

street roots.org



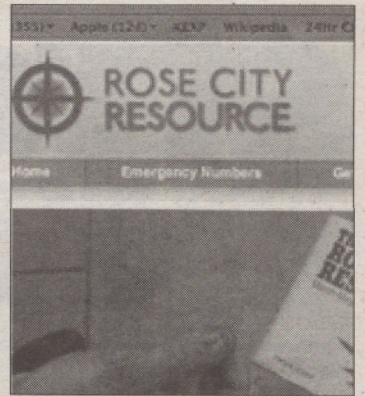
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Page 3



Shock waves

The number of veterans falling into homelessness is on the rise, with older veterans arriving on the streets for the first time in their lives.

BY MARA GRUNBAUM
STAFF WRITER

It's a warm, still May afternoon as people mill around the curb outside a downtown shelter, and Tyrone Brown, a fiery Vietnam veteran with a baseball cap and greying goatee, is pissed off.

"We got this country free," he says, gesturing toward other veterans who are staying in the Glisan Street Shelter or, like him, waiting for a space in it. "What are we doing being homeless?"

Veterans have long been a large segment of the U.S. homeless population. There are no perfect estimates of how many veterans are on the streets, but by several accounts, the number is on the rise — especially for older veterans like Brown.

The Department of Veteran's Affairs estimates that there are 2,042 veterans experiencing homelessness on any given night in the Portland service area, which includes Vancouver. That's up from 1,790 in 2006.

Portland's One Night Street Count, which surveys people who were homeless on a given night in January, found 192 veterans this year compared with 108 in 2007. The jump far outpaces the increase in the overall street count, which only grew by about 10 percent.

Though some of those new to the streets are

See SHOCK WAVES, page 13

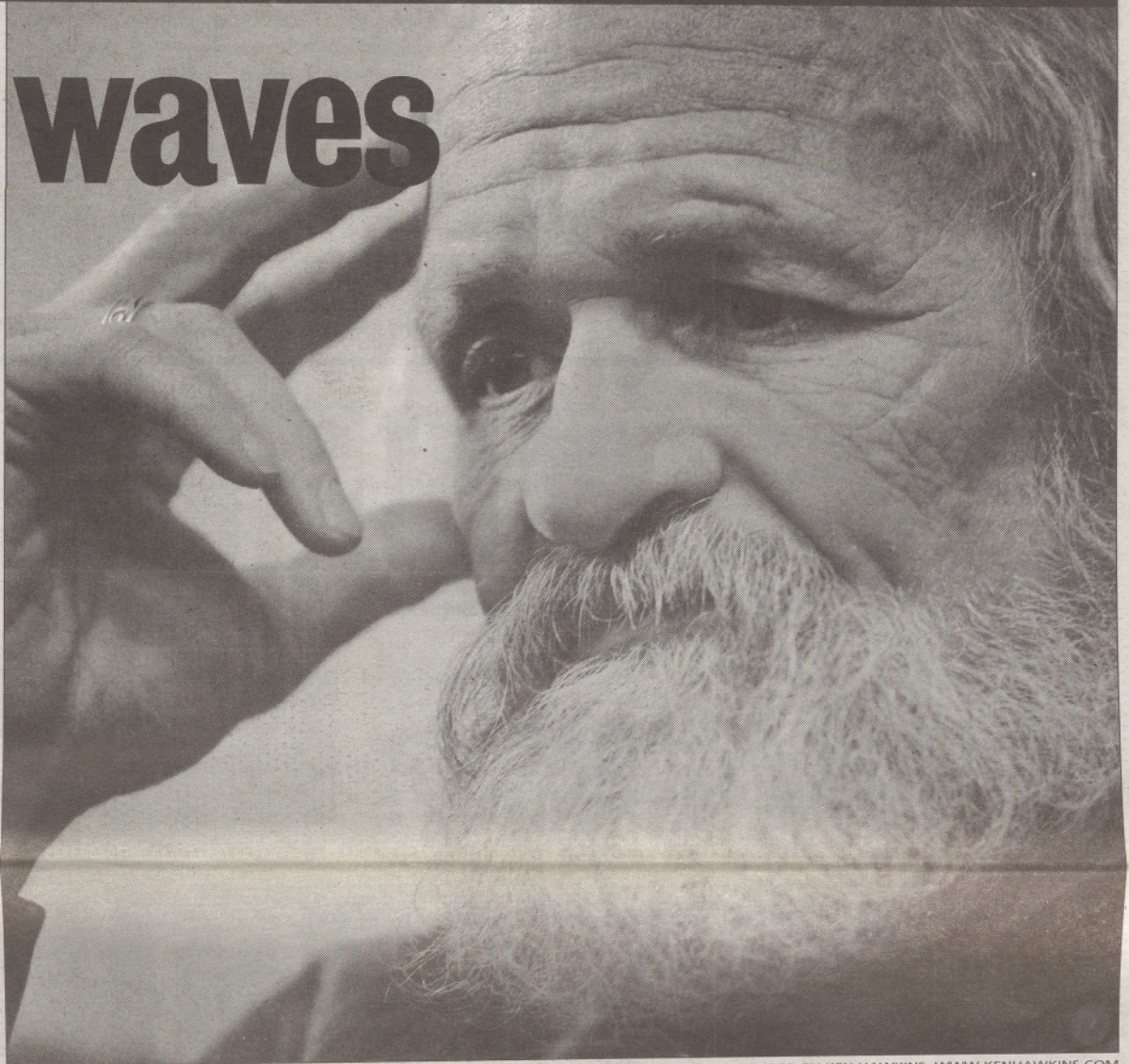


PHOTO BY KEN HAWKINS, WWW.KENHAWKINS.COM

Rick Stoller, who directs the Harbor Light shelter, says it's becoming increasingly difficult to find appropriate affordable housing for veterans "because everyone's looking for it."

Community's heart for Vision in Action beats loud and clear

City bails on funding the program to empower minority communities — PSU picks up the slack

BY REBECCA ROBINSON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The City Council hearing on the evening of May 20 was best summarized by Sisters of the Road co-founder Genny Nelson: "It is not business as usual in Portland."

Indeed, the individuals giving testimony about the VisionPDX public engagement process and its progeny, the Vision Into Action coalition (VIA), stood in direct contrast to the city's overwhelmingly white majority. Africans, Cambodians, Iraqis, Latinos and other immigrant and ethnic minority populations packed the seats in council chambers and stepped up to the microphone, detailing in voices alternately shaky and forceful how VIA had empowered their communities — and why the city should not go forward with its planned elimination of VIA's \$339,416 budget.

"Through VisionPDX, I felt like I had access to the city in a way I never had," said Evelyne Ello-Hart, the interim director of the African Women's Coalition. "It was a clear message that we really mattered." Before concluding her testimony, she urged City Council "not to kill the vision."

Romeo Sosa with the VOZ Workers' Rights

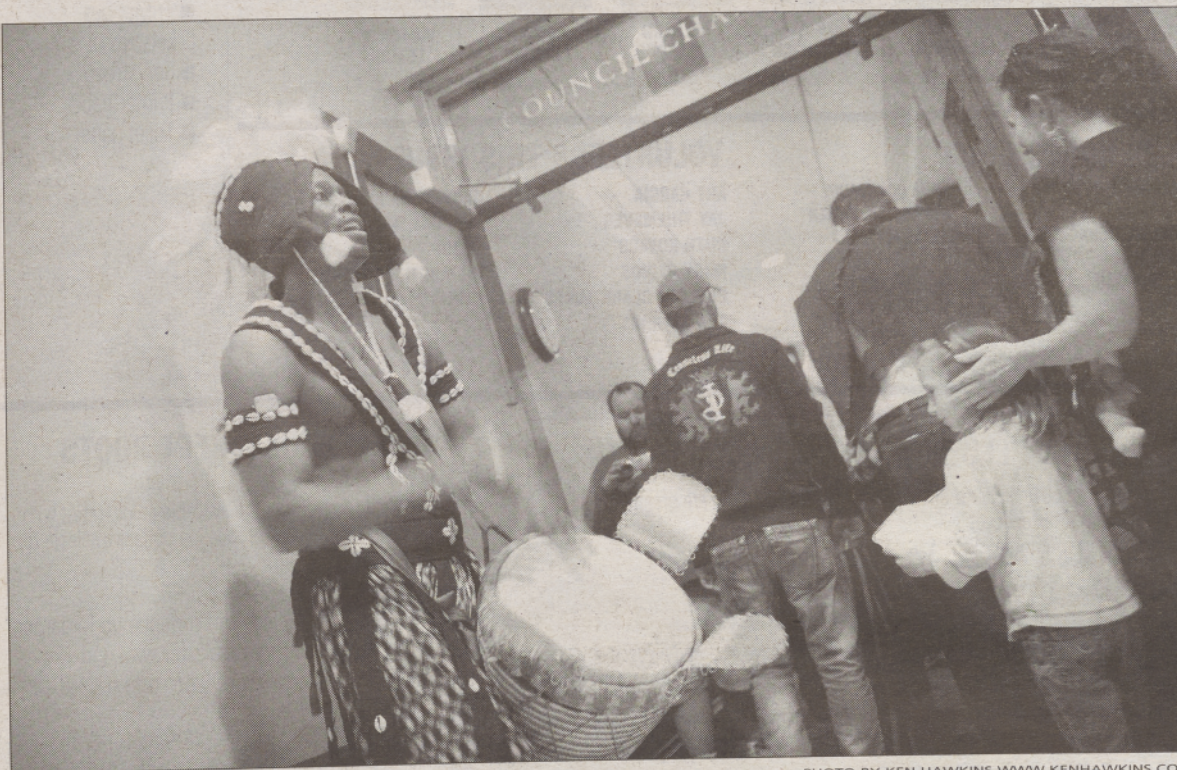


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Kerfala Bangoura ("Fana") performs outside City Council Chambers as audience members file in to testify on behalf of the Visions in Action program. The program, which the city cut funding on this month, was created to give minority voices and cultures a stronger platform in the city.

See VISIONS, page 11