

Peninsula Lodge #128 Serving N-Portland Since 1895

Odds & Ends Community Newsletter

July 2018



Community  Action Spotlight

From Refugee to Portland Police Officer

A Conversation with Officer Cuong Nguyen



Odds & Ends: Officer Nguyen, thank you for letting us interview you. Tell us a little about yourself.

Officer Nguyen: I was born at the end of the war in the city of Ban Me Thuot in Vietnam. My mom's family lived there and my dad's family lived in Saigon. I remember spending time in both places. I have a brother that's a year older, and a sister that's a year younger.

One day, when I was 4 years old, my parents told me that our family was going to visit the zoo. We got

dressed up and went to a café that overlooked a harbor. I was anxious to go to the zoo so I kept asking them when we were going to get there. They told me to be patient and that we would go soon.

At one point, my parents told us kids to keep quiet and run so we did. We ran across an open field and hopped onto a long wooden boat. I didn't understand why my uncle was already there on the boat. He placed a white sheet over the family. We hid there like cargo. My parents told us to keep very quiet so we did.

My uncle was not hiding under the sheet; he was steering the boat. He used a pole to push the boat away from the shore, and we started our journey. I was too young to know that we were escaping from the communist government of Vietnam. We were officially "Boat People."

We were on many boats for seven days. It was a network. The first boat would take us to a certain point and drop us off. We would then board the second boat which would take us to another drop-off point. The process repeated. There were times when a boat would drop us off in the marsh and we'd have to stand there waiting for the next boat. My dad would hold the two boys in his arms, and my mom would hold my sister. I remember hiding in the tall grass and keeping quiet when a Viet Cong boat drove by on their patrol. Fortunately, they never detected us.

I remember asking my parents when we were going to arrive at the zoo. They just kept saying that we were almost there.

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Help Us Send Colby to Cincinnati for Airway Surgery



This is Colby, also known as "Christmas Colby," because he was born on Christmas Day. Colby was born with numerous medical anomalies and underwent twenty-one different procedures by the time he was three years old, including heart surgery.

Colby was also born with a Class 1 cleft in his airway. This cleft allows food and drink to sometimes aspirate into his lungs, which is very dangerous and can lead to pneumonia. The abnormalities in his airway make it very difficult for Colby to talk and breathe. To manage the complications caused by his cleft, Colby has to endure a

daily regimen of steroids, antibiotics, nebulizers, deep suction machines, pulmonary vests, critical coughing assistance machines, gastric feeding tubes and cpap machines.

All of these drugs and machines help manage Colby's symptoms and keep him alive. What he really needs, though, is a complicated airway surgery which is only performed by a small number of specialists in the field. After a very long process of referrals, tests, appointments and tons of paperwork, Colby has been approved for surgery at the Airway Disorders clinic at Cincinnati Children's Hospital.

Colby is cared for by his grandmother, who does all she can to help him. Now they both need your help. Colby's grandmother is on a fixed income, and cannot afford the cost of airfare to get her and Colby to Cincinnati. Assistance with the cost of her lodging during his recovery is also needed.

Peninsula Odd Fellows Lodge is raising funds to send Colby and his grandmother to Cincinnati for his surgery. We hope you will join us.

Donate here:

<https://www.gofundme.com/2g2txac>





Officer Cuong Nguyen in his patrol car

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Eventually, my mom told me that we were going to America. When she saw that I was disappointed, she said "Don't worry. They have lots of toys there." To a four year old, those words made it all better.

We eventually reached our destination on a beach in Pulau Bidong, Malaysia. We spent close to a year living in a couple of different refugee camps. I had another uncle that was already living in Portland, so when it was our turn to come to the United States, that's where we went.

We were one of the first in our extended family to come to America. Now, most of my family (on both sides) is here. I sometimes wonder what my life would be like if we had never left Vietnam. My grandfather and dad were both barbers in Vietnam so I would probably be a barber myself. But along time ago my parents made the fateful decision to come to America. Because of this, instead of being a barber in

Vietnam, I'm a police officer in Portland.

O&E: How long have you been a police officer?

Officer Nguyen: I've been an officer for 14 years. I was hired in January of 2004.

O&E: Why did you choose to be an officer? Was there a specific event or person that inspired you to be a police officer?

Officer Nguyen: Growing up, I've always respected the profession and the people who wear the uniform, but I didn't grow up knowing that I was going to be a police officer. I was running an evening swim lesson program as a lifeguard when a parent approached me and told me that he thought I would do well as a cop. He set me up on some ride-alongs to see if I would like it. I fell in love with it so much that I spoke to The Boss (my wife). She was supportive so I applied. As the saying goes, when you're an officer, you have a front row seat to the greatest show on earth.

O&E: How long have you worked in North Portland?

Officer Nguyen: I've worked in North Portland for 13 years, ever since I completed probation.

O&E: Wow! That's basically your entire career as an officer. Does the bureau decide where you are assigned, or do you choose to work in North?

Officer Nguyen: Though officers can make requests, the Bureau decides officer assignments when

they come off of probation. I was originally assigned to the Old North Precinct building in St Johns. That building is now the Traffic Division.

O&E: How has St. Johns and North Portland changed since you first started working here?

Officer Nguyen: Overall, it seems like St. Johns and North Portland have cleaned up. Some problem areas have been replaced by new apartment buildings and swanky restaurants. On a smaller scale, you could compare it to what happened on Mississippi Avenue and Alberta Street.

O&E: How has your job as an officer changed?

Officer Nguyen: We do a lot more social work now than ever before. We are tasked to be first responders to the medical issue of mental health, and the social issue of homelessness. The job has also become more political than ever. With the population growth and the under-staffing, we are continually asked to do more with less.

O&E: When I think about your job, I imagine officers having to constantly deal with angry and sometimes dangerous people who are not happy to see them. Is that pretty much how your day goes?

Officer Nguyen: We deal with all varieties of people on the spectrum. We do contact angry dangerous people who can't find anything good to say about the police. In contrast, we also . . .

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The Peninsula Pool Penguins



Peninsula Pool 2016. Photo courtesy of Portland Parks and Recreation.



Peninsula Pool 1957. Photo courtesy of The Oregonian Newspaper.

It's summer time, and Peninsula Pool is full of happy, laughing, splashing children. In 1957, it was a very different scene. Instead of children, Peninsula Pool was full of penguins... 47 penguins to be exact!

The penguins were supposed to go to the Washington Park Zoo, but they arrived before the zoo was ready for them. With nowhere else to put them, Peninsula Pool was quickly converted to a makeshift penguin shelter.

The spectacle of penguins in a public pool was too much for the public to resist. Lines stretched for blocks to get a glimpse of the tuxedoed newcomers. According to official count, over 10,000 people came to see the penguins on opening day of the temporary exhibit.

Soon, however, the excitement

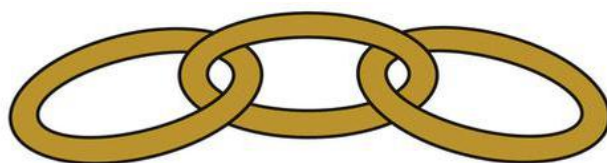
turned to concern and grief as one by one the penguins started dying. Experts were flown in from around the country. Sick and deceased penguins were transported to the Oregon State Teaching Hospital (now called OHSU) in a mad dash to discover what was killing them.

After several autopsies, and the first ever x-raying of a penguin,

aspergillosis was diagnosed and regimen of antibiotics, vitamins and rest was prescribed.

Eighteen penguin died before the diagnosis could be made, but the remaining 29 were nursed back to health and, after a few more months at Peninsula pool, moved into their new home at the zoo in May of 1958.





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Class	Website
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Capoeira – CTE Capoeiragem	CTEOregon.Wordpress.com
Dance – Afro KidsWorks	facebook.com/bobbyfouter
Dance – Dance-4-Fun	Dance4FunPDX.com
First Aid, CPR, Babysitting	www.safetysideup.com
Hula – Uluwehi Halau O Kapukui	HulaDanceLesson.com
Jujitsu – Kaishinkai Danzan Ryu	DanzanRyupdx.Wordpress.com
Zumba® – Monica Robles	facebook.com/monica.myers.7146



Saturday, July 28
 10 am to 12 pm
 Peninsula Odd Fellows
 Community Classroom
 Refreshments provided by
 Willamette's End Coffee

"COFFEE WITH A COP" is an opportunity for local residents to meet and develop relationships with their neighborhood police officers and fellow community members. In light of recent national events, many people have important questions and concerns about policing. This unique, friendly and informal atmosphere is a great way to ask questions, voice your concerns, discuss problems and most importantly, help craft solutions together. In the end, police officers and the community have the same goal: healthy, thriving neighborhoods that are free of crime, dangerous conditions, violence, and the fear of such things. You are invited to join the conversation on July 28th from 10 am to 12 pm in the Odd Fellows Community Classroom, 4830 North Lombard Street. Refreshments will be provided by Willamette's End Coffee.

Willamette's End
COFFEE

Coffee, Tea, Baked Goods, and Weekend Brunch!
 5003A N. Lombard, Portland, OR 97203
 M-F 6:30 to 2:30 / S-S 7:00 to 3:00

Neighborhood Association
 board meetings for July, 2018

Portsmouth

July 3, 2018, 6:30 pm
 Peninsula Odd Fellows Lodge
 4830 N. Lombard Street

University Park

July 9, 2018 7:00 pm
 Portsmouth Trinity Lutheran
 7119 N. Portsmouth Ave.

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... contact many people who have unwavering support for us. I believe that the media has a huge role in shaping how people perceive the police. People are influenced by what they see and hear on TV. If that wasn't the case, then no business would pay millions of dollars for a 30-second clip during the Super Bowl. I sometimes meet people who have strong political opinions about my job. At the same time, those people have very little knowledge about police work. It's an uphill battle because the media that educates the masses also have very little knowledge about my job.

O&E: What is Community Policing?

Officer Nguyen: There are many different definitions. I think of community policing as the community and the police partnering up, and working together to achieve a common objective. If you omit the police or the community, it'll be difficult to achieve the goal.

O&E: Why is community policing important? How does it benefit the community? How does it benefit the officers?

Officer Nguyen: It allows the police to work with community

members to achieve common objectives, and to understand each other. If the community understands why we do what we do, then they can be our proponent. If we understand the community's goals, we can better serve them. Most of the time, we're all working towards the same goals.

O&E: Is "Coffee with a Cop" part of Community Policing?

Officer Nguyen: Yes. Any open discussion with the community will benefit all parties involved. I think there's a lot of people in our

community who are cautious and don't know what to expect from the police. They have lots of questions and seek to understand. That's why "Coffee with a Cop" is a great opportunity for community policing.

O&E: The next "Coffee with a Cop" at Peninsula Odd Fellows will be July 28, from 10am to 12pm. Will you be there?

Officer Nguyen: Yes, I will be there, so bring all of your hard questions, and have a cup of coffee on the house.



Interested in Advertising or Contributing? Get in touch! We're always looking for content ideas, upcoming events, and community happenings, and would be delighted to advertise your business or organization. For further details and pricing, contact KayPe Kapukui at oddsandends@keepportlandodd.com



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