Chambers. The inauguration will be broadcast live on local government Channel 22 beginning at 7 p.m. The new Mayor, Thomas G. Ferrini, also will address the gathering.

OVERNIGHT ART 2008

The City's cultural commission, Art-Speak, has announced an Overnight Art 2008 public art competition that will culminate in the installation of temporary outdoor art at 10 Portsmouth locations from mid-May through the summer. The competition is open to all artists, all forms of art will be considered, and collaboration among artists is encouraged. Applications will be available online Jan. 3 at www.art-speak.org and at the Art-Speak office at City Hall, and must be submitted by Feb. 15. Winning artists receive an honorarium and a stipend funded by the NH Council on the Arts, corporate sponsorships and individual donations. Contact: 610-7222.

CONCERT BROADCAST

The All-City Concert from Dec. 21 will be broadcast on local government Cable Channel 22 on Saturday (Dec. 29) at 7 p.m. The concert featured PHS performing groups, and the elementary school choral and band groups.

TRASH & TREES

There will be some changes to curbside collection related to the New Year's holiday. The Tuesday curbside collection of solid waste and recycling is rescheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 2. Christmas trees will be collected from the curbside from January 7 through January 18 on the same day that the trash and recyclables are collected. Residents also may bring Christmas trees to the Recycling Center for disposal. For Recycling Center hours and more info, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/publicworks/solidwaste-recycle-rc.htm.

ALCOHOL REMINDER

The Portsmouth Police Department urges everyone to drink responsibly during the holiday season, and please use a designated driver, utilize public transportation, or call a cab if you have been drinking alcohol. Police will have increased DUI patrols during this time as they work to make sure the holiday season is safe for everyone.

THANK YOU

The Welfare Department would like to thank all the generous citizens who contributed gift cards for their needy neighbors this holiday season. The prospect of some extras -- such as a haircut, a special gift, or a trip to the movies -- brought tears to the eyes of many recipients. Thank you all for your thoughtfulness.

RECYCLING STICKERS

It's time to get your 2008 sticker to use the City's Recycling Center. Residents may apply for and receive the free stickers at the Recycling Center on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 8 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. by filling out an application and showing proof of residency. Stickers are issued on an annual basis and must be placed on the driver's side window. Contact: 427-1530.

MANDATORY RECYCLING

Effective next Tuesday (Jan. 1), mercury-containing products such as fluorescent light bulbs and cell batteries must be recycled under a new State law that bans their disposal in landfills and incinerators. The Recycling Center at 680 Peverly Hill Road has installed a specifically designed collection box. The new law also bans disposal of mercury-containing thermostats, and electrical switches and relays. Contact: 427-1530.

ISLINGTON STREET-CANCELED

The Jan. 15 public meeting on the Islington Street Corridor Action Plan at the Library's Levenson Room has been canceled. It will be rescheduled at a later time.

RESCHEDULED FILM

The film "Namesake" based on the best-selling novel by Jhumpa Lahiri will be shown Thursday, Jan. 10, at 7 p.m. in the Library's Levenson Room. It was originally scheduled Dec. 13 but was postponed due to bad weather. "Namesake" is the story of the Ganguli family whose move from Calcutta to New York evokes a lifelong balancing act to meld to a new world without forgetting the old. For more info, see www.cityofportsmouth.com/library/lib-programs-films.htm.

REC NEWS

The Spinnaker Point Adult Recreation Center and the Indoor Pool are great places to work off extra holiday pounds. Information on Spinnaker Point is at www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/spoint.htm and on the Indoor Pool at www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/indoor.htm. Also, the Connie Bean Community Center is open this week for open court time. Call 766-1483 for more info. The next Middle School Dance is Friday, Jan. 11, at the Connie Bean Center from 7:30-10 p.m.

SKI TRIP-CANCELED

The Jan. 21 Gunstock Ski Area family ski trip listed in the Recreation Department Fall/Winter brochure has been canceled and will not be rescheduled.

SWIM LESSONS

Registration has begun for Indoor Pool swim lessons in January and February. Most classes are on Tuesdays and Thursdays, but some Saturday morning lessons are available. Sign up at the Indoor Pool during normal pool hours. The schedule and more info are at www.cityofportsmouth.com/recreation/indoor.htm or call 427-1546.

SNOW INFO

The City may declare a ban on on-street parking to facilitate snow removal when a storm drops two or more inches of snow. A ban will be announced on Cable Channel 22, through a recording on the snow phone at 766-7669 (SNO-SNOW), at www.cityofportsmouth.com, in the local media and on signs at all entrances to the City. The ban's end is announced the same way. A map of parking lots open during the snow bans is at www.cityofportsmouth.com/transportation/snowbanparkinglots.htm.

PARKING COUPONS

Portsmouth residents can obtain coupons now that will allow them to pay just \$3 if they park at the High-Hanover Parking Facility during snow emergencies and snow removal periods. Proof of residency is required to obtain the coupons at no cost from the Parking Office at City Hall (open 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). The coupons can be used only by the person to whom they are issued. Residents must present a coupon and show identification to the parking attendant to receive the \$3 rate payable upon exiting the garage. Contact: 610-7229.

PHS SPORTS

The Portsmouth High School athletic schedules can be found by clicking the link at www.cityofportsmouth.com/school/phs/athlsch.htm.

BOARD OPENINGS

The City has three vacancies on the Taxi Commission, two on the Building Code Board of Appeals and one opening on the Economic Development Commission. Information on the City's volunteer boards and commissions, and how to apply, is at www.cityofportsmouth.com/cityclerk/boardscommissions.htm.

Did you know...?

The Welfare Department handled 220 cases comprising 245 adults and 153 children and provided \$212,280 in assistance in Fiscal Year 2007. The largest category of aid was shelter at \$173,935. By law, the City must provide emergency general assistance to individuals and families "who are poor and unable to support themselves." If basic allowable expenses (rent, food, utilities, prescriptions, etc.) exceed income, an applicant receives a voucher from the Welfare Department to present to a vendor. For more information on this and other City departments, see the FY07 Annual Report at 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/2007/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 closed Sunday.

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.