

VIOLENCE IN, VIOLENCE OUT

Jerome Gold talks about his
new book about the troubled
life of juvenile delinquents

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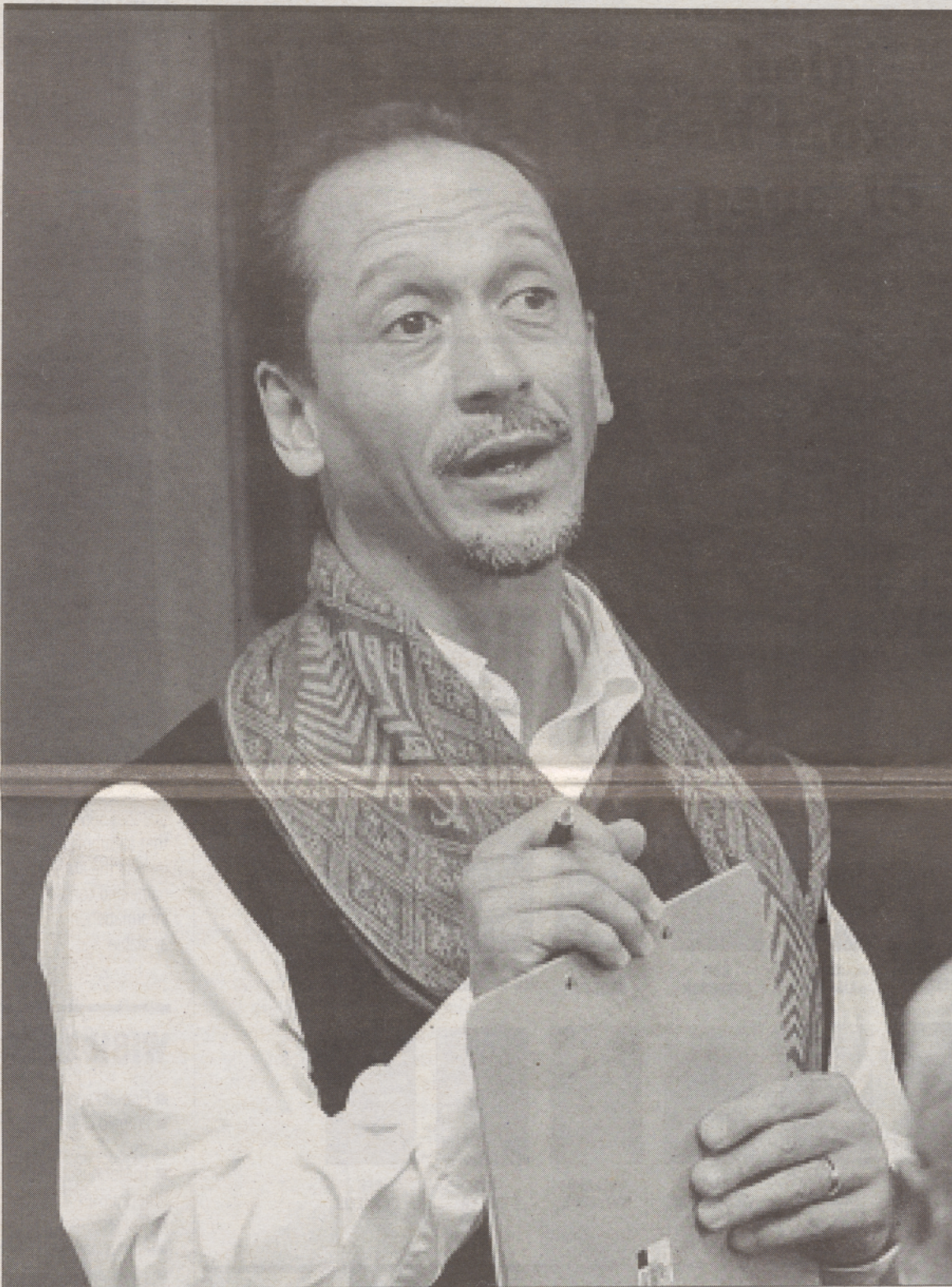
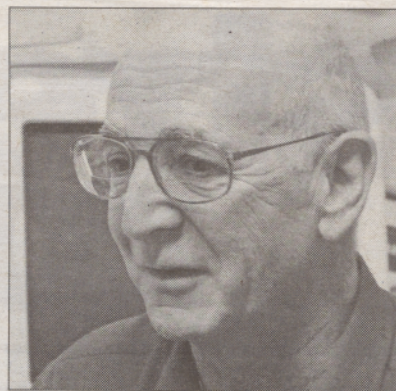


PHOTO COURTESY OF POLO CATALANI

West *meets* East

Attorney and writer Ronault
"Polo" Catalani is the world's
ambassador to Portland

BY ISRAEL BAYER
STAFF WRITER

Ronault "Polo" Catalani is a man who has walked down many roads since leaving Indonesia many years ago.

His writings in Portland's *The Asian Reporter* capture a humorous, yet strikingly real, outlook on life in Portland from a different perspective — the Asian-American perspective. As an attorney, Catalani has counseled groups such as the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, the Cambodian American Community Organization and the Southeast Asian Refugee Federation of Oregon, to name a few. He has also worked in both public and government relations for groups in Vietnam and Thailand.

Catalani is currently working for the city of Portland in the newly created Office of Human Relations, where his experience and work are having an impact on the way immigrants and refugees moving to Portland from around the world are adjusting to city life. Street Roots recently sat down with Polo to talk about immigrant life and his experiences in Portland.

Israel Bayer: What are some of the things the immigrant community is contributing to Portland that we as a city undervalue?

Polo Catalani: We believe as newcomers to Portland that we have spiritual and cultural capital that Portland's mainstream longs for, as much as we as a community long to be Portlanders.

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Oregon's homeless population grows even as nation's declines

BY STAFF REPORTS

If a one-night snapshot of people on the streets is correct, more of Oregon's population per capita is experiencing homelessness more than any other U.S. state. Among those experiencing homelessness, people in families grew almost 10 percent.

The Housing and Urban Development reports in its recently released Annual Homeless Assessment Report (AHAR) that while other states had much higher overall numbers, their percentage was lower relative to their population. Oregon's leads the all with a rate of 0.54 percent.

Housing advocates say that the numbers show that despite important new allocations in state funding and significant funding from Portland in the past three years, there is still significant work to be done to secure affordable housing for hardworking Oregon families, seniors, and people with disabilities.

"Oregonians need to recognize that these

families are our neighbors. We as a state need to wrestle with how we tax and fund services so that we can provide the opportunity for all families to succeed," said Patti Whitney-Wise, executive director of the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force.

Oregon jumped to No. 1 after being ranked fourth in the nation (0.47 percent) in 2007 and fifth in the nation (0.41 percent) in 2006.

2008's report shows that 664,000 people nationwide were homeless—either sheltered or unsheltered—on a single night in January 2008, down about 7,500 people (or one percent) from the previous year.

The report cautions that data collection ended in September 2008 just when the economic crisis was accelerating, and suggests that these early trends could be precursors to even bigger problems.

The State of Oregon showing a 35-37 percent increase in homelessness across the state, mostly represented by newly homeless families: a total of 17,000 Oregonians experiencing homelessness.

The state of homelessness today

* Nationwide, the number of people in families increased by 9 percent to 516,700.

* Homeless persons in shelters and on the street continued to be most heavily concentrated in urban areas. On a single night in January 2008, more than half of all homeless people were found in just five states: California, New York, Florida, Texas, and Michigan.

* In the twelve months ending on Sept. 30, 2008, the share of the sheltered homeless populations in suburban and rural areas increased substantially, from 23 percent in 2007 to 32 percent in 2008.

* A greater share of people accessing the homeless system in 2008 came from stays with friends and family and from places where they had lived a year or more, suggesting that people who had been stably housed were becoming homeless after exhausting their housing options.

Source: HUD's The Annual Homeless Assessment Report