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Munjoy Observer

Portland Renewal Authority

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EDITORIALLY SPEAKING . . .

This month the Portland Renewal Authority introduces this newsletter for residents of Munjoy-South.

It is YOUR newsletter.

We want you to use it in every way which will benefit your interest and participation in your neighborhood.

The MUNJOY OBSERVER is just that. An Observer. It is not intended to be solely a voice of the Portland Renewal Authority. Instead, it can be a conversation piece — to and from the 1200 residents in this area adjacent to scenic Casco Bay.

The MUNJOY OBSERVER can also serve as a sounding board for opinions, suggestions, answers to questions. It can serve as an informer about activities relating to the improvement of your area. It can publish helpful hints on home repairs. It can contribute to the spirit of the neighborhood, to the stimulation of civic pride, and to the beautification and promotion of public improvements.

You will be hearing from your area reporter who will seek out the kinds of information you would like to see included. If you would like to volunteer to take part in the Munjoy Observer news gathering staff, please contact Paul Folan, of the Munjoy South Association who can be reached after 3 p.m. daily at SP 2-1522.

When reporting for this paper let’s bear in mind what Rudyard Kipling once said:

"I keep six honest serving men
(They taught me all I know)
Their names are What and Why and When
And How and Where and Who."

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Happy Relocation Achieved

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Libby with PRA Specialist James Pleat.

While problems seem always to get more attention than solution, there are numerous happy relocations being achieved steadily.

The story behind the story (published in the Portland Evening Express on Oct. 3) of the Charles Libbys, who have moved to a new home in Westbrook from their former home at 16 Carey Lane, is one which can encourage others.

The Libbys have persevered with their own ingenuity in acquiring a desirable building lot, getting in their foundation and doing a lot of their own work. However, the time came when they had exhausted their resources and had to have cash in order to proceed in time to live in their home this winter. At the time — last August — the date of settlement on their Carey Lane property was unknown, since the price approvals at that time had not been received from the New York office of the Urban Renewal Administration.

James Pleat, Renewal Specialist with the Portland staff, whose job is to help families deal with financial assistance matters, was the PRA friend who stood closely by the Libbys and was able to help resolve their problem by obtaining a loan. But it took three tries to do it! The first two banks that the couple applied to turned down their bid because of the uncertainty of time when their Munjoy-South property could be sold. When all was the darkest for this couple, Jim Pleat thought of another small loan company that had not been approached by anyone on this program. The small company came through with the loan; the Libbys completed their new home sufficiently to move into it early in September, and thus became Munjoy-South’s first relocation family, and the first property sale to PRA.

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YOUR QUESTIONS!

There’s an old saying that you can’t believe all you hear and only half of what you see!

One way to get accurate information is to go to headquarters instead of trusting the “rumor mill.” If you have a question, or want to clear up something you may have “heard” please call us at SP 4-8221. We’ll do our best to see that you get a straightforward and official answer. Each month the Munjoy Observer will publish the questions and answers which may be of most general interest.
ABOUT THE NEXT ISSUE —

For the December issue of the MUNJOY OBSERVER we're looking for news items.

New babies. Newcomers to the Hill. Weddings. Club notices. Do you have a hobby? Are there enough hobbyists to put on a pre-Christmas hobby show? What's your favorite recipe?

AND . . . what are your repair and fix-up plans if you are living in the rehabilitation area. Maybe we can start a helpful exchange of ideas. Maybe we can help you save money in your work. For instance, just last week a resident inquired of PRA about the price of used radiators. As a result the property owner found that he could get new baseboard units for $200 less than he was quoted for used radiators. Now he can do more repairs with the money he saved.

Let's start a column of Renovation Notes in the December issue. Will you help with the questions and answers? Please send your suggestions to the Munjoy Observer, care of PRA, City Hall.

Happy Relocation Achieved

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Since that time there have been several other equally happy relocations.

• One Adams Street family has moved to West Falmouth in a new six-room house which they have been able to purchase following sale of their Munjoy-South property.

• Another Adams Street couple has moved to a new home on Sherwood Street.

• Another family with two teen-aged daughters found their own new home — a substantial improvement on the old. They moved on Nov. 1 to a single eight-room house with an oil-burning furnace on Sherman Street.

• A family on Waterville Street resolved their own relocation by purchasing the dwelling next door to their former home.

In all relocations moving expenses are available through PRA.

PROPERTY PURCHASES

MOVE FORWARD —

As of the 20th of October, the PRA had acquired 12 parcels in the Munjoy-South area at a total valuation of $46,225 and including 37,088 square feet. Options on an additional ten parcels valued at $90,125 and covering 54,567 square feet were in progress.

With the exception of one property which may be used as a temporary relocation address, the residents in the remaining structures will be relocated as soon as possible so that these acquired properties may be removed.

Most owners have willingly and quickly signed options, finding PRA prices to be fair.

Offers are being made as rapidly as possible on all properties to be purchased, but titles must be cleared first and some prices are still awaiting approval from the Federal Government.

RELOCATION NEEDS

INCREASE

There are presently 17 families in the Munjoy-South area who are being assisted by Mrs. Ann Armstrong, PRA's Relocation Counselor. Out of this number six are classified as "multi-problem" — that is — having a combination of factors making their relocation extremely difficult.

• For instance, a veteran on total disability, has ten children, and would like to live on a farm.

• Another family with four sons, has an income of less than $40 weekly. The wife has heart trouble and they need to be relocated in a first floor apartment.

• Another family came to Portland from a mid-coastal town to be near medical care for one of the children. All six children have had scarlet fever and the mother has heart trouble. This is a deserving, neat family with very low income. PRA is assisting this family with a temporary move until such time as a suitable permanent home can be found.

On September 21 fifteen community leaders met at City Hall to form a Relocation Committee to broaden the resources in dealing with "multi-problem" families.

A great amount of time and effort is necessary on the part of PRA and interested citizens in dealing with the relatively few cases which seem to defy solution. At the same time a majority of the relocating families are able to find their own solutions with a minimum of assistance.

HOW WILL YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Now is the time to help answer that question for next spring. For much of the success of spring and summer gardens is started in the fall.

November is not too late, providing frost has not hardened the ground, to plant some bulbs for spring blooming. It is also an important time to apply weed killer . . . getting at those ugly intruders on their own territory to keep them from starting to grow before the snow is off the ground.

The experienced gardener learns a lot each season until he has accumulated a wealth of valuable knowledge. The amateur, however, or the beginner, can be so overcome with confusion that he fails to act until the season has gone by.

A few suggestions: plant two or three inches deep the small bulbs such as scilla, crocus, grape hyacinth and breeder tulips which look so lovely in rock gardens.

Not all daffodils are yellow. For instance the Mt. Hood variety is big, showy and white. For a special treat try "Mrs. Backhaus" for a different colored daffodil — white petals with a pink perianth (cup). For jumbo yellow try King Alfred which can be planted any time up to frost five to ten inches deep.

For best effect use five to ten flowers of the same color in groups. If mixed be sure they have same blooming time and similar height. What's your garden hints?

HOUSING INSPECTION

STEPED UP —

During September housing inspections were started by the Portland Health Department. Thirty-three structures and 81 dwellings have been inspected in scattered sections according to the availability of access.

Inspections were on the Eastern Promenade, Morning, Kellogg, Monument, Sheridan, Congress and Vesper Streets. Eleven structures and 26 units were found to be standard and 22 structures and 55 units were found to have some deficiencies, according to a report from the City Housing Inspector's office.

Small block meetings will be held soon to discuss the results of the inspections.