

PORTLAND SAFOOT



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



July/August 2012:

THE TRAVEL ISSUE

How to

- **Vacation** without gasoline
- **Parent** without a truck
- **Barbecue** without pork
- **Board the bus** without a ticket



photo: Jonathan Maus

1 Wage cut

I hate to approve a contract that is, in parts, “poor public policy and simply unfair” to current and former TriMet workers, arbitrator David Gaba wrote July 12, but TriMet’s looming financial disaster leaves me no choice. In a 42-page analysis, Gaba approved TriMet’s proposal to phase out its pensions and end free retiree health care.

WHY IT MATTERS

TriMet workers’ new medical costs: 10% copays and \$150 deductibles, up to \$1500 per year. With hundreds of qualified applicants for each job opening, Gaba said, TriMet can still lure good workers and stave off a “vicious downward spiral” of declining transit service.

5 CHANGES FOR WORKERS

<http://pdx.be/LostBenefits>

2 All aboard

Emily Finch is a total badass, *BikePortland.org* reported June 28. The SE Portland mother of six cashed in her nine-seat SUV for a Dutch-style cargo bike in 2009 and hasn’t looked back – except to check on whichever of the kids, aged 2 to 11, is taking a turn on the secondary bike they’ve rigged up as rear-wheel drive. Though some commenters criticized a family of 8 as too big to be green, Finch said she bikes for lifestyle, not politics. She promised to reply to every question as soon as she had time. “As you all know,” said Finch, 34, “I have a very busy sex life.”

FINCH’S STORY (WITH TIPS)

<http://pdx.be/FourUpFront>

3 Hardball mayor

Mayor Sam Adams fought tooth and nail to save PPS high school TriMet passes – and won, *Willamette Week* reported July 20. A

crucial twist: Adams threatened to slam TriMet with \$2 million in new shelter fees, which he’d then use to buy the passes from the agency and distribute to high schoolers, unless a deal was reached. TriMet and PPS stepped up their contributions, preserving the 13,000-student program through 2013.

4 Good news

Get ready to breeze past that broken ticket vending machine. Local tech firm GlobeSherpa has nearly inked a deal to let you buy TriMet tickets by text message, web or smartphone app, *The Oregonian* reported June 25. The custom messages include a unique validation code, allowing any bus or train rider with a debit card and cell phone to buy fare on the fly. Dear fare inspectors: please walk directly to the riders who scramble madly for phones when they see you. ☹

HOW IT’D WORK

<http://pdx.be/MobileFares>

Squaring up.

There was an error in last month’s issue: TriMet lover Tabitha Boschetti testified at a hearing that fare hikes might force her to take up biking. But we mistakenly attributed that to Eavan Moore, a different testifier. We apologize.

Published monthly by Portland in the Round, a nonprofit journalism startup, under a CC-BY-SA license. Printed at Eberhardt Press on SE 11th, the world’s only print shop with a 4-color newsprint illustration of Portland’s sewer system on the bathroom wall.

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Portland, OR 97213
\$14 a year: pdx.be/subscribe
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Foot fuel

A tiny review of a former parking space

It’s called: Homegrown Smoker Vegan Barbecue.

So it sells: Traditional Southern barbecue (slow-smoked over apple wood each morning) meets state-of-the-art veganism: soy-curl and tempeh sausage sandwiches, chili dogs, chili pie, mac and nocheese.

Corner of: SW 4th & College. The eastside location just moved to Mississippi & Skidmore, behind Prost ... one of the only joints in town that lets you carry cart food inside for a drink and table.

Summer hours: 11–6 Mon–Fri, 12–4 Sat.

Proprietor: Jeff Ridabock, a former meat salesman for wholesale grocer Sysco, caught the veganism bug from his own kids. Now the whole family is animal-free – and so is the two-year-old family business, one of the city’s very few all-vegan carts and a major draw for vegan food tourists.

Menu range: Chili pie on Fritos, \$5. “Itsasammich,” a smoked tempeh, portobello, grilled pepper, onion and Chipotle aioli sandwich with side, \$9. Lots in between.



Greens, slaw, cornbread or fries a la carte, \$2–\$4. Signature drink: tea meets lemonade in a \$2 Arnold Palmer.

On-site ingredients: 57.

If it were a haiku:

Comfort food never
had meat anyway. Today
there’s soy curl. Match point. ☹

Cause of the month: Each month, we give 2% of ad + subscription revenue to a charity picked by a random paid subscriber. For August, Jason V. sends \$12 to Free Geek, which offers refurbished computers, education and job skills in exchange for community service. “Everybody should have the chance to get their geek on,” Jason says. pdx.be/FreeGeek

PDX.be links: If you have a smartphone, download a scanner app (say, i-Nigma), point your lens at this 2D barcode and it’ll send you to an online list of all the month’s goodies: pdx.be/jul12links



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Dear Portland: Thanks for making our second year on this crazy little ride a big success. We're just getting started – so hang onto that strap.

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Heaven on wheels

If you can commute by bike, you can vacation by bike. PDX's two friendliest touring experts have everything you need to make your next getaway human-powered, dirt-cheap, and off the grid.



The coast trail that might It's the missing crown jewel of outdoor recreation in Oregon: An offroad bike/horse path to the Pacific. After floods wrecked the Salmonberry rail line in 2007, this route through a remote valley of the Coast Range floated into of a lot of wilderness lovers' dreams. It'd cost tens of millions and take years to piece a trail together, but a feasibility study due next year could kick it into high gear. A quick note of support might help flip the levers of power: pdx.be/ToTheCoast

Bring it! Nine non-obvious things to pack

from author Ellee Thalheimer & Cycle Wild founder Matt Picio

Bugspray. Mosquitos can fly 10 mph. On uphill climbs, "there's a cloud," Picio said. "You can't really stop them."
Earplugs. Unsafe in the city, these help on highways because only vehicles are loud enough to get through.
Sarong. Camp towel + yoga mat + changing room + hip pouch = Thalheimer's most precious clothing item.
Gladware. Cook once, nosh twice.
Chamois. \$70 padded shorts, essential to protecting key assets on trips over 15-20m. Don't wear with underwear. Optional: chamois butter lubricant, \$16.
Zipties & masking tape. Good for most temporary bike repairs.

The perfect first time 18 miles northwest of Hillsboro, on the offroad Banks-Vernonia trail, is Stub Stewart State Park, a frequent weekend shot for CycleWild's bike-camping beginners. Skip the hills by riding to the end of the Blue Line; the only stressful stretch is 7 miles along Highway 47 north of Forest Grove to the trailhead. At the park: \$10-a-site wooded camping, hills, canyons, and, (for the true bike-tour aficionado) golf. pdx.be/BeginnersTrek

The coast trail that ain't Portland mayoral contender Charlie Hales has made a "100-mile" rail-and-trail project down the Columbia "all the way to Astoria" a key part of his pitch to bicyclists. The river railroad is "hardly used," he told BikePortland.org last winter, repeating the plan to both OPB and Portland Afoot. Say what? Portland & Western's line hauls 20,000 cars a year, feeding more than 1,000 jobs along the river and brand-new plasticboard and ethanol plants, P&W's David Anzur said July 18. Anzur said steep cliffs and narrow tunnels leave no room for a trail on the valuable corridor; state rail planner Bob Melbo agreed that it's infeasible. Hales replies that they need to think bigger. "I love these guys ... but they have a point of view that is very train-centric." Hm. pdx.be/AstoriaPromises

The world's best local bike tour website? Matt Picio's nonprofit labor of love, CycleWild.org lists dozens

of bike-friendly campsites in Portland's "rideshed," gear lists and a community of young local couples and singles who take year-round group trips into the nearby wild. Next up: Sept. 21 to Mt. Hood.

The belly of the beast Here's what Easterners don't seem to get about great cities: they're not quite complete until they include escape hatches.



Wine country This four-day swing through the Willamette Valley's golden section is the closest to home of eight detailed trip plans in *Cycling Sojourner*, Ellee Thalheimer's meticulous, beautiful new 240-page, \$18 guide to bike travel in Oregon. Includes detail maps, food, lodging, fun, bike shops and a two-page packing list; weighs 9.2 oz and fits in a handlebar bag. It's the bottles of Pinot that really add to your load – best to finish those immediately. pdx.be/BikeGuideBook

Top of the morning The old Columbia River Highway has its ups and downs (biggest climb: 800 feet to Crown Point's Vista House), but nab summer reservations early in the year for one of eight campgrounds. You'll never settle for ogling waterfalls through a windshield again. pdx.be/BikeTheGorge

StrikeMaster fire starter. Sold at Portland Saturday Market for \$15 or online for less, this Picio-approved handheld tool combines flint, steel, wood and flammable magnesium shavings in a single pocket-size object.

PowerGorilla gadget charger Advanced and/or geeky tourists like Picio love this optional luxury: a \$225, 105 watt-hour battery for charging other batteries and can accept just about any electronic cable, including a laptop's.

U.S. flag. For the back of your bike. Picio learned the trick while biking across the country: "It makes it a lot less likely that cars will honk at you or cut you off or do anything rude or bizarre." ?



ONLY ON THE BUS



Brandon
TriMet Red Line

My dad's from Portland originally. I cover high school and college football for FoxSports.com, based in Seattle, and I'm probably traveling two weekends out of the month.

I was in town for the opening of a Nike football camp, riding to Beaverton from the airport. This was actually the first time I've ever ridden the TriMet.

I was sitting in the very first seat behind the little rail, in the raised area, with my bag on the seat next to me. It's a pretty quiet train, not many people on it, until we get to the convention center.

I saw them up ahead. There was probably hundreds.

You could tell that some of them were Midwesterners: tucked-in t-shirt with jeans. I would say the majority were Caucasian older males – late 60s, early 70s. It could have been a group of anything: teachers, electrical workers.

They got on and every seat was taken. There was just a whole mob of people standing. I kind of want to bury my-

self in a hole at that point, because my bag's on the seat, but they don't seem to notice.

There was a man holding onto the upper rails. I looked at the badge on his lanyard.

Barbershop Harmony Society.

I never saw the face of the guy who started to sing.

It was kind of a deep booming voice. It had that kind of feel of a New Orleans song – kind of a somber song, but for all I know, it could have been a happy song. I was in awe – I didn't even pay attention to the words.

He goes on for about 45 seconds in the packed train. My guess is they're thinking, *is anybody else going to join in?* And then *everybody* joins in – the high and the low. It

sounded really cool, actually. That's why it was kind of surprising. If it was one person singing, it would have been like, *okay, that's kind of weird.*

This convention mob might have been anything. Teachers? Electrical workers?

Maybe two stops later, they all got off.

My dad always says that Oregon is a weird place. I've taken the Sounder after a Seattle Seahawks game, the subway from

Yankee Stadium, the trolley from San Diego. But nobody's ever broken into song. It was nice, it was really nice.

I didn't join in. I don't sing.

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

Electronic mail.

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