

PORTLAND SAFOOT

*PDX's 10-minute newsmagazine
about buses, bikes & low-car life*



January 2012:

THE COLD ISSUE

- *Defrosting* without a windshield
- *Deciding* to end free transfers
- *Devouring* reindeer on SW Oak



1

Car share

The future's here. Getaround, the new company whose "Carkit" technology essentially turns any car into a money-earning Zipcar, comes to PDX in January thanks to a \$1.7 million federal grant. Two of its first stops: Lents and Powellhurst-Gilbert, to test the idea that this can bring carsharing to the east side.

WHY IT MATTERS

Leery of sharing with strangers? Then don't. Sharing only with neighbors, roommates or co-workers works fine. Car borrowers pay by the hour to duplicate the owner's insurance. The catch: Signing up requires a Facebook account. Well played, Zuckerberg.

LIST YOUR VEHICLE

<http://pdx.be/ShareMyCar>

2

Bus stop battle

Don't just stand there – do something, OPAL bus organizers told riders at east-side bus stops Dec. 21. And hey, have a donut. While downtown gets upgrade after upgrade, busy east-side corners still lack shelters, benches and curb ramps. OPAL (a PA partner) started recruiting riders at 82nd & Powell to pick five bus stops and push TriMet to do them up right. "Where there's more money, there's more power," said OPAL's Galadriel Mozee. "It's self-perpetuating."

HELP CHOOSE THE STOPS

<http://pdx.be/BusStopFix>

3

Budget game

End free transfers? Kill Red Line trains downtown? Add ads to the telephone Transit Tracker? Hike fares 40 cents? TriMet's thought of lots of ugly ways to save \$17 million next fall. But at least they're asking. In a

simple online "balance our budget" game launched Dec. 15, TriMet asked the public for suggestions on the right cuts and hikes. In 1 week, the agency got 1,850 proposals, more people than TriMet usually hears from in an entire budget process. Epic win.

PLAY THE BUDGET GAME

<http://pdx.be/TheRightCuts>

4

Good news

Their fight isn't won, but Portland Public high schoolers got a reprieve Dec. 5 when Mayor Sam Adams announced a deal with TriMet and the school district to split the cost of universal student TriMet passes through May 4. Next stop: Salem.

OUR COVERAGE SINCE APRIL

<http://pdx.be/StudentPass>



Big thoughts.

Budget seasons squish and squash. Let's stretch. Next month's issue will be full of low-car ideas that sound crazy to people who know too much: write concepts@portlandafoot.org.

Last month's issue overstated the number of blocks in which the #25 Glisan draws very few riders: it's 84, not 96. Shoot.

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924 NE 65th Ave.
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Block of cheese day.

Foot Fuel

A tiny review of a former parking space

It's called: Beez Neez Gourmet Alaskan Reindeer Sausage.

So it sells: Charcoal-grilled sausages of all sorts, most shipped from Alaska. The vegan sausage, a \$4 blend of wheat gluten, yeast flakes, mushrooms and "smoky paprika," is a house recipe. (Turns out there's not much demand for it in Alaska.)

Corner of: SW 3rd & Oak.

Hours: 11 am-3 pm Mon-Fri, plus late nights 10 pm-3 am Fri-Sat. Next summer, may stay open until 6 pm on weekdays.

Open since: October 2009.

Proprietor: Brian Veal.

Menu range: \$3.75 all-beef dog to \$5 for the namesake specialty, which Veal estimates is about



60% to 70% caribou meat.

On-site ingredients: 35, including 24 types of mustard, ketchup and other condiments.

If it were a haiku:

Sweet bun. Spicy skin.
Just be sure not to skip the
Caramelized onions. 🍷

Bus connections: See that 2-D barcode to the right? If you have a smartphone, download a scanner app (say, i-Nigma), point your lens at it and it'll send you to an online list of the month's pdx.be links. Nice, eh? Thank reader Max Campos. TriMet plans to add these to every bus stop by fall: <http://pdx.be/StopCodes>.





How it's going.

Two years ago next month, six of us met around a NoPo dinner table to talk about creating a news outlet that could support fun, sharp, relevant reporting in the interest of public transit riders. We've learned plenty

since, and we believe in looking at ourselves with the same eye we put on everyone. For a candid conversation about our successes, failures and futures, check out pdx.be/YearThree – we'd love to get your take.

Michael Andersen

publisher & spreadsheet monkey

we've led the issues



March We dug into public records to break the story that fare enforcement had quietly plummeted on MAX. After other media picked up the numbers, TriMet restored some of the lost positions and announced a new "zero-tolerance" policy on fare jumpers.



April Our ranking of downtown employers with the best commuter benefits was our breakout feature of the year. We're already cranking on 2012's rankings, and we've partnered with the BTA to expand our survey throughout the metro area.



May As every other news outlet in the state ignored the crucial bill, we reported on a small group of teens' doomed effort to find someone to stand up for a state program that brought universal transit passes to 12,000 local high schoolers. Mayor Sam Adams made preserving the program a priority; last month his office sealed a deal with TriMet and PPS to save YouthPass until summer.



July Our Travel Issue, which could be read only after being folded into a paper airplane, was certainly controversial (we're still not sure whether we heard from more lovers or haters). The Portland-based Independent Publishing Resource Center named it their "Zine of the Month," and Michael promised quite a few people that he'd help fold theirs some time.



October We hit Silicon Valley to take a close look at the unreported practical nuts and bolts of Getaround, a potentially revolutionary peer-to-peer carsharing company, and predicted that it might arrive in Portland next. It did: their local pilot launches this month at PSU.

Stamped & sorted, 2011 (2010)

- monthly subscribers: 947 (257)
- sustaining members & donors: 39 (34)
- copies distributed: 8,733 (2,599)
- wiki pages: 1,014 (595)
- unique web visitors: 36,474 (8,832)
- printing cost per copy distributed: 44¢ (39¢)
- mailing per copy mailed: 21¢ (\$1.09)

Readied & aimed, 2010 (actuals)

- neighborhood ads by March (July)
- 800 subscribers by June (June)
- neighborhood profiles by August (November)

Revenue, 2011 (2010)

- grants: \$5,000 (\$0)
- ads & sponsorships: \$4,203 (\$292)
- subscriptions: \$2,220 (\$2080)
- donations: \$599 (\$4,531)
- miscellaneous: \$205 (\$0)

Expenses, 2011 (2010)

- printing: \$3,829 (\$1,003)
- staff & freelance: \$2,988 (\$0)
- mailing: \$1,686 (\$1,297)
- admin, fees, supplies & software: \$720 (\$493)
- marketing: \$506 (\$786)
- meals & travel: \$210 (\$266)

Michael's PA time, Oct. 2011

Total: 104.4 h. He's a freelance editor 2 days a week; that's been enough for his basics. But PA won't be sustainable until someone besides him would want to do it.

- reporting, writing, editing: 55.5 h
- distro & production: 21.8 h
- accounting & planning: 11.3 h
- ad sales: 9.5 h
- marketing: 6.3 h

and we've run the numbers



INTRODUCING

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going your way for
work and play. Find
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Metro



"For a long time I've had a dream that we could get rid of our second car, start biking and riding public transit and eventually work towards not owning any cars at all. I have a business that involves carting around heavy things and a toddler, not to mention my husband works on the other side of a mountain, so this dream didn't really feel much like it would come to reality.

Then one day our car was stolen. We got it back, but it was totaled. My husband started riding his bike up Mt Scott, but I felt my dependence on our car as strong as ever. One day I ran into Portland Afoot. I immediately signed up for a subscription, at first thinking it was for my husband (to give him encouragement up that hill), but then when the first issue came in the mail, I realized it was really for me.

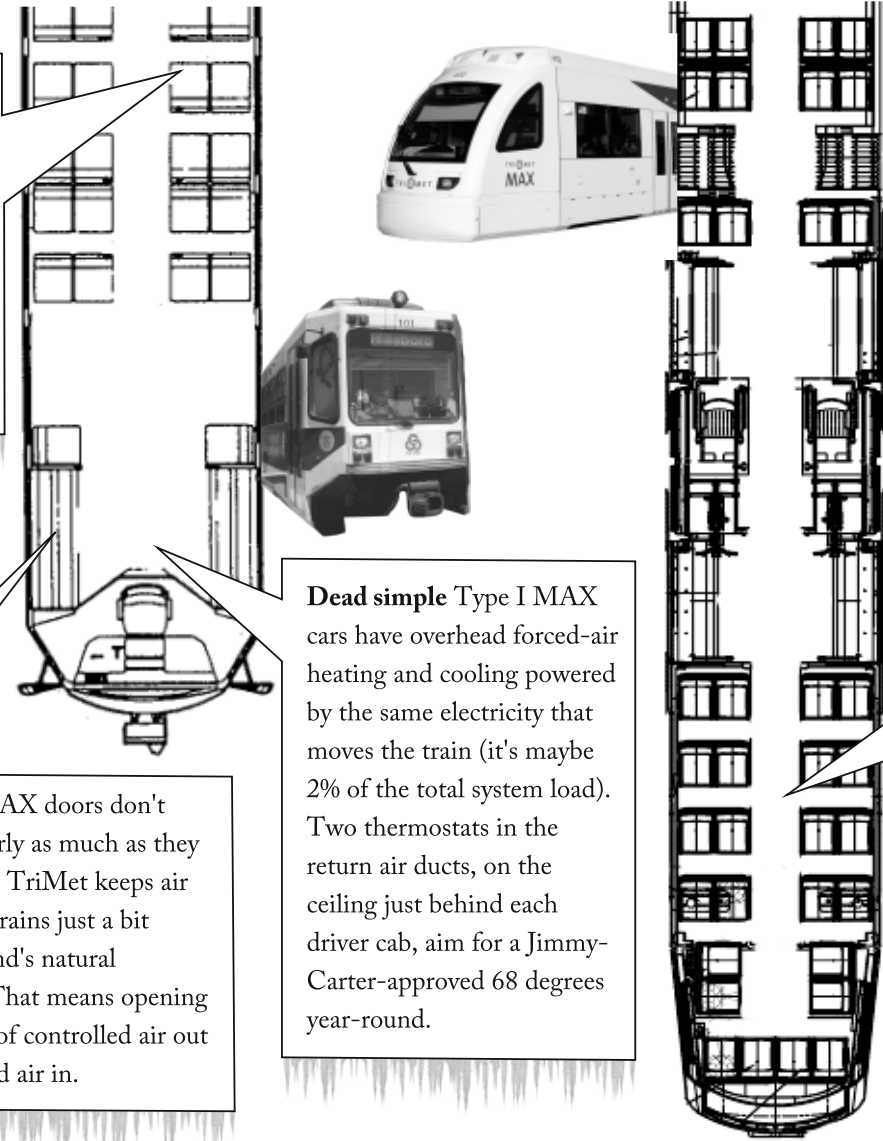
The effect that having this journal in our home was subtle at first. I'd read the tales of fun on the bus, local news concerning public transit and bikers, and though I hadn't made any real change in my transportation life, I felt more connected to this world. One day, my husband had a flat tire and couldn't bike up the mountain. I had been talking to my son Lev about riding the bus recently, and so I decided on a whim that this was the day we were going to try to get through our day without the use of the car. Jared rode off with the car and Lev and I sat down to look at the bus schedule. To my amazement, the route from our house to our destinations was incredibly easy to navigate – we switched buses once (to the delight of my son) from Outer Southeast all the way to Northwest.

This day was the beginning of a new way of getting around for my son and I.

Now, my son wants to ride the bus or Max all the time – whenever he sees one going by from the car window, he insists that we pull over, get out, and ride public transport instead. The presence of Portland Afoot in my life has been a subtle influence – I never felt like I HAD to stop driving the car, but just that it could be great to try a different way to get around once in a while. And for me, I think that is why it was so effective – it made me want to be a part of the bike culture and bus/train culture in Portland. It made me feel like I could be part of that culture, even if I drive a car sometimes too. And now that dream is getting closer to reality – we are planning on getting a bike trailer for Lev this summer and between my husband, myself, our many small businesses and the wonderful world of low-car life, we will find a way to get from point A to point B."

definitely our favorite email of 2011

In with the old There's an easy formula for warmth on TriMet's old high-floor MAX cars, says TriMet rail equipment manager Mark Grove: "Stay away from the doors."



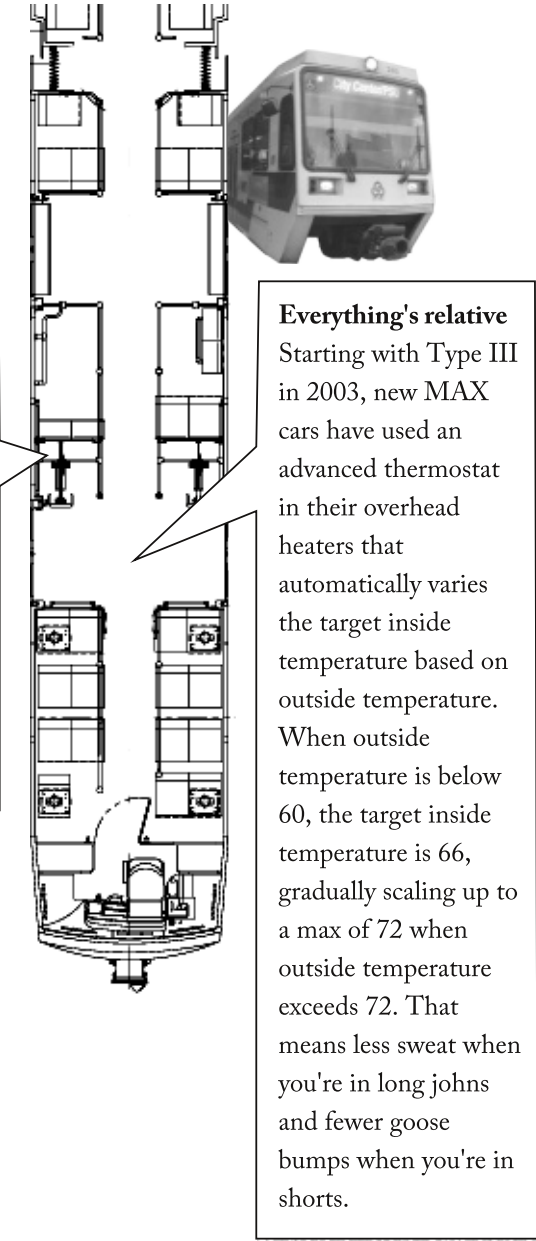
Pressure heater MAX doors don't actually matter nearly as much as they might. Here's why: TriMet keeps air pressure inside its trains just a bit higher than Portland's natural atmospheric PSI. That means opening doors send a burst of controlled air out – not a burst of cold air in.

Dead simple Type I MAX cars have overhead forced-air heating and cooling powered by the same electricity that moves the train (it's maybe 2% of the total system load). Two thermostats in the return air ducts, on the ceiling just behind each driver cab, aim for a Jimmy-Carter-approved 68 degrees year-round.

Cool breeze As if you needed another reason to dislike the sleek, cramped Type IV MAX cars, the ventilation has never quite worked on these: there's a perpetual draft in the raised seating areas at front and rear. TriMet's working on a fix, but for now the agency compensates by cranking the base temperature up here to 72 – so unzip your jacket as you climb the ramp.

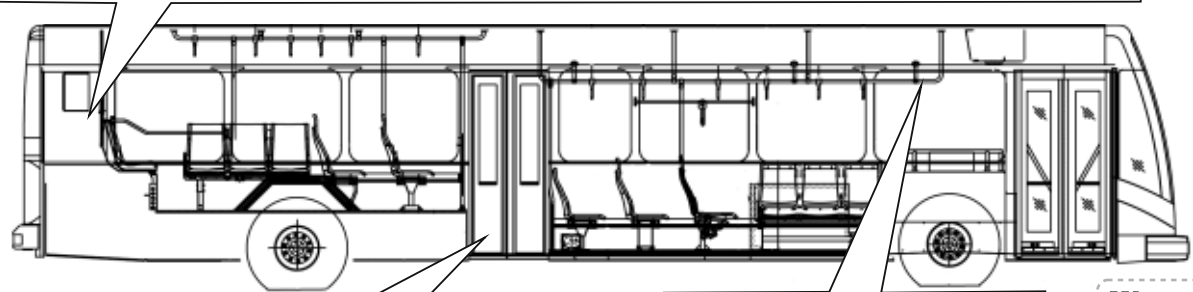
taking the Chill off

Winter radiance Like movie franchises, Decemberists albums and mediocre dates, the four generations of MAX cars peaked with the second and third. In 1997, TriMet introduced one of the great joys of Portland winters by rolling out Type II MAX trains with floor-level radiators that kick on whenever outside tempeature drops below 55 and inside temperature below 66. On the coldest days, avoid the middle sections of Type II, III and IV cars – their facing seats still lack heaters underneath.



Everything's relative Starting with Type III in 2003, new MAX cars have used an advanced thermostat in their overhead heaters that automatically varies the target inside temperature based on outside temperature. When outside temperature is below 60, the target inside temperature is 66, gradually scaling up to a max of 72 when outside temperature exceeds 72. That means less sweat when you're in long johns and fewer goose bumps when you're in shorts.

The oven Like other autos, TriMet buses get all the heat they need from their engines. This one pumps heat forward through a duct system above the handrails, but the back rows of the bus are always hottest, thanks to heat leakage, less crosswind and (on new, low-floor buses) being closer to the ceiling.



Electric blessing Cold feet? Try the seat immediately in front of the rear door on newer buses. When TriMet finishes its biggest new bus purchase in 10 years this summer, the agency will finally phase out most buses without these small heaters.

Low-tech thermostat All TriMet buses are theoretically set at 72 degrees, but at their size it's hard to keep to. In off-hours, bus thermostats are tested by a six-inch hand thermometer hung from the extreme front of the right handrail.

Winter-proof your glasses with a little spray of Pam. Fog and rain droplets won't stick to the thin layer of grease.

Keep your nose clear with saline nasal spray. Breathing through your mouth brings in cold air too fast. A small bottle costs \$3.19 at Freddy's. "I use it all the time."

If your kids are in the trailer, bundle them "ridiculously." "It might be even a good idea to have a warm water bottle if you want to go for a really long ride."

Martina Fahrner, owner, Clever Cycles (SE 9th & Hawthorne) Don't overdress your torso and don't neglect your extremities. "A good rule of thumb is if you get a little bit nippy when you're standing still, that's good. If you feel good when you're standing still, that's too warm."



Carl Larson, walk + bike ambassador, Bicycle Transportation Alliance: Keep your ears out of the wind with a ski helmet. "I wouldn't really want to exert myself in it, but it's nice and warm."



more tips from
the experts



Snap into a Slim Jim. Smartphone styluses start at \$13, touchscreen-friendly gloves at \$14. Beef jerky sticks are \$1.30, and they work just as well when you want to check arrival times with gloves on. Try it.



Wake Gregg, owner, E-Bike Store (N Vancouver & Alberta) Heated grips aren't just for motorcyclists. Find a pair on eBay for \$50 and wire them into your e-bike's battery.

Avalanche rescue tricks aren't just for hikers. "Tense up, hold for five seconds, release for five seconds. You'll be sweating in a heartbeat."

Keep your bike battery indoors. They lose 15% of range at 40 degrees, 30% at 30 degrees and can't fully charge when cold. Bring yours inside at least an hour before each charge.



Nicola Swain-Campbell, psychologist, University of Otago: Play a game on your phone. In results published this month in the journal Pain Research and Management, Swain-Campbell's team found that people playing a video game were less sensitive to cold water than people watching television. But gamers should hope the battery lasts until the bus arrives. "If they stop while still cold, it might seem more intense as all their attention switches to the sensation of cold they have been ignoring." Nothing to do then but eat your Slim Jim.



The other guy I don't really remember. But the poet guy looked like a poet.

This is when I was going to PSU last fall. I was coming back from modern composition theory class.

They were just a couple, like, street guys. He had shaggy gray hair, beard, in his 50s. He's talking with his friend, having one of those conversations where they start including the people around them. They're sitting in front of me, and there's an attractive young woman across from me. And in the course of the conversation he starts to address her. So then, once he's kind of involved her, he was like, "You know, I wrote a poem today." He says it directly to her.

That's when I realize: *Oh, I'm going to get a poem on the bus. This is awesome.*

She gives him the minimum he needs for encouragement, like: "Oh, really." He's like, "It's called 'Foot Locker of

Love."

I'm never going to be able to recreate it completely accurately.

"You don't want to go

Down

To my foot locker of love

Because it smells of feet

And love

In my

Foot locker of love."

And it takes some kind of tender, sappy turn that I don't remember.

I don't think she said anything afterwards. But the funny thing is that everyone else feels included. Everyone around the woman is like, "You know, that's not too bad."

It was, like, performance art just given

spontaneously and completely generously to whoever was there, with nothing expected back except maybe the vague interest of some hot girl.

"You know," he said,
"I wrote a poem
today."

I don't think he figured they were going to walk out together and go all Julie Delpy/Ethan Hawke. It was just one of

those bus encounters. You see somebody and you want them to be interested in you for however long that time is.

I would happily have listened to him for the rest of the ride if they were all like "Foot Locker of Love."

As told to editor Michael Andersen. What's your favorite bus story? Write onlyonthebus@portlandafot.org.

Electronic mail.

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