

PORTLAND AFOOT

PDX's 10-minute newsmagazine
on buses, bikes, and low-car life



February 2011:

THE LOVE ISSUE

strap swinging ... pole dancing ... note passing ... and remembering to thank the driver

Arriving Now Four stories you can't miss this month



photo: Chuck Taylor

1 Bike ban
State Rep. Mitch Greenlick reaped a windstorm Jan. 11 by proposing a **\$90 fine for carrying any Oregonian under 6 on a bike or trailer**. After a 2-day torrent of calls, he backed off. "With a friggin' **\$500 bike trailer**, you're pretty sure it's going to be safe," said Sellwood dad Chad Berkeley, 33.

WHY IT MATTERS

It's true: Bikers get **fatally crunched** about 3-10 times more often than car users. But **cutting car use**, as PDX has, seems to help *everybody*. As BikePortland reported, no locals died on bikes in 2010 – and it was also our safest year for motorists since **1925**.

BIKEPORTLAND COVERAGE

<http://pdx.be/BabyBikeBan>

2 Good news

After years of anticipation, **free Wi-Fi on Amtrak's Cascades trains** flipped on Jan. 24, at a cost of about \$100,000. "It's a marketing ploy," said Washington rail operations boss Andrew Wood. More ploys, please! Cascades ridership is soaring, and a Jan. 11 study called it the **most promising high-speed route** outside California and the Northeast.

WHY OUR LINE ROCKS

<http://pdx.be/BestFastTrains>

3 More bus cuts?

Here we go again: After slashing service 4 times in a year, TriMet said Jan. 4 that it'll have to **cut another \$13 million** – the same as last September – unless its union agrees to move retirees onto Medicare, among other changes. "TriMet is **the only public agency in Oregon** that provides full retirement health benefits," boss

Neil McFarlane wrote.

IS MY ROUTE AT RISK?

<http://pdx.be/BusWatchlist>

4 40 mph headlock

Jeff Pavey **seemed like your ordinary crazy person** when he boarded the 33 to Milwaukie Jan. 26. But after he got on, bystanders told KATU, the 6'0" Pavey started barking orders and **shoving the driver**. Alarmed, rider Derek Kamahoahoa, a former wrestler and Marine with an assault record of his own, **wrestled Pavey into a headlock** until cops arrived. Rough day for Pavey, 39 – but honestly it looks like he's had a rough decade.

KAMAHOAHOA'S STORY

<http://pdx.be/DontMess>



ONLY ON THE BUS



Sarah

TriMet #15

or black?" I was like, "Blue."

He says, "Give me your hand. No, flip it over to the other side." So I flip it to the other side.

And he reaches into his bag and pulls out ... a bottle of blue nail polish. And starts painting my fingernails.

I'm like, *Where did the nail polish come from?* "Do you have other kinds of nail polish in there too?"

And he does! He was totally ready for a lot of different ladies. If I didn't like blue, there were many different colors to choose from.

"I'm not Filipino or gay," he says. "I just like to paint fingernails."

So then he moves on to the next finger. And I can see the 15 coming up the street. And he moves on to finger three. *I don't want to create an incident, but I also want to avoid all of my fingers getting painted blue.*

So the bus gets there, and I say, "OK, we gotta get on the bus!" And I wave.

I had that nail polish on there for like, two weeks. It kept chipping off.

What's your favorite bus story? Write michael@portlandafoot.org or call 503-662-2871. Storytellers receive a gift card to our favorite bar or coffee shop.

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Heart warmed.

According to our calculations, about one in 20 frequent TriMet riders has a dating story. Go ahead and ask.

We would not have guessed.

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Set to simmer.

Street Talk Five questions and someone worth asking

*In 2009, car-free Portland writer and Sarah Gilbert's bike was **turned away from a Burgerville drive-through**. She spun her annoyance into activism gold when the local chain redubbed its **windows "cycle-thrus"** and **welcomed bikers**. With bikes still seen as essentially dangerous objects by some (see "Bike ban" above) we wanted to ask the UrbanMamas blogger and mother of three about **leading social change ... and also toting tots on TriMet**.*

Why did your Burgerville campaign work?

It just kind of had a good story. And we have an organization whose commitment is to sustainability and active lifestyles. You have to find people who already see things at least a little bit your way.

What if they don't? Do we just ignore them?

No. But the most persuasive story in the world is not going to change the mind of somebody like Greenlick.

You ride TriMet with kids. Any tips?

I make flagrant use of my iPod Touch. My friend's husband is an iPhone app developer. She's going to try to have him develop this app of ideas for things to do with kids while they're waiting.

I have this notion that TriMet should sell discount family passes, like cell phone companies.

It gets super-expensive! If I do three trips in a day, that's \$10 – probably about as much as it would cost to drive a cheap car. My son

Everett is 8 now. Every time I was getting on the bus with him, I'd say "I need a transfer for him, too." I had to do it so many times, I stopped paying for him. And nobody said a thing. That was a couple weeks ago.

What's your favorite Portland secret?

That little circle in Pioneer Courthouse Square, on the northwest corner, where you can stand and hear the echo of your own voice. That always impresses people.

Qs & As edited for brevity. Gilbert blogs at

Sarah Gilbert

urban mama

UrbanMamas.com and CafeMama.com.





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On the line *A great idea within one block of a TriMet stop*

The Spot Open Space Café, a brunch café and bar with local food and liquor

The Line Bus #17 Holgate/NW 21st

The Time Open Tues-Fri, 7am-5pm, and Sat-Sun, 10am-5pm. Closed Mondays.

The Link openspacecafe.com

The Skinny Open Space Cafe's door is just steps from the SE 28th and Holgate stop on Line 17. Coffee and food are available all day, with local dairy, produce and bread, pastries from Black Sheep, soup from Portland Soup Company, and popular breakfast burritos from Higher Taste across the street.

They'll get your order up quickly if you need to catch the bus, but if you stay a while you can take advantage of the free

and open Wi-fi, eclectic seating and wall art, and, if you've got the little ones with you, their kids' corner. Cocktails use a selection of local liquors and they also offer (you guessed it) local beer and wine.

Coffee is on the expensive side, but it's bottomless if you bring your own mug. People's Co-op members get a discount, and Open Space participates in Supportland, the local customer-loyalty rewards card.

During last summer's heat, thirsty

travelers found a welcome watering hole with Open Space's "open door policy" when owner Mo Whalen welcomed them in to grab a quick glass of water, no questions asked. "Just come back when you're hungry," she told them. We suggest it.



Open Space Café
 SE 28th & Holgate

Reported & written by local active transportation activist Alexis Grant. Got a spot? Send your nominations to alexis@portlandafoot.org.

See more of Alexis's work at pdx.be/AppReviews, our long-awaited page rating the best

TriMet-approved applications for your mobile phone. One of our favorites, Dadnab, can be used by any phone that gets text messages. 



James Coon



Raymond Thomas



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caught in a

Bus r♥mance

It gets as weird as you suspected. It gets more normal than you think.

The only thing the Hysmiths both remember about their first conversation is where they were sitting at the time.

Cheryl was in the front seat on the right of the 77 bus. George was behind the steering wheel.

She remembers one other thing, too: At some point he definitely mentioned his wife.

Oh, well, Cheryl said to herself as she swung out.

She was 35, divorced, with two sons. He was 37, soon to be separated, with five.

The 15-minute ride soon slipped from Cheryl's mind. But the tall, outgoing, dark-haired woman his age stuck in George's.

It was "just one of those things where you have a lot in common," George recalled. "Things just click."

So when a golf buddy dragged him to a party a year later, George was shocked to see the woman he remembered sitting at a table, sipping wine and trying to find a domino partner.

He was still wearing his TriMet uniform. "You were my passenger!" he blurted out.

It was, Cheryl said, pretty romantic.

"He remembered me," she said. "I was just amazed."

The track was set. Their first date was a few weeks later, at Old Town Pizza on



portraits by
Michael Schoenholtz



Valentine's Day, 1984. By the next winter, they'd blended their huge family.

The pair retired to Trout Lake, Wash., five years ago and celebrated their 23rd wedding anniversary in September.

George declined to comment on his two other attempts to date passengers, before reuniting with Cheryl.

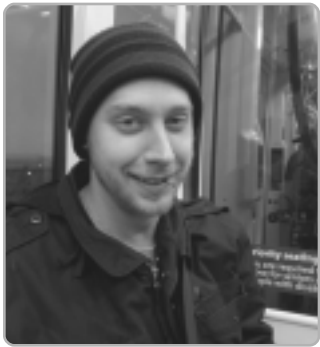
"You meet a lot of people when you're driving the bus," George said. "I guess I can be selective."

A few words from the experts

There's the guy who scored a woman's number on the MAX by **asking to borrow her cell phone**, then secretly calling his own. (They're still together, last we heard.) There's the 23-year-old who likes to meet her girlfriends on the bus by **passing them notes**, so they won't be too embarrassed to say yes. (Her happy hunting ground: "The 19, past Reed. Lots of smart lesbians.") Portland's roads and rails are full of **folks who work their game on TriMet** – for richer and for poorer, for better and for worse. **Here's what they told us.**



Be exotic. Tigard graphic designer Robert Lambert, 44, was just enjoying singing a Sioux folk song with his friend on the MAX. But his friend walked out the door with a date and he walked away impressed. "He's a better singer than I am," Lambert confided.



Take it easy. "Meet on neutral territory," said Joe Shriner, 28, of Northeast Portland. "It's like if you met them online. Never let them know where you live on the second date – three to five dates. I'm paranoid, though."



Be brave. Edward Gromysh, 20, of Gresham, met one ex when she grabbed him by the sleeve and pulled him off the MAX after her. They stayed together for a month and still get along. On TriMet, he said, "What do you have to lose?"



Watch out. John King, 47, was engaged. It didn't matter. He couldn't resist the smell of the woman he kept running into on MAX. Despite their "crazy chemistry," the two split after a two-week fling. "It was one of the worst things that's ever happened to me."



Know your type. A comic-book chat at Beaverton Transit Center turned into a "painfully shy" romance for Gohma Schwartz, 22, of Beaverton. But she's got no time for non-geeks, she explained. "They're not going to get why you like to pretend you're an orc." 🐉