

Thanks to our corporate sponsors!



For more information on the Independent Transportation Network® or to make a donation, please complete this form and mail it to: ITNPortland®, 90 Bridge Street, Westbrook ME 04092

- I am interested in volunteering as a driver or office support.
- I am interested in donating or trading a car for rides.
- I am interested in ITN® services for myself, a friend or relative. Please send me an application.
- I would like ITN® to make a presentation to my group.
- Enclosed is my contribution: \$ _____
- Please send a CarTrade brochure.

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News and Information from the Independent Transportation Network®

Fall 2008

Look Who's Driving Now: Mark Steingesser!

by Marnie Ward, ITN Office Volunteer

Martin Steingesser engages life through his poetry, artistic performances, teaching, and, more recently, through his involvement with ITNPortland. In September, he graciously volunteered his services as a driver, helping to underscore the importance of dignified transportation options for seniors and disabled.

Martin relocated to Maine from the Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1981 where he was already a recognized poet and performance artist. Among other things, he is adept at walking on stilts – garnering not one, but three residencies from the Maine Arts Commission. Today, he is considered a master artist and teacher, having many publications and awards to his credit. He lectures and teaches throughout Maine, especially enjoying his work with children and young adults. In 2007, Martin was named the first Poet Laureate of Portland.

While going to pick up ITNPortland member Pam Smith, Martin spoke of the loneliness of poetry writing, and how going into the community to teach and help others alleviated his isolation. He talked about the Lower East Side that he grew up in, one which differed dramatically from that of his parents. During their time, he said, people looked out for one another, especially the older folks. He didn't see that happening any longer when he lived there. The contrast of Maine to that situation astounded him. Here was a place where the generations in-termingled and worked together, and neighbor looked after neighbor.

He noted that at the age of 71, he is lucky that he can still drive, but he'd had a recent bout of not being able to drive while recovering from a car accident. He knows intimately what it means to be dependent on others for the shortest trip or simplest errand.

When the car stopped in front of Pam Smith's house, Martin, a slim and energetic man, bounded up the steps to greet his "rider." Pam has been visually disabled since 2001. Before that, she was a healthy and outgoing woman, working for Quest Diagnostics. A promotion brought her to Maine, where she needed to drive throughout the state to service her clients. On her off days, because she knew only her daughter and son-in-law at the time, she became active in community activities and,



Martin Steingesser before picking up Pam Smith.

Continued page 2

**Welcome
New Members**

Harold Brigham
Marie Brigham
Marjorie Carlson
Linda Clark
Ruth Ellis
Esther MacDowell
Ida Goldman
Floris Jones
Dorothy Nickerson
Bernice Paterak
Patricia A Pierce
Clara F. Quinn
Paul Rheaume Sr
Arlene Ritchie
Richard Tibbals
Barbara Tibbets,
William Tolford
Mary Anne
Whittemore
Veo Willey
Linda Woods

**New Volunteer
Drivers**

Jeannine Rabinowitz
Betsy Dilworth
Jo-Ann Cecil
Doris Bell
Laura Feder
Patricia Peightal

**New Office
Volunteer**

Millicent Donahue

New Staff

We are thrilled to welcome Whitney Dorsett to our staff as our Community Outreach Intern. She is currently a student at the University of Southern Maine studying Business Administration.

(Look Who's Driving Now., continued)

one evening, went to a presentation hosted by the Rotary Club. The speaker was Katherine Freund, the founder of *ITNPortland*. Pam feels the Universe intended this meeting to happen, preparing her to cope with later disability by acquainting her with a service that would in the future allow her to reduce the burden of her illness on her family.

A pert and friendly woman, Pam spoke openly about losing her driving ability. She removed herself from the driver's seat before the state did, she said, since she knew she had become a hazard on the highway due to her deteriorating vision. Pam missed her independence very much, she admitted, but was thankful that an organization such as *ITNPortland* existed. This was an excellent alternative, she thought.

After dropping Pam at her doctor's office, Martin shared his reaction to listening to her story. It gave him pleasure, he said, to find he could make a difference in someone else's day. He mentioned the phrase "six degrees of separation," coining a new take on it – the six degrees of connection. This was how he described the joy of living in a place like Maine, where you could feel the difference you made in another's life.

You may influence someone in a big city for a few moments, he observed, but the nature of life in a huge metropolis almost always precludes knowing if your presence really made an impact. Getting Pam to her appointment was tangible evidence for him that he'd done a good thing, and it was just as important to encourage others to get involved. The way he put it about Maine – if you sneeze in Kennebunkport, you get a call about it from Caribou – showed the truth of our dependence on each other.

While he has very limited free time, Martin knew he'd be thinking of how he could become an on-going volunteer for *ITNPortland*. It's about getting along and taking care of others, he realized a long time ago, and he wanted anyone who read this article to consider how they too could offer a little time but reap a huge reward. Please call *ITNPortland* at 854-0505 to discuss how you too can make a difference in how an elderly or visually impaired person feels about their worth. Help us maintain dignified transportation alternatives for those who need them.

Upcoming Events: Please join us

- ☞ *ITNPortland* will be hosting its **Annual Wine Dinner** at the Back Bay Grill on Tuesday, November 11. Tickets are \$250 a plate with proceeds going to benefit our organization. If you are interested in purchasing tickets, please call Elizabeth at 854-0505. We are grateful to the Back Bay Grill for their generous support.
- ☞ It's that time to start working on the next **Walk For Rides**, to be held Sunday, May 31, 2009. It will start at Payson Park next to the Back Cove. If you would like to take part in planning or volunteering at the event, please call us at 854-0505.

Greetings, ITN Members and Supporters

It is my pleasure to introduce myself as the new Chairman of the *ITNPortland* Board of Directors. I value my role in this organization as, having had the opportunity work closely with *ITNPortland*, I can attest to the importance of the service provided by ITN to the Greater Portland area. The service strengthens the community by allowing seniors and visually impaired individuals to support local businesses, to volunteer and work in their neighborhoods, to stay connected to their families, and to contribute to the rich fabric of diversity that makes up our community.

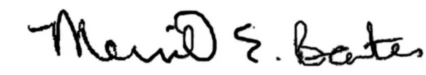
While *ITNPortland* takes pride in providing a safe and reliable service to the community, our organization could not function without the support of the community. Community support, in the form of contributions from both individuals and businesses, is critical as it enables us to provide our service at an affordable price. We are committed to keeping rates as affordable as possible so that everyone who needs the services provided by ITN can access them. This commitment is especially critical given the struggles facing many of our members due to the current economic conditions. Therefore, our members are charged only about 50% of the true cost of the rides that they take with ITN. We must fundraise to cover the remainder of the expenses.

In the coming weeks we will be mailing out our Annual Appeal to ask for financial support of *ITNPortland*. While no gift is too small, we ask members of the community to reflect upon the value of our service considering the myriad of ways that active and independent seniors and visually impaired individuals contribute to the health and richness of our lives. Please give as generously as possible.

Thanks to all of you who are members and supporters of *ITNPortland*. It is an honor to begin in the role of Chairman of the Board of Directors of an organization that is so vitally important.

Sincerely,

Merrill Barter



**Gift Certificates for
ITNPortland Rides**

ITNPortland now has gift certificates available. These would be great stocking stuffers for your senior loved one or a nice gift to show them you care about their independence.

Contact *ITNPortland* at 207-854-0505 for details.

**Thank You to the
Community Bakers
who baked goods for
the Annual Meeting.**

Harriet Levi
Marie Villanucci
Linda Sabourin
Carrie MacDonald
Prudence Todd

The goods were a big hit!

"I decided to turn my car in a year early rather than 5 minutes too late."

Does your household have a car that's not being used? In 2005, AAA® estimated that the average cost of a car sitting in your driveway is \$15.25/day. This doesn't even include the cost to drive anywhere! Why not convert your depreciating asset into ITN rides? If you are interested in trading a vehicle for ride credits, please call us at 854-0505. We will send a representative to your home to help you set a price for your vehicle. Once you are satisfied, your ITN *CarTrade* funds your Personal Transportation Account™ for rides—wherever you want or need to go. ITN will then collect your vehicle.

If you are not a member of ITN but are interested in donating a vehicle rather than trading it for credits, we accept car donations and provide receipts so that you can claim your tax deduction. Please call us at 854-0505 for more information or if you have questions.