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Holidays

IN THE COUVE

NOVEMBER 2023

The Columbian

Living

IN THE COUVE

What is The Couve?

The Couve **geographical name**

\ 'thē cōv \ rhymes with 'move'
(noun)

1 —Nickname for Vancouver, Washington.

2 —The original Vancouver.

3 —A small city with vibrant communities, urban attractions, and natural recreation areas.

See Also: Greater Couve, Clark County, Southwest Washington

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Find past issues archived online at
www.livinginthecouve.com



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Holiday Edition

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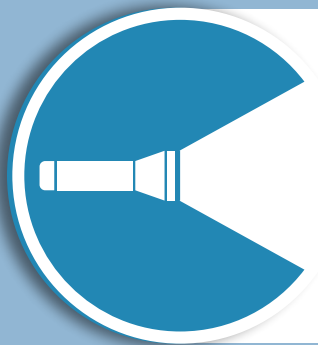
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NONPROFIT *Spotlight*



For information contact communitypartnerships@columbian.com

GIVE THE GIFT OF MUSIC *with the* VSO



This year, give the gift of music! The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra is a holiday tradition in Southwest Washington, bringing you festive music and family fun for 45 years. Take your family to our Holiday Pops concert and create memories and a love of music that will last a lifetime, gift a package of concerts to the music lover in your life, or simply buy a ticket to bring someone special for a great night out.

With incredible programs including Mahler's moving 5th Symphony, Bizet's mysterious Carmen Suite, and the legendary 9th Symphony by Beethoven, the VSO's symphonic series will bring you new favorites alongside the most celebrated music of all time.

Or, experience music up close with our chamber music series. With two programs featuring piano virtuoso Orli Shaham, a love letter to the woodwind section with Maestro Ken Selden, and a series of brilliant silent films presented with live music for an unforgettable experience, there is something for everyone.

For 45 years, the VSO has been a part of the community of Vancouver, with a mission of enhancing the quality of life in Southwest Washington by providing symphonic music of the highest caliber in live performances and through music education in schools, concert halls, and throughout the community. Each season we present more than 20 classical, pops, educational, and family concerts in Vancouver, along with special events and opportunities for students. We take great pride in providing world-class classical music to our community, and it is thanks to your support that it is made possible.

It's our holiday wish that you celebrate and support the arts locally, and make them an essential part of your life every day. Sharing live music is the greatest gift of all, during the holidays and all year round.

To learn more about our concert series and other events, such as our Evening of Jazz and Young Artist Competition, find us online at www.vancouversymphony.org or call our office at (360)735-7278.

This season, discover that world-class music belongs to everyone.



Smoke Your Thanksgiving Turkey **THE SMOKIN' OAK WAY**

by ERICK GILL, co-owner of The Smokin' Oak

For anyone unfamiliar with The Smokin' Oak, we're a full-service Texas-style barbeque joint located in downtown Vancouver. Rooted in East and Central Texas, we make everything from scratch using family recipes going back three generations and cooking all of our top-quality meats outside on a custom, 22-foot, offset barrel smoker that we designed and built ourselves.

Every Thanksgiving, we smoke 36 turkeys, as that is as many as we can fit in our smokers, for sale in November. They usually sell out the first day. So, if you happened to miss out on getting yours ordered and you have a smoker at home, here's how we do it.

First off, like all meats, quality is everything, so buy from a local butcher who deals directly with the farm. We recommend Butcher Boys over on Fourth Plain. We buy 18-20 pound birds and brine them for 14 hours.

Here's what you need to make the brine:

- 1 cup kosher salt
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 cup apple cider
- 1 tbsp poultry season
- 2 gallons of hot water (for emulsion) in a five-gallon bucket

Combine all the ingredients and whisk until everything is fully dissolved. Then add cold water until the bucket is about 3/4 full. Cool the brine, then put the turkey in the bucket, making sure that it is fully submerged. Refrigerate for 14 hours.

Take your turkey out of the brine, rinse it off and pat it dry. Put it in an aluminum turkey roasting pan and on to the smoker at about 225-250 degrees. Our offset barrel smokers work off convection with the heat rolling out of the firebox into a kind of vortex before being pulled out of the stack. If you're using an upright smoker with the heat coming from below, you may want to adjust accordingly.

With that in mind we start our birds breast side up with the legs facing away from the fire for the first hour or so until they form a little color. Then, we flip them breast down for the rest of the cook. Every half hour, we alternate basting them with the juices from the pan and spritzing them with a 50/50 mixture of apple cider vinegar and water. Make sure to keep an eye on the legs and wings. If they look like they're getting a little dry, wrap them in heavy aluminum foil.

Each bird is its own cook and there are a lot of variables at play when cooking outside in November

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so cook times will vary. A good rule of thumb is thirty minutes per pound, but we've finished turkeys in as little as six hours and had others go over 12. We pull each turkey when the internal temperature of the breast reaches 165 degrees. The momentum will continue to raise the temperature after it is removed from the smoker. We then tent each bird with aluminum foil and put them into humidity-controlled, hot holding ovens at 150 degrees. Most homes don't have this option so we recommend preheating your oven to its lowest temperature setting then putting the turkey in and shutting it completely off. Don't open the door until you're ready to carve.

That's it folks. This makes a pretty darn good turkey. From our family to yours, we wish y'all a happy Thanksgiving and a wonderful holiday season filled with laughter and love and plenty of smoked meats. Cheers.



Turkey not turn out the way you want it? Or you just don't feel like cooking? The Smokin' Oak also offers a full catering menu.

HAPPY
Thanksgiving

THE SMOKIN'

OAK

PIT & DRINKERY

The Columbian

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CLARK COUNTY

2023

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Appetizers and Side Dishes for Holiday Meals

by EILEEN COWEN, for *The Columbian*

Holiday meals are such a great tradition, mostly because they represent celebrations of family, seasons, and the importance of the communal breaking of bread. We all have great memories of watching our mothers and grandmothers toil over the details of these large meals while cousins catch up and uncles and grandpas snooze on the couch. Although I do love a good holiday meal, I have a confession to make: for me, holiday meals are all about the appetizers and side dishes. Appetizers and side dishes are a lovely way to put a personal spin on an otherwise standard holiday meal. And, they are a great way to honor the seasonality of harvest foods. Here are a few of my favorite nontraditional recipes that are sure to bring some delicious excitement to your holiday spread. The good news is, they are all easy to bring together ahead of time, saving your holiday for more important activities.

Appetizer

Cranberry Brie Pastry Pouches

At the holidays, puff pastry is a must. Not only is it easy to use, but it adds an elegant touch to your appetizer table. Buy a couple packages to keep on hand in a snack emergency!

- 1 cup cranberries (fresh or frozen)
- ½ cup sugar
- Juice and zest of one orange
- 1 small wheel of brie cheese
- 1 puff pastry, thawed

In a saucepan, combine the cranberries, sugar, juice and orange zest. Bring to a boil and simmer until the cranberries pop and the sauce thickens. Let cool.

Cut your puff pastry into 12 equal sized squares. In each square, add a tablespoon of cranberry sauce. Then, cut your brie into 12 equal sized wedges and place atop the cranberry sauce. Fold over the sides to make a small pouch, making sure to completely seal the sides. Cook the pouches at 375 for about 20 minutes, or until the pastry puffs and turns golden brown. Serve hot or warm!

Appetizer

Feta and Olive Pastry Bites

Here's another great way to use puff pastry. Again, these can be made ahead of time and served warm or at room temperature.

- 8 oz feta cheese
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp thyme
- ½ tsp fresh chopped parsley
- ½ cup chopped olives (kalamata are a great option)
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 1 sheet puff pastry

In a mixer or food processor, combine the feta, egg, herbs, salt and pepper until it makes a smooth paste. Mix in the chopped olives. Cut the thawed puff pastry into 12 equal portions and put a heaping tablespoon of the mixture on top. You can either seal the edges shut, or you can turn up the edges like a mini tart. Bake the pastry at 400 for about 15 minutes, or until the tops turn brown and the pastry is cooked.

Appetizer

Cauliflower Buffalo Bites

These can be made ahead of time and warmed up just in time for company to arrive. They also make a great game day snack! If you have an air fryer, these bites cook up in no time.

- 2 lb cauliflower, broken into florets
- ½ cup flour
- ½ cup water
- 1 ½ tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- ½ cup hot sauce (your choice)
- ½ cup butter, melted
- 1 tsp lemon juice

In a large bowl, mix together the flour, water, garlic powder, paprika, salt and pepper until it makes a batter. Toss in the cauliflower, making sure to cover it well. Lay out on a baking tray and bake in the oven at 450 for about 20 to 25 minutes, turning them over half way through. Remove from the oven when they are golden brown.

In a bowl, combine the butter, hot sauce, and lemon juice. Toss the baked cauliflower in the sauce and serve with bleu cheese dressing or ranch.

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Appetizer

Caramelized Onion Dip

This is my all-time favorite dip. Seriously. It does take some time, but the end product is rich, sweet, savory, salty, and amazing with a baguette from Bleu Door Bakery. Trust me on this!

- 2 lbs onions, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tbsp butter
- ½ cup mayo
- ½ cup sour cream
- ½ cup cream cheese, cubed
- ½ tsp fresh ground pepper
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper

In a heavy saucepan, heat up the oil and butter then add all the onions. Cook on low heat until they are soft, golden brown, and sweet. (You may need to add liquid such as white wine or water to keep the onions from sticking.) This part takes up to 45 minutes, so plan accordingly and be patient!

When the onions are done cooking, remove the pan from the heat. Then, add all the remaining ingredients, stirring well until the cubed cream cheese melts. When it is completely mixed, put the dip into a container and chill. Serve cold or room temperature.

Side Dish

Broccoli Cheddar Casserole

Looking for an alternative to the ubiquitous green bean casserole? Give this one a try! It is reminiscent of broccoli cheddar soup, but you get the added bonus of crispy fried onions.

- 1 can condensed cream of mushroom soup (or cream of chicken, for a meatier side dish)
- 1 c. sour cream
- 1 ½ cups of shredded cheddar cheese, plus ½ cup to top the casserole
- 1 can of French Fried Onions (divided in half)
- 2 lb. broccoli florets (either fresh or frozen)

Mix together the soup, sour cream, 1 ½ cups of cheddar, and half the can of french fried onions. Combine with the broccoli and add to a baking dish with a cover. Bake the casserole for 40 minutes at 350 degrees. Remove the cover, top with remaining cheese and onions, and cook uncovered for an additional 10 minutes or until the cheese is browned.

Side Dish

Roasted Brussels Sprouts and New Potatoes with Mustard Sauce

Don't worry that the mustard sauce will overpower the veggies – it takes on a mellow flavor that pairs well with the sweetness of the roasted vegetables.

- 1 lb. brussels sprouts
- 1 lb. small new potatoes
- 1 ½ tbsp. Olive oil
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced

Toss the brussels sprouts and potatoes in the olive oil and garlic. Roast in a 425 degree oven for about 15 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender.

In a bowl, whisk together:

- ¾ c. cream
- ¼ c. dijon mustard (or other spicy mustard that suits your fancy)

Salt and pepper to taste

Whisk together the ingredients and serve alongside the roasted vegetables.

Side Dish

Garlic Green Beans with Filberts

Do you call them Filberts or hazelnuts? They are the same nut, I just think filbert sounds more sophisticated. Take advantage of the Northwest's delicious and prolific hazelnut crops by making this fancy and simple green bean side this holiday. You can get fresh nuts at the Vancouver Farmers Market or a number of small farms in the region.

- 3 lbs. Fresh green beans with the ends cut off
- ¼ c. chopped garlic (either fresh or prepared)
- 3 tbsp. Butter
- 1 c. chopped filbert nut meats
- 1 tbsp. Lemon juice
- 1 tsp. Fresh tarragon or rosemary
- 1 tbsp. Salt
- ½ tsp. Fresh cracked pepper

In a heavy hot skillet, add butter, garlic and green beans. Sautee for a couple minutes or until the beans take a bright green color. Add in the filberts and cook until toasted, around 4 or 5 minutes. Remove from heat and toss with the lemon juice, herbs, salt and pepper.

Side Dish

Roasted Beets with Horseradish Cream Sauce

Beets are a delicious and beautiful addition to your holiday spread. This combo of sweet roasted beets and zippy horseradish sauce can be made ahead of time, saving you time during holiday prep. Simply refrigerate the beets and sauce separately, then bring to room temperature to serve.

- 2 lb beets, diced into inch cubes
- Olive oil for roasting

Salt and Pepper to taste

Toss the beets in the oil, salt and pepper. Lay them out in a single layer on a baking sheet and cook in a 400 degree oven until soft on the inside and slightly crispy on the outside – about 25 minutes. Cool to room temperature. For the horseradish cream sauce, combine:

- ¾ c. sour cream
- ¼ c. prepared horseradish
- Splash of lemon juice
- Salt and pepper
- Fresh herbs for the top (parsley or thyme are great options)

In a bowl, whisk together the first four ingredients. When ready to serve, pour the sauce over the cooked beets and sprinkle with herbs.

PATIENTS HAVE MORE CONTROL OVER THEIR HEALTH CARE THAN EVER – THAT’S A GOOD THING

by **ERIK GEISSAL, MD**, *Vancouver Clinic*

Once upon a time, clinics kept patient records in paper folders that only doctors read. The only way to talk to a clinician was to make an appointment. And the only way to make an appointment was to call.

Today’s patients have a far different experience—one that is continuing to evolve thanks to new technology and changing expectations. Health care clinics are taking cues from grocery stores and airports to find more efficient ways to operate. They

are giving individuals greater control over their own information and increasing accuracy in the process.

As a physician and the chief medical information officer (CMIO) at Vancouver Clinic, my job is to enable the clinic to stay at the edge of this digital forefront. I help make it easier for clinicians to care for our community and for patients to receive advice seamlessly. Ensuring that patients feel heard and cared for is one of Vancouver Clinic’s highest goals.

AS WE EMBRACE NEW TECHNOLOGY AND NEW WAYS OF DOING THINGS, VANCOUVER CLINIC IS KEEPING SEVERAL VALUES IN MIND:



CONVERSATIONS ABOUT YOU SHOULD INCLUDE YOU.

One of the most obvious changes in health care is an increase in transparency. The 21st Century Cures Act, passed in October 2022, requires health care organizations to give patients unfettered access to their medical records in digital format. Vancouver Clinic has long been a leader in this area. For example, we were one of the first in the country to open chart notes to patients. We believe that when patients can see what their doctors see, it creates trust.

This new law opens clinical notes to patients, providing insights into their clinician’s thought process and lab and imaging data. Because the notes

contain medical language, we encourage patients to use the information to start a conversation with their clinician. It’s really gratifying to see a vision for openness implemented on a national stage.

When patients have more power to see what information is entered on their behalf, they can control its accuracy. For example, patients can determine if their gender identity, race or ethnicity, preferred language, and other details are correct. It gives patients more ownership in the process and allows patients to discuss changes privately—wins all around.



CHECKING IN SHOULD BE EASY FOR EVERYONE.

We believe in serving patients in a way that’s comfortable for them. Vancouver Clinic offers an eCheck-In process to allow patients with a MyChart account to check in for appointments digitally. A growing number of patients want to just use their phone or computer to accomplish tasks. It’s happening in other industries too—some people

prefer the grocery store self-checkout line.

We still trust in the power of human connection. Our clinics all have in-person check-in available for people who desire personal interaction or help with questions and problems that can’t be addressed via a screen. Both options will remain available to patients.



SCHEDULING SHOULD HAPPEN IN A CLICK OR THREE.

Scheduling appointments online makes life easier. Vancouver Clinic continues to expand our online scheduling options. New patients can schedule primary care, urgent care, obstetrics and gynecology, allergy, sports medicine, and podiatry appointments through our website. In addition, current patients may also schedule with clinicians and specialists they have seen before using their MyChart account.

We consider our website to be our digital front door and will be introducing a new look, expanded features, and more intuitive navigation in early 2024. The new design makes it easy for patients to find and make urgent care appointments that work for their schedule.

Another benefit of online scheduling is that it can allow patients to be seen faster. Due to the nationwide physician shortage, some patients may wait weeks or months for appointments. When our patients schedule through MyChart, they have the option to add themselves to the waitlist in their MyChart account. Every month, about 2,000 patients are seen an average of 25 days sooner when they accept earlier appointment offers through their MyChart account.

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SIMPLE QUESTIONS DESERVE EFFICIENT ANSWERS.

Gone are the days where patients had to call or visit their physician's office to get an answer. With MyChart messages, patients can send non-urgent questions to their clinician. For example, patients may clarify a medication question or confirm next steps after their lab results. It's more efficient for both clinicians and patients. Sometimes, a seemingly simple question may require a conversation. In these cases, the clinician or their team will reach out to schedule a visit. Nuanced answers deserve time, attention, and dedicated discussion.



VIRTUAL VISITS SHOULD REMAIN AN OPTION.

Meeting with a clinician through video has a number of advantages. It eliminates travel costs, takes less time, allows parents without childcare to be seen, and lets individuals more easily fit in appointments during the workday. At Vancouver Clinic, all of our clinicians have the capability to offer video visits. We believe in eliminating barriers

to good health and consider video an excellent tool.

We also recognize that medicine often requires in-person care. While mental health, pain management, and urgent care have video visit options, some other specialties are less suited to this approach. We always encourage patients to talk to their clinician about their visit options.



THE VOICE OF THE PATIENT MUST DRIVE CHANGE.

One of the most important lessons new physicians learn is to listen to their patients. A patient's experience and knowledge of their body is one of the best pathways to an accurate diagnosis. The same is true with technology. Patient feedback is critical to creating a better digital experience. At

Vancouver Clinic, many of our technology changes are influenced by patient comments and our dedicated patient advisory board. We use these insights as we update and refine our processes. We always invite comments at feedback@tvc.org.



Dr. Erik Geissal is an internist and the chief medical information officer at Vancouver Clinic. He is board-certified in internal medicine and clinical informatics. He strives to influence medical technology to make it as useful to patients and clinicians as possible.



Schedule appointments online.

Access digital check-in for visits.

Message your care team.

Download the
MyChart app today!





SHOPPING *Main Street*

by TODD KAPRAL, Backyard Bird Shop

Fall is in full swing and the holidays are upon us. Once again I find myself reflecting on the significant role that small businesses play in our communities. We recently made our annual trip up the gorge to Hood River to drive the "Fruit Loop". This is a tour of all the small stores and stands of the family farms and orchards during harvest. Here you can see generations of families working in their small businesses and how important your patronage is. This year we found honey-crisp apple pie, pears and some great dried flower arrangements.

This has again been a busy year for us here at Backyard Bird Shop in Vancouver. The last few (stay at home) years have introduced many new people to the hobby of wild bird feeding. We love hearing from all the people who are new to feeding tell us about seeing their first goldfinch or hummingbird at their feeders. Many are amazed how easy it is to encourage nature right outside their window.

Our ability to meet the needs of all these new birders in addition to all our wonderful long-time customers is made possible largely due to our philosophy of supporting small, local or U.S. artisans and craftspeople. From bird feeders, houses and baths to a multitude of nature-related gifts, dozens of the local and U.S. suppliers we support are able to keep our shelves stocked with unique, well-made items that can be hard to find at national chain stores or online. At our stores, you can find gifts that

Continued on next page ►

include wall art, jewelry, cards, statuary, chimes, candles and more -- all from local or U.S. artisans. We also have many new vendors this year to add flavor to the mix! Additionally, I have found that dealing with local artists and companies often allows flexibility that you can't find at large-faceless companies headquartered somewhere else.

I feel strongly that small, brick and mortar shops are not going away. Most of our customer feedback is that folks appreciate being able to come into a store and actually see and touch an item or have a personal conversation with knowledgeable staff. This is an experience you cannot get on the internet.

You can find small, local businesses in practically every part of town. These shops serve the needs of their communities with knowledge and expertise that might be scarce at big box stores. From Vancouver to Camas, Washougal, Battle Ground and beyond, these small businesses serve a vital role in the community. As I visit these stores around town and speak to the folks that work and own them, this "shop local" mindset exists there as well. There is a level of dedication, passion, and common interest with customers that inhabit most small business participants. This often shows through in the feel of the store and the depth of knowledge you encounter.

Also, keep in mind that when you shop at a locally-owned and operated business, you are helping your dollars stay in the community. The owners and employees will in turn spend their

dollars at local restaurants and shops and family activities. Additionally, you are also supporting that store's local supply chain.

At Backyard Bird Shop, our business suppliers include advertisers, printers, hardware and lumber for displays, computer and tech support, and more which all come together to create a unique and immersive shopping experience.

We also believe in the importance of giving back to the community by supporting numerous environmental and educational organizations. You can find out more information about our stores by visiting www.backyardbirdshop.com.

This holiday season and throughout the year, please consider shopping local first. You will likely be rewarded with an in-depth experience that will make it worth the trip.



*From our flock to yours,
may your holidays
be merry
and bright!*



Shop Local Special!



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*Excludes seed, suet and other food items. Not applicable to Brome Squirrel Buster products. Coupon must be presented at time of purchase and is good for in stock items only. Coupon cannot be combined with other coupons or discounts or used to purchase gift cards.



BackyardBirdShop.com/Vancouver
8101 NE Parkway Dr. • 360-253-5771 ext. 5

RUNNING AND ROLLING FOR A GOOD CAUSE



The 10th Annual Race for Warmth's New Event Promises a Fun Morning of Support for Operation Warm Heart



by DAMEON PESANTI,
Public Information Officer at Clark Public Utilities

Anyone who's been in downtown Vancouver on the morning of the fourth Sunday of January has probably seen the hundreds of people pounding the pavement in

matching shirts.

Rain or shine, freeze or thaw, the Clark Public Utilities Race for Warmth has become an annual community event for well over a thousand walkers and runners, who along with, donation contributors from across the county, help raise tens of thousands of dollars to support local families in financial crisis.

"It felt like such a huge leap when we first launched the Race for Warmth. The utility had never done anything like this before and we weren't sure if anybody would want to sign up for a run on a frosty January morning," said Clark Public Utilities Marketing and Events Specialist Maxie Mayer. "We couldn't have been more pleasantly surprised. Every year, our entire team is just left in awe by joy of the attendees and the outpouring of support for Operation Warm Heart."

The Race for Warmth is a charity 5k walk/run and 10k run that directly supports Operation Warm Heart, a Clark Public

Utilities donation-funded assistance program that helps families in financial crisis pay their energy bills. The event is produced and hosted by over 150 Clark Public Utilities employee-volunteers. Every dollar of registration fees goes directly to supporting community members in need. In the last ten years, more than 10,000 participants have raised over \$420,000 for local families.

Grab your friends, your kiddos or your favorite pair of headphones and join the crowd on Sunday, January 28, 2024.

This year, the tenth anniversary, promises to be one to remember. To celebrate a decade of fun, community spirit and goodwill, the race is adding an entirely new event to welcome even more people.

The race begins and ends at the utility's Electric Center office in downtown Vancouver. Runners up for a challenge

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will follow a timed and controlled 10K course that goes through Fort Vancouver, out and back along the Columbia River then winds through the streets of downtown. Walkers and runners who opt for the 5K event will follow the same route but skip the river section.

Special to the 10th year of the race, bicyclists are invited to participate in an event of their own — a 16-mile bike ride along a designated course. The bike route follows a path that'll be familiar to many local cyclists. The ride begins at Hudson's Bay High School, travels along East McLoughlin Boulevard, goes down East Mill Plain Boulevard and out to Northwest Lower River Road, turning around at Frenchman's Bar Regional Park and returning to the school.

Cyclists of all ages and abilities are invited to the ride. Afterward, they're welcome to attend the race after party at the Electric Center in downtown Vancouver. There will be a



secure bike check on site, so riders can stow their wheels and have some fun.

"We've talked about including a cycling event for years, and the tenth anniversary ride seemed like the perfect opportunity to bring it in," said Mayer. "Just like our other two events, you don't need to be a super athlete to join in, just up for a fun challenge on a chilly morning."

At the start of the day, the smallest athletes will have a kids race of their own around the utility parking lot. Plus, participants can take a moment to visit a booth or two hosted by the event's many business partners, grab a quick snack and enter one of several raffle drawings. Once racers and riders return, they'll be welcomed to celebrate at the after party with free live music, beverages, warm snacks, yard games and more. Those looking to continue the celebration and make up for some of those burned calories can take advantage of special downtown dining deals that'll be included in this year's registration packet.

Early registration is \$40 and open now at www.raceforwarmth.com. Participants receive a long-sleeve performance shirt, participation medal, bib number and drawstring race bag filled with gifts, coupons and snacks, all thanks to generous local business partners.

Those who want to stay warm and dry indoors on a chilly January morning rather than pounding pavement can still make a tax-deductible donation to Operation Warm Heart. Simply look for the "donate" button at www.raceforwarmth.com or call customer service at 360-992-3000.



Save money and cut emissions with an electric vehicle



If you own or are considering an electric vehicle, we offer incentives to help. Incentives are available for the installation of various charging stations and we offer rebates to qualifying customers for the purchase of used electric vehicles, too. Visit our website for more information.

ClarkPublicUtilities.com/EV



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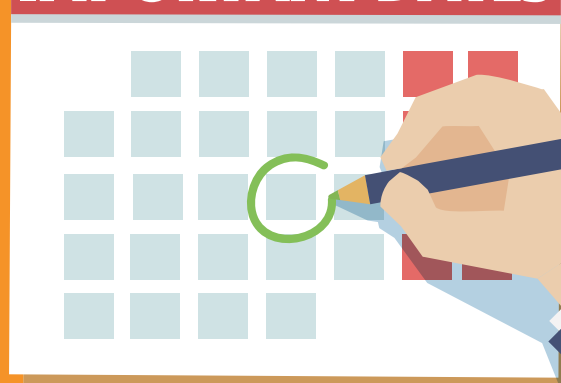
MEDICARE

**don't
forget!**

PICK YOUR 2024 PLAN

If you're age 65 and older, or a younger adult with a qualifying disability, then you're likely becoming more familiar with the complexities of Medicare. This is the time of year people can explore changes to Medicare and compare coverage options.

IMPORTANT DATES



**OPEN ENROLLMENT ENDS
DECEMBER 7, 2023**

**OPEN ENROLLMENT CHANGES TAKE EFFECT
JANUARY 1, 2024**

Open Enrollment Season is also the season for fraud and scams. Even if you've been enrolled in Medicare for many years, it can still be mysterious territory. Don't travel alone! Beware of unsolicited offers and requests for personal information. When in doubt, call Medicare directly at **1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227)** or your local SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors) office at **1-800-562-6900**.



WHAT TO DO

1. Read your 2024 Medicare & You handbook and the "Annual Notice of Change" letter from your Medicare plan.
2. Review the letter and handbook to learn about changes to benefits and coverages, and changes to your current Medicare plan.
3. If you like your current plan and it's still available for 2024, you don't need to take any action.
4. If you want to change your plan, go to Medicare Plan Finder: www.medicare.gov/plan-compare, or get help by calling Medicare directly at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) or your local SHIBA (Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors) office at 1-800-562-6900.
5. Complete all plan changes by December 7, 2023.

CELEBRATE LIFE AT PRESTIGE SENIOR LIVING

At **Prestige Senior Living Bridgewood**, our wellness program Celebrations embraces a philosophy of healthy, fulfilled living to foster happiness and longevity among our residents.

We offer Independent Living, which compliments your lifestyle and gives you both the freedom and choices to explore and celebrate life! Let us do the cooking and cleaning so you can enjoy happy hour, trivia, painting, fun exercise classes, or making new friends.

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SEASON OF SUSTAINABILITY: EMBRACING A GREENER HOLIDAY SEASON

by BETHANIE COLLETTE, Clark County Public Health Solid Waste Education and Outreach



This holiday season, join Clark County Green Neighbors in embracing greener and more sustainable holiday celebrations. Traditional gift-giving often results in excessive packaging and disposable single-use items which end up in the landfill. By choosing zero-waste gifts, such as experiences, reusable items, or second-hand treasures, we can minimize the environmental impact of our celebrations. Opting for gifts made from recycled materials, ethically sourced products, or locally produced items supports environmentally conscious businesses and artisans, while fostering a shift towards a more sustainable economy.

Another crucial aspect of reducing our ecological footprint during the holidays is minimizing food waste. Food waste in landfills contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and exacerbates climate change. By being mindful of our food consumption and finding creative ways to use leftovers, we not only help mitigate these environmental impacts but also save valuable resources like water and energy.

Join us on this journey towards a greener and more eco-friendly lifestyle as we explore practical tips and ideas for sustainable holiday practices.

Continued on next page ►

Battery Drop-Off Program: Recycle Batteries Safely

The holiday season is accompanied by great food, amazing people, and beautiful gifts—many of which require batteries.

When batteries are improperly stored and/or disposed of they can cause serious harm. Batteries that end up in household garbage or inside of recycling carts can explode and pose a significant fire risk.

Luckily, there are now several safe Battery Drop-Off sites throughout Clark County! These convenient locations accept a variety of batteries from Clark County households, including cell phones and rechargeable batteries, which often pose the biggest safety risk when improperly disposed of. Please limit to 10 batteries per person per day, and larger quantities should be taken to a county household hazardous waste facility for proper disposal. To search for battery drop-off locations, and for more information about the types of batteries accepted, visit our website recyclingdoneright.org or download the RecycleRight app.

Celebrate scrappy cooking

As we approach the holiday season, it's essential to be mindful of food waste and its impact on our environment. On average, Washington state generates 400,000 tons of edible food waste—with over 35,000 tons coming from Clark County alone.

To help reduce food waste, we encourage smart shopping by using a meal plan. Proper food storage is also crucial in preventing food from expiring prematurely. Donating surplus edible food to local food banks is another great way to minimize waste. Let's not forget the joy of leftovers during the season - revive holiday foods by creating new combinations. This will help reduce food waste and provide tasty and creative ways to enjoy holiday leftovers.

A few of our favorite repurposed recipes include:

- Using leftover mashed potatoes to make potato pancakes or shepherd's pie.
- Turning cranberry sauce into a topping for yogurt or oatmeal.
- Using unfinished pie or cake to make trifles or parfaits.
- Repurposing leftover stuffing into savory muffins, soup dumplings or fritters.
- Boiling bones to create a flavorful and nutrient rich bone broth.

Gifting with intention

This year let's make the holiday season more sustainable by embracing a low-waste mindset. Here are some ideas to help reduce waste during this festive time:

- Consider zero-waste gifts. Look for fun local experiences, reusable items, or second-hand treasures to minimize packaging waste and support local businesses.

- Embrace eco-friendly wrapping. Instead of using traditional wrapping paper, try reusable bags or get creative with old maps, posters, sheet music, or paper bags. Let's make gift-giving more sustainable and fun!
- Host eco-conscious celebrations. When hosting holiday parties, eliminate disposable plates, cups, napkins, and silverware. If disposables are necessary, look for products with recycled content. Make sure to mark recycling containers clearly and purchase food and drinks with recyclable packaging.
- Energy and water conservation. Turn off or unplug holiday lights when not in use and consider using LED lights for energy efficiency. Be mindful of water usage while cooking and only run full loads in the washing machine and dishwasher. These small steps can make a big difference in reducing our environmental footprint.
- Alternative gift ideas. Give meaningful gifts like homemade goodies in reusable containers, DIY creations, or gift certificates for experiences that will leave a lasting impact on your loved ones.

By incorporating these practices into our holiday celebrations, we can create cherished memories while protecting the planet.

Clark County Green Neighbors wishes you a joyful and eco-friendly holiday season!

CONVENIENT DROP OFF LOCATIONS AVAILABLE FOR BATTERY RECYCLING

Used batteries can explode and cause serious harm if not disposed of properly. Never put batteries in the garbage or recycling carts.

To safely dispose of used batteries:

1. Find locations in directory using the **RecycleRight** app, or at clark.wa.gov/hhw.
2. Tape battery ends, place in separate plastic bags, or bag batteries at the store.
3. Drop off batteries for safe disposal. Limit 10 batteries per person per day.



Clark County solid waste planning and programs are a cooperative effort of Clark County, Battle Ground, Camas, La Center, Ridgefield, Vancouver, Washougal and Yacolt.



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- Preserve longstanding traditions and customs

- Offer personalized and affordable services and products
- Reach out to the greater community

We believe that the success of any business requires dedication and professionalism. In our business, in particular, it also requires a great deal of kindness, compassion and attention to detail. You'll find these qualities in each and every member of our staff at Evergreen Memorial Gardens. Put your trust in us to make this experience as comfortable and carefree as possible.



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It's All FUN & GAMES

by EILEEN COWEN, for *The Columbian*

Holiday shopping for children can be so easy and difficult at the same time. I have a theory that it all depends on the age of the child in question. For instance, when children are younger, their lists tend to be a bit shorter and readily available. Toys, building blocks, dolls, trucks, and games are all on the list of things you can find at any large department store. For specialty things such as figurines and musical toys, there are some awesome toy shops in the greater Couve area. However, things get tricky for older kids and teens. For this age group, it is difficult to know not only WHAT to buy,

but WHERE to buy that isn't from an online retailer. Sometimes it's hard to know where to even start.

Thankfully, Living in the Couve has you covered this year with a fun guide of places that have games, comics, anime/manga, and more that will help make your tween or teen shopping much easier. Each of these stores has gift cards as well for those who would rather leave the tough decisions to the giftee. An added bonus is that giving gifts from these cool shops will help you be the hip aunt, uncle, grandma or grandpa. Who doesn't need a little extra clout with the teen crowd?

DICE AGE GAMES

107 E Fourth Plain Blvd Ste 105, Vancouver

This is a great shop that specializes in Dungeons and Dragons Figurines, model building, Magic the Gathering cards, and fantasy board games. They also host free live competitive gaming in-store at various points throughout the month. This is a great option for your budding fantasy fanatic or even someone who wants to get into building models of the fantasy realm.

I LIKE COMICS

1715 Broadway St, Vancouver

I Like Comics is the premiere comic bookstore in the region. They have a huge selection of new and back issue comics including DC, Dark Horse, Image, and Marvel. The shop also boasts a large selection of graphic novels, trade paperbacks, and pop culture items such as Funko Pops. (These are the large-headed cartoonish figurines that are highly collectable and feature everyone from sports stars and musicians to Stranger Things characters and everything in between.) I Like Comics has things for everyone including high-end comics collectors. Check them out for everything ranging from amazing first editions to old Archie comics in the bargain bins.

Continued on
next page ►

TOY BOX COLLECTIBLES

700 SE Chkalov Dr #21, Vancouver
1307 NE 78th St suite 3, Hazel Dell

At Toy Box Collectibles, it is all about toys and figurines. I like that they have anime figurines such as characters from Naruto and One Piece. Go there for items such as McFarlane figurines, Funko Pops, and even classic toys like GI Joe, Star Wars, and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

CCG HOUSE

3925 NE 72nd Ave Ste #108, Vancouver

CCG focuses on trading card games such as Pokemon, Magic the Gathering, and Forgotten Realms. You can purchase decks or single cards there and they also host public game nights and Pokemon leagues. CCG also has a great selection of sci-fi and fantasy board games for fun family night activities.

DOUBLE JUMP VIDEO GAMES

700 SE Chkalov Dr #21, Vancouver

Double Jump is a cool store that focuses on classic and current video gaming. It is buyer and seller, so you can trade in anything from an Atari 2600 to a Playstation 5. Not only do they have video games, the shop also boasts figurines, plushies, game cards, board games, and posters. This is a great shop to get gear for your young gamer.

BRICKS AND MINIFIGS

8700 NE Vancouver Mall Dr #236, Vancouver

Let's face it: some kids are just Lego kids (and by "kids," I also include Lego-obsessed teens and adults!). Bricks and Minifigs has multiple locations in Clark County and Greater Portland, but I often find myself at their location at the Vancouver Mall. This is a great place to get standard and designer sets, single and bulk bricks, and a fun selection of minifigs. They also buy Legos if you want to unload some clutter after the holiday madness.

KAZOODLES

13503 SE Mill Plain Blvd #B-3, Vancouver

Yeah yeah, I know. Kazoodles is a toy store for kids, right? Not so fast! They have an awesome selection of fun board games for teens and families. I love that this store grew right along with my own kids – we have been going there since they were little and now, we go there to get great games for family vacations. They have a great selection that is sure to make all the kids on your list happy this holiday season.

As always, no matter where you go this winter to shop for the teens, consider shopping locally at any of the great Coupe-based shops before going online! Local dollars mean a lot to these small businesses because although they do ship to places outside the local area, it costs more time and money to do so. As a customer, it is less expensive to purchase locally and avoid shipping costs. It's a win all around for consumers and businesses!

Happy Holidays
from our family to yours!



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NOW IS THE IDEAL TIME TO PLANT FALL CROPS AND HERBS

by LIZ PIKE, WSU Extension Clark County Master Gardener

The days are getting shorter and temperatures are beginning to cool. This time of year is always a welcome change for those of us who've been toiling in our gardens during the long and bountiful growing season. There're still tomatoes ripening on the vine and winter squash and pumpkins to harvest aplenty.

We are fortunate to live, grow food, and thrive in Southwest Washington. Our growing season is long and because of that, there's a temptation to take a break from planting crops until next Spring. Don't give in; the time to plant winter greens and some herbs is right now.

Many gardeners are not ready to end the healthful cycle of heading out to the garden to "pick dinner." And, with mild temperatures continuing over the next several weeks, we can plant now and expect beautiful, fresh greens all the way through Thanksgiving and possibly beyond.

RECONDITION YOUR SOIL BEFORE PLANTING NEW CROPS

Consider planting kale, spinach, arugula, and other lettuces in garden beds where other plants have already been harvested. First, remove all of the spent plant material. Give it a good raking to loosen garden soil. It's important to add new organic matter before you plant your winter crops. New plants need new nutrients and it's likely that whatever was growing there before has already used up the healthy attributes of your garden bed soil.

If you don't want to sow new winter crops from seed, many specialty nurseries offer starts ready to plant. The best time to transplant starts is in the cool of the morning or evening hours. Be sure to give your reconditioned garden beds a good

Continued on next page ►

watering before you plant and then again, right after. Starts need a good soaking for the first several days. Keep an eye on the forecast. If Autumn rains do not fall, your winter crops will need a sprinkling each day.

SPRUCE UP YOUR HERB GARDEN WITH NEW PLANTINGS

Now is also an ideal time to clean up your herb garden. Many of us are not ready to give up on fresh basil, thyme, parsley and rosemary as we head into the hearty soup season of our kitchens. Earlier this year, I constructed a standing culinary herb garden from recycled cedar fence boards and a

few pieces of lumber left-over from another project. I located the new herb garden on our paver patio just a few steps from our kitchen. I noticed the nasturtium that was planted earlier in the season has propagated itself with a brand new crop. I found tender new starts of organic rosemary, basil, parsley and thyme at a local nursery. Before planting, I cleaned up the spent herb foliage and added fresh, organic potting mix into the existing raised bed. This will feed the new herbs with the nutrients they need to thrive over the next several weeks and beyond.

Happy gardening and enjoy this wonderful Autumn weather.



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**FREE Resource Site
For Caregivers**

The holidays can mean added demands on caregivers for older adults, and here at **Prestige Assisted Living at Hazel Dell**, we're here to help with a free resource page on our website at **www.prestigecanhelp.com**.

It contains a wide variety of information, including:

- Cognitive Health & Aging Guides
- Caregiver Blogs Collection
- Webinar Recordings: Mental Health, Fall Prevention, and More
- Senior Living Insights: Care, Finances, Memory Care, and More

If you or a loved one are a recipient of Medicare or Medicaid, Prestige Assisted Living at Hazel Dell has apartments available. For more information, contact us at **(360) 693-2402** or visit us online at **prestigecare.com/hazeldell**.



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2023 CHRISTMAS SHIP PARADE SCHEDULE



2023 COLUMBIA RIVER

DECEMBER	ASSEMBLY TIME	ASSEMBLY AREA	DESTINATION
Friday, 1	7:00PM	M. James Gleason Boat Ramp	North Portland Harbor – Combined Fleet
Saturday, 2	6:00PM	Camas/Washougal	Camas/Washougal – Combined Fleet
Sunday, 3	NO PARADE TONIGHT		
Monday, 4	7:00PM	M. James Gleason Boat Ramp	Vancouver Waterfront/Hayden Bay
Tuesday, 5	7:00PM	M. James Gleason Boat Ramp	Washington Shores/Wintler Park
Wednesday, 6	7:00PM	M. James Gleason Boat Ramp	Vancouver Waterfront/Hayden Bay
Thursday, 7	NO PARADE TONIGHT		
Friday, 8	7:00PM	M. James Gleason Boat Ramp	I-205 Bridge/164th
Saturday, 9	6:00PM	St. Helens City Docks	St. Helens/Columbia City/Woodland – Combined Fleet
Sunday, 10	4:30PM	JJ Collins Memorial Park	Scappoose/Multnomah Channel – Combined Fleet
Monday, 11	NO PARADE TONIGHT		
Tuesday, 12	NO PARADE TONIGHT		
Wednesday, 13	7:00PM	M. James Gleason Boat Ramp	Washington Shores/Wintler Park
Thursday, 14	7:00PM	M. James Gleason Boat Ramp	North Portland Harbor
Friday, 15	7:00PM	M. James Gleason Boat Ramp	Vancouver Waterfront/Hayden Bay
Saturday, 16	4:30PM	RiverPlace Marina (Meet & Greet - 8pm-10pm)	Lake Oswego – Combined Fleet
Sunday, 17	5:00PM	RiverPlace Marina (Meet & Greet - 2pm-4:30pm)	St. Johns Bridge/Cathedral Park – Combined Fleet

All performance times are approximate and subject to safety, commercial river traffic, weather and water conditions which are beyond the control of Christmas Ships, Inc.

The Christmas Ship Parade started in 1954 with one lone sailboat from Portland Yacht Club. Bows of green with some ribbon were tied along the rails and it paraded on the river. The next year the parade started to grow. Today, The Christmas Ship Fleet averages about 55 to 60 boats between the Columbia and Willamette River fleets. Things have changed since the first lone ship. Now the displays are brightly lit and can be seen from bank to bank on each side of the river. This tradition packs the restaurants and viewing locations along the river to watch the parade.

For more information visit: www.christmasships.org



2023 WILLAMETTE RIVER

DECEMBER	ASSEMBLY TIME	ASSEMBLY AREA	DESTINATION
Friday, 1	7:00PM	M. James Gleason Boat Ramp	North Portland Harbor – Combined Fleet
Saturday, 2	6:00PM	Camas/Washougal	Camas/Washougal – Combined Fleet
Sunday, 3	NO PARADE TONIGHT		
Monday, 4	7:00PM	RiverPlace Marina	Fremont Bridge
Tuesday, 5	7:00PM	RiverPlace Marina	Milwaukie
Wednesday, 6	7:00PM	RiverPlace Marina	Fremont Bridge
Thursday, 7	NO PARADE TONIGHT		
Friday, 8	7:00PM	RiverPlace Marina	Milwaukie/Oregon Yacht Club
Saturday, 9	6:00PM	St. Helens City Docks	St. Helens/Columbia City/Woodland – Combined Fleet
Sunday, 10	4:30PM	JJ Collins Memorial Park	Scappoose/Multnomah Channel – Combined Fleet
Monday, 11	NO PARADE TONIGHT		
Tuesday, 12	NO PARADE TONIGHT		
Wednesday, 13	7:00PM	RiverPlace Marina	Milwaukie
Thursday, 14	7:00PM	RiverPlace Marina	Fremont Bridge
Friday, 15	7:00PM	RiverPlace Marina	Milwaukie
Saturday, 16	4:30PM	RiverPlace Marina (Meet & Greet - 8pm-10pm)	Lake Oswego – Combined Fleet
Sunday, 17	5:00PM	RiverPlace Marina (Meet & Greet - 2pm-4:30pm)	St. Johns Bridge/Cathedral Park – Combined Fleet

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For more information visit: www.christmasships.org

BEST OF CLARK COUNTY 2023

Visit local small businesses for your
Holiday Shopping!

Small Business Saturday is an annual national shopping day that takes place the Saturday after Thanksgiving. It's a great incentive to celebrate and support small businesses in your local community. There are many small businesses in and around Vancouver to help you complete your holiday shopping list. Instead of ordering online, consider going out to browse locally for the perfect gift, or if you're not sure, most small shops have gift certificates for sale.

Looking for the best gifts from small businesses in Clark County? The Columbian's Best of Clark County can help you decide among all the great eateries, shops, services and entertainment venues that our community has to offer.

Join us on Saturday, November 25 in celebrating all of the Clark County small businesses that make our community great. Show your support by shopping and utilizing the services of our outstanding businesses.



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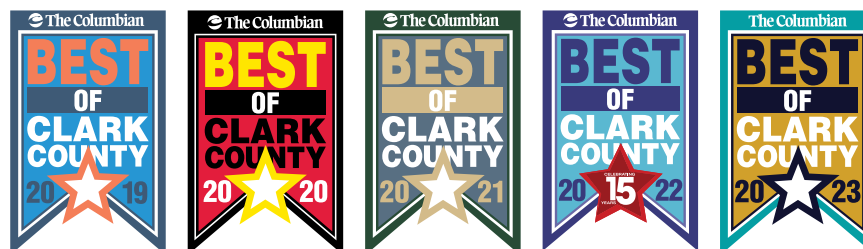
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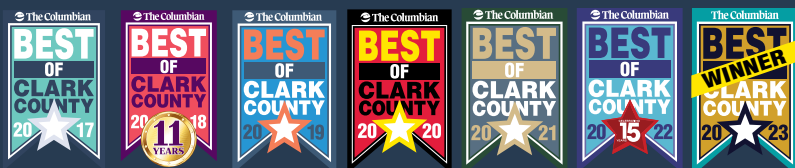
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EVENTS

NOVEMBER 2023 - DECEMBER 2023



ESTHER SHORT PARK COMMUNITY TREE LIGHTING

November 24

Join the Rotary Club of Vancouver for the Community Tree Lighting Ceremony at Esther Short Park in Downtown Vancouver. This year's celebrations will extend to Vancouver's Waterfront. The festivities will include a vehicle parade, which will begin in front of the AC Marriott. The parade will proceed along Columbia Blvd, heading towards Esther Short Park, where Santa and Mrs. Claus will be dropped off to illuminate the Christmas Tree. Go online for the full schedule of events: rotarytreelighting.org



CAMAS HOMETOWN HOLIDAYS

December 1, 5pm-8pm

Join Camas Parks & Recreation to celebrate the holiday season in historic Downtown Camas. Go to downtowncamas.com for details on holiday entertainment and activities, Santa's visit and more.



RIDGEFIELD HOMETOWN CELEBRATION

December 2

Enjoy the hometown holiday spirit of historic Downtown Ridgefield where you will find twinkling lights, decorated businesses, gifts, food, holiday specials as well as fun events and activities for the whole family. Find the full schedule of events at: www.ridgefieldwa.us/356/December-First-Saturday



VANCOUVER SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA HOLIDAY POPS
Special Guest: Columbia Dance Company
December 8 & 9

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra announces holiday pops concert to include selections from Swan Lake, in partnership with the Columbia Dance Company. Skyview Concert Hall 1300 NW 139th St, Vancouver. Tickets: Starting at \$34, \$10 for students with ID. Find ticket information at: vancouversymphony.org

JUNIOR SYMPHONY OF VANCOUVER
December 9, 7:30 pm

The program will include selections by Mozart, Percy Faith, Grainger, and traditional sing-alongs. Cascades Presbyterian Church. 9503 NE 86th Street, Vancouver. Tickets \$15 – available at the door. Reception following. oregonchamberplayers.org/junior-symphony-of-vancouver



CHELATCHIE PRAIRIE RAILROAD CHRISTMAS TRAINS

Month-long weekend excursions offer three diesel runs each Saturday and Sunday departing at 9:30 am, NOON, and 2:30 pm from the station in Yacolt, WA. Along the trip capture views of the Lewis River atop a hill-side vantage point, then return to Moulton Station. At the station stop, enjoy warm cider

and cocoa, and hot coffee. Santa has a gift for each child. Go online to verify schedule and purchase tickets: tickets.bycx.org or call 360-686-3559.

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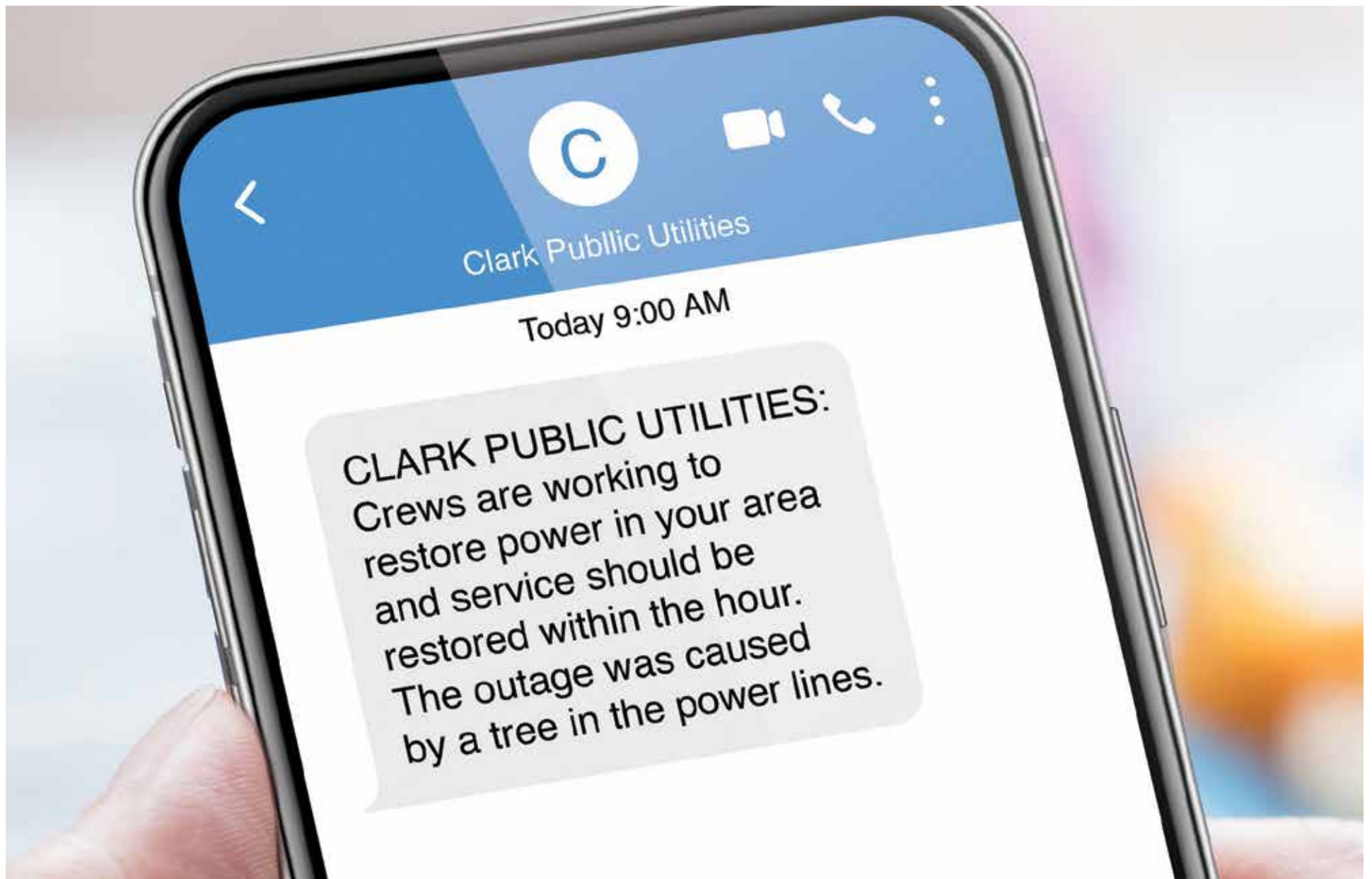
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You expect reliable electric service, and that's our goal. We've designed, built and maintained one of the most reliable electric systems around, but as much as we do, some outages still happen, especially during winter storms. Stay informed about outages in your area by signing up for text alerts. Just log into MyAccount at ClarkPublicUtilities.com.



A consumer-owned, non-profit utility providing reliable, affordable, responsible service since 1938